

**IOWA DEPARTMENT OF INSPECTIONS AND APPEALS
ADMINISTRATIVE HEARINGS DIVISION, UI APPEALS BUREAU**

EMAD HASSOUN

Claimant

APPEAL NO. 22A-UI-14998-JT-T

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE
DECISION**

WEST DES MOINES COMM SCHL DIST

Employer

OC: 06/14/20

Claimant: Appellant (1)

Iowa Code Section 96.6(2) – Timeliness of Appeal

Iowa Code Section 96.4(5) – Between Academic Terms Disqualification

STATEMENT OF THE CASE:

On July 12, 2022, Emad Hassoun (claimant) filed a late appeal from the March 10, 2021 (reference 01) decision that denied benefits effective June 14, 2020, based on the deputy's conclusion the claimant was an employee of an education institution, the claim for benefits fell between academic years or terms, and the claimant had reasonable assurance of continued employment. After due notice was issued, a hearing was held on August 23, 2022. Claimant participated and presented additional testimony through Mike Younadam. Megan Thole represented the employer and presented additional testimony through Carol Rushing. The hearing in this matter was consolidated with the hearing in Appeal Number 22A-UI-14999-JT-T. Arabic-English interpreter Jasmine Abdullah (#14351) of CTS Language Link assisted with the hearing. Exhibit A, the online appeal, was received into evidence. The administrative law judge took official notice of the following Agency administrative records: the reference 01 and 02 decisions, DBRO, KPYX, KCCO, and WAGE-A.

ISSUE:

Whether the appeal was timely. Whether there is good cause to treat the appeal as timely.

FINDINGS OF FACT:

Having reviewed all of the evidence in the record, the administrative law judge finds:

Emad Hassoun (claimant) established an original claim for benefits that was effective June 14, 2020. The claimant is an Arabic speaker. The claimant does not read or speak English. The claimant is unable to read in any language. The claimant is part of the Syrian refugee community in the Des Moines metropolitan area. The claimant has at all relevant times had access to one or more bilingual friends and/or acquaintances who are bilingual in Arabic and English and who have assisted the claimant as needed with unemployment insurance matters.

On March 10, 2021, Iowa Workforce Development mailed the March 10, 2021 (reference 01) decision to the claimant's West Des Moines last-known address of record. The reference 01 decision denied benefits effective June 14, 2020, based on the deputy's conclusion the claimant

was an employee of an education institution, the claim for benefits fell between academic years or terms, and the claimant had reasonable assurance of continued employment. The reference 01 decision stated the decision would become final unless an appeal was postmarked by March 20, 2021 or was received by the Appeals Section by that date. The decision stated that if the deadline for appeal fell on a Saturday, Sunday or legal holiday, the deadline would be extended to the next working day. March 20, 2021 was a Saturday and the next working day was Monday, March 22, 2021. The weight of the evidence indicates the claimant received the reference 01 decision at his West Des Moines address of record in a timely manner, prior to the deadline for appeal. The claimant did not file an appeal from the decision by the appeal deadline. The claimant did not take any steps on the matter until after the claimant received the overpayment decision the was mailed on July 6, 2022.

In the summer of 2021, months after the March 10, 2021 (reference 01) decision was mailed to the claimant, the claimant relocated to Wisconsin for two months. The claimant returned to West Des Moines in the fall of 2021, but to a different address than where the claimant resided prior to the move to Wisconsin. The claimant did not update his address with Iowa Workforce Development until he filed an appeal on July 12, 2022. The claimant advises he requested the United States Postal Service forward his mail.

On July 6, 2022, Iowa Workforce Development mailed the July 6, 2022 (reference 02) overpayment decision to the claimant. The reference 02 decision held the claimant was overpaid regular benefits, Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation (FPUC) and Lost Wage Assistance Payments (LWAP), due to the reference 01 disqualification decision.

On July 12, 2022, the claimant, with assistance, completed and transmitted an appeal from the reference 02 overpayment decision. The Appeals Bureau received the appeal on July 12, 2022 and treated it as also a late appeal from the reference 01 disqualification decision.

REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:

Iowa Code section 96.6(2) provides:

2. Initial determination. A representative designated by the director shall promptly notify all interested parties to the claim of its filing, and the parties have ten days from the date of mailing the notice of the filing of the claim by ordinary mail to the last known address to protest payment of benefits to the claimant. The representative shall promptly examine the claim and any protest, take the initiative to ascertain relevant information concerning the claim, and, on the basis of the facts found by the representative, shall determine whether or not the claim is valid, the week with respect to which benefits shall commence, the weekly benefit amount payable and its maximum duration, and whether any disqualification shall be imposed. The claimant has the burden of proving that the claimant meets the basic eligibility conditions of section 96.4. The employer has the burden of proving that the claimant is disqualified for benefits pursuant to section 96.5, except as provided by this subsection. The claimant has the initial burden to produce evidence showing that the claimant is not disqualified for benefits in cases involving section 96.5, subsections 10 and 11, and has the burden of proving that a voluntary quit pursuant to section 96.5, subsection 1, was for good cause attributable to the employer and that the claimant is not disqualified for benefits in cases involving section 96.5, subsection 1, paragraphs "a" through "h". Unless the claimant or other interested party, after notification or within ten calendar days after notification was mailed to the claimant's last known address, files an appeal from the decision, the decision is final and benefits shall be paid or denied in accordance with the decision. If an administrative law

judge affirms a decision of the representative, or the appeal board affirms a decision of the administrative law judge allowing benefits, the benefits shall be paid regardless of any appeal which is thereafter taken, but if the decision is finally reversed, no employer's account shall be charged with benefits so paid and this relief from charges shall apply to both contributory and reimbursable employers, notwithstanding section 96.8, subsection 5.

The ten-day deadline for appeal begins to run on the date Workforce Development mails the decision to the parties. The "decision date" found in the upper right-hand portion of the Agency representative's decision, unless otherwise corrected immediately below that entry, is presumptive evidence of the date of mailing. *Gaskins v. Unempl. Comp. Bd. of Rev.*, 429 A.2d 138 (Pa. Comm. 1981); *Johnson v. Board of Adjustment*, 239 N.W.2d 873, 92 A.L.R.3d 304 (Iowa 1976).

An appeal submitted by mail is deemed filed on the date it is mailed as shown by the postmark or in the absence of a postmark the postage meter mark of the envelope in which it was received, or if not postmarked or postage meter marked or if the mark is illegible, on the date entered on the document as the date of completion. See Iowa Administrative Code rule 871-24.35(1)(a). See also *Messina v. IDJS*, 341 N.W.2d 52 (Iowa 1983). An appeal submitted by any other means is deemed filed on the date it is received by the Unemployment Insurance Division of Iowa Workforce Development. See Iowa Administrative Code rule 871-24.35(1)(b).

The evidence in the record establishes that more than ten calendar days elapsed between the mailing date and the date this appeal was filed. The Iowa Supreme Court has declared that there is a mandatory duty to file appeals from representatives' decisions within the time allotted by statute, and that the administrative law judge has no authority to change the decision of a representative if a timely appeal is not filed. *Franklin v. IDJS*, 277 N.W.2d 877, 881 (Iowa 1979). Compliance with appeal notice provisions is jurisdictional unless the facts of a case show that the notice was invalid. *Beardslee v. IDJS*, 276 N.W.2d 373, 377 (Iowa 1979); see also *In re Appeal of Elliott*, 319 N.W.2d 244, 247 (Iowa 1982). One question in this case thus becomes whether the appellant was deprived of a reasonable opportunity to assert an appeal in a timely fashion. *Hendren v. IESC*, 217 N.W.2d 255 (Iowa 1974); *Smith v. IESC*, 212 N.W.2d 471, 472 (Iowa 1973).

No submission shall be considered timely if the delay in filing was unreasonable, as determined by the division after considering the circumstances in the case. See Iowa Administrative Code rule 871-24.35(2)(c).

The weight of the evidence in the record establishes an untimely appeal from the March 10, 2021 (reference 01) decision. The weight of the evidence establishes the claimant received the reference 01 decision in a timely manner, prior to the deadline for appeal. Though the claimant was unable to read the decision, the claimant did not take any steps to seek to understand the decision, despite the claimant's contacts with, access to and history of support from bilingual members of the Des Moines Arabic-speaking community. Despite the language barrier, the claimant had a reasonable opportunity to file an appeal by the applicable appeal deadline if he had made timely contact to request assistance from his support community and/or Iowa Workforce Development. Even if the language barrier had provided a reasonable basis for a short delay in filing an appeal from the reference 01 decision, the claimant unreasonably waited 16 months after the denial decision was mailed received to take action on the matter in response to the July 6, 2022 (reference 02) overpayment decision. The late filing of the appeal was not attributable to the Iowa Workforce Development error or misinformation or delay or other action of the United States Postal Service. There is not good cause to treat the late

appeal as a timely appeal. See Iowa Administrative Code rule 871-24.35(2). Because the appeal was untimely, administrative law judge lacks jurisdiction to disturb the March 10, 2021 (reference 01) disqualification decision. See *Beardslee v. IDJS*, 276 N.W.2d 373 (Iowa 1979) and *Franklin v. IDJS*, 277 N.W.2d 877 (Iowa 1979).

DECISION:

The claimant's appeal from the March 10, 2021 (reference 01) decision was untimely. The decision that denied benefits effective June 14, 2020, based on the deputy's conclusion the claimant was an employee of an education institution, the claim for benefits fell between academic years or terms, and the claimant had reasonable assurance of continued employment, remains in effect.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "James E. Timberland". The signature is written in dark ink on a light-colored background.

James E. Timberland
Administrative Law Judge

September 30, 2022
Decision Dated and Mailed

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APPEAL RIGHTS. If you disagree with the decision, you or any interested party may:

1. Appeal to the Employment Appeal Board within fifteen (15) days of the date under the judge's signature by submitting a written appeal via mail, fax, or online to:

**Employment Appeal Board
4th Floor – Lucas Building
Des Moines, Iowa 50319
Fax: (515)281-7191
Online: eab.iowa.gov**

The appeal period will be extended to the next business day if the last day to appeal falls on a weekend or a legal holiday.

AN APPEAL TO THE BOARD SHALL STATE CLEARLY:

- 1) The name, address, and social security number of the claimant.
- 2) A reference to the decision from which the appeal is taken.
- 3) That an appeal from such decision is being made and such appeal is signed.
- 4) The grounds upon which such appeal is based.

An Employment Appeal Board decision is final agency action. If a party disagrees with the Employment Appeal Board decision, they may then file a petition for judicial review in district court.

2. If no one files an appeal of the judge's decision with the Employment Appeal Board within fifteen (15) days, the decision becomes final agency action, and you have the option to file a petition for judicial review in District Court within thirty (30) days after the decision becomes final. Additional information on how to file a petition can be found at Iowa Code §17A.19, which is online at <https://www.legis.iowa.gov/docs/code/17A.19.pdf>.

Note to Parties: YOU MAY REPRESENT yourself in the appeal or obtain a lawyer or other interested party to do so provided there is no expense to Workforce Development. If you wish to be represented by a lawyer, you may obtain the services of either a private attorney or one whose services are paid for with public funds.

Note to Claimant: It is important that you file your weekly claim as directed, while this appeal is pending, to protect your continuing right to benefits.

SERVICE INFORMATION:

A true and correct copy of this decision was mailed to each of the parties listed.

DERECHOS DE APELACIÓN. Si no está de acuerdo con la decisión, usted o cualquier parte interesada puede:

1. Apelar a la Junta de Apelaciones de Empleo dentro de los quince (15) días de la fecha bajo la firma del juez presentando una apelación por escrito por correo, fax o en línea a:

**Employment Appeal Board
4th Floor – Lucas Building
Des Moines, Iowa 50319
Fax: (515)281-7191
En línea: eab.iowa.gov**

El período de apelación se extenderá hasta el siguiente día hábil si el último día para apelar cae en fin de semana o día feriado legal.

UNA APELACIÓN A LA JUNTA DEBE ESTABLECER CLARAMENTE:

- 1) El nombre, dirección y número de seguro social del reclamante.
- 2) Una referencia a la decisión de la que se toma la apelación.
- 3) Que se interponga recurso de apelación contra tal decisión y se firme dicho recurso.
- 4) Los fundamentos en que se funda dicho recurso.

Una decisión de la Junta de Apelaciones de Empleo es una acción final de la agencia. Si una de las partes no está de acuerdo con la decisión de la Junta de Apelación de Empleo, puede presentar una petición de revisión judicial en el tribunal de distrito.

2. Si nadie presenta una apelación de la decisión del juez ante la Junta de Apelaciones Laborales dentro de los quince (15) días, la decisión se convierte en acción final de la agencia y usted tiene la opción de presentar una petición de revisión judicial en el Tribunal de Distrito dentro de los treinta (30) días después de que la decisión adquiriera firmeza. Puede encontrar información adicional sobre cómo presentar una petición en el Código de Iowa §17A.19, que está en línea en <https://www.legis.iowa.gov/docs/code/17A.19.pdf>.

Nota para las partes: USTED PUEDE REPRESENTARSE en la apelación u obtener un abogado u otra parte interesada para que lo haga, siempre que no haya gastos para Workforce Development. Si desea ser representado por un abogado, puede obtener los servicios de un abogado privado o uno cuyos servicios se paguen con fondos públicos.

Nota para el reclamante: es importante que presente su reclamo semanal según las instrucciones, mientras esta apelación está pendiente, para proteger su derecho continuo a los beneficios.

SERVICIO DE INFORMACIÓN:

Se envió por correo una copia fiel y correcta de esta decisión a cada una de las partes enumeradas.