

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS BUREAU**

VERONICA K SINGH
Claimant

APPEAL 21A-UI-02547-S1-T

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE
DECISION**

**ALUMINUM CO OF AMERICA
DAVENPORT WORKS**
Employer

**OC: 04/19/20
Claimant: Appellant (2)**

Iowa Code § 96.6(2) - Timeliness of Appeal
Iowa Code § 96.4-3 – Able and Available
871 IAC 24.23(10) – Voluntary Leave of Absence
Iowa Code § 96.19(38)a & b – Total and Partial Unemployment

STATEMENT OF THE CASE:

Veronica Singh (claimant) appealed a representative's July 8, 2020, decision (reference 01) that concluded ineligibility to receive unemployment insurance benefits as of April 19, 2020, because a leave of absence was granted by Aluminum Co of America (employer) at the claimant's request. After hearing notices were mailed to the parties' last-known addresses of record, a telephone hearing was held on March 8, 2021. The claimant participated personally and through Joshua Meyrer, Union Representative for United Steel Workers. The employer participated by Diana Foust, Human Resources Business Partner.

Exhibit D-1 was received into evidence. The administrative law judge took official notice of the administrative file. 20A-UI-02547.S1 and 20A-UI-02548.S1 were heard at the same time.

ISSUE:

The issue is whether the appeal was filed in a timely manner and, if so, whether the claimant was available for work.

FINDINGS OF FACT:

The administrative law judge, having heard the testimony and considered all of the evidence in the record, finds that: The claimant was hired on October 10, 2011, as a full-time operator. The employer did not have work for the claimant from April 19, 2020, through May 9, 2020. During this period, the claimant was under no medical restriction.

The claimant filed for unemployment insurance benefits with an effective date of April 19, 2020. Her weekly benefit amount was determined to be \$481.00. The claimant received benefits of \$481.00 per week from April 19, 2020, to the week ending May 9, 2020. This is a total of \$1,443.00 in state unemployment insurance benefits after the separation from employment. She also received \$1,800.00 in Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation for the three-weeks ending May 9, 2020. She did not apply for Pandemic Unemployment Assistance.

A disqualification decision was mailed to the parties' last known address of record on July 8, 2020. The claimant did not receive the decision within ten days. The decision contained a warning that an appeal must be postmarked or received by the Appeals Section by July 20, 2020. The appeal was filed on January 4, 2021, which is after the date noticed on the decision. The claimant filed her appeal after she received an overpayment 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 claimant did not have an opportunity to appeal the fact-finder's decision because the decision was not received. Without notice of a disqualification, no meaningful opportunity for appeal exists. See *Smith v. Iowa Employment Security Commission*, 212 N.W.2d 471, 472 (Iowa 1973). The claimant appealed the overpayment decision, which was the first notice of disqualification. Therefore, the appeal shall be accepted as timely.

Iowa Code section 96.19(38) provides:

"Total and partial unemployment".

- a. An individual shall be deemed "totally unemployed" in any week with respect to which no wages are payable to the individual and during which the individual performs no services.
- b. An individual shall be deemed partially unemployed in any week in which either of the following apply:

- (1) While employed at the individual's then regular job, the individual works less than the regular full-time week and in which the individual earns less than the individual's weekly benefit amount plus fifteen dollars.

(2) The individual, having been separated from the individual's regular job, earns at odd jobs less than the individual's weekly benefit amount plus fifteen dollars.

c. An individual shall be deemed temporarily unemployed if for a period, verified by the department, not to exceed four consecutive weeks, the individual is unemployed due to a plant shutdown, vacation, inventory, lack of work or emergency from the individual's regular job or trade in which the individual worked full-time and will again work full-time, if the individual's employment, although temporarily suspended, has not been terminated.

Iowa Code section 96.4(3) provides:

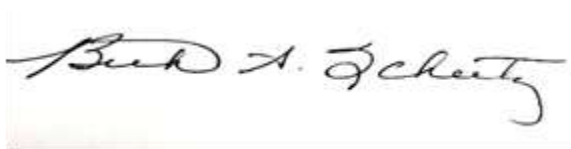
An unemployed individual shall be eligible to receive benefits with respect to any week only if the department finds that:

3. The individual is able to work, is available for work, and is earnestly and actively seeking work. This subsection is waived if the individual is deemed partially unemployed, while employed at the individual's regular job, as defined in section 96.1A, subsection 37, paragraph "b", subparagraph (1), or temporarily unemployed as defined in section 96.1A, subsection 37, paragraph "c". The work search requirements of this subsection and the disqualification requirement for failure to apply for, or to accept suitable work of section 96.5, subsection 3 are waived if the individual is not disqualified for benefits under section 96.5, subsection 1, paragraph "h".

When an employer has no work for an employee for a period, not to exceed four consecutive weeks, the employee is temporarily unemployed. The employer had no work for the claimant for the three weeks ending May 9, 2020. The claimant was temporarily unemployed and eligible to receive unemployment insurance benefits for the three weeks ending May 9, 2020.

DECISION:

The July 8, 2020, reference 01, decision is reversed. The appeal in this case was timely. The claimant was temporarily unemployed and eligible to receive unemployment insurance benefits for the three weeks ending May 9, 2020.



Beth A. Scheetz
Administrative Law Judge

March 11, 2021
Decision Dated and Mailed

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