

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS**

ELISE VOGEL
Claimant

APPEAL NO. 20A-UI-07156-JTT

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE
DECISION**

FAMILIES FIRST COUNSELING SERVICES
Employer

OC: 04/05/20
Claimant: Respondent (1)

Iowa Code Section 96.4(3) – Able & Available
Iowa Code § 17A.12(3) – Default Decision
Iowa Admin. Code r. 871-26.14(7) – Dismissal of Appeal on Default

STATEMENT OF THE CASE:

The employer filed a timely appeal from the June 24, 2020, reference 02, decision that allowed benefits to the claimant for the period beginning April 5, 2020, provided she met all other eligibility requirements, and that held the employer's account could be charged for benefits, based on the deputy's conclusion that the claimant was able to work and available for work, but that the employer was not providing the same pattern of employment as in the base period. A notice of hearing was mailed to the parties' last-known addresses of record for a telephone hearing to be held at 10:00 a.m. on August 4, 2020. Claimant Elise Vogel was available for the hearing. The employer/appellant did not make itself available for the hearing. The employer did not register a telephone number for the hearing. The appeal letter was signed by Barbara Rundle, Human Resources Manager. The appeal letter footer included a telephone number for the employer. Ms. Rundle was not available at the number included on the appeal letter. Based upon the employer/appellant's failure to participate in the hearing and the law, the administrative law judge enters the following findings of fact, reasoning and conclusions of law and decision.

ISSUE:

Should the appeal be dismissed based upon the employer/appellant not participating in the hearing?

FINDINGS OF FACT:

The employer is the appellant in this matter. The employer was properly notified of the appeal hearing set for 10:00 a.m. on August 4, 2020 through the hearing notice that was mailed to the employer's last-known address of record on July 20, 2020. The employer did not participate in the hearing or request a postponement of the hearing as required by the hearing notice. The employer did not comply with the hearing notice instructions to register a telephone number at which a representative could be reached for the hearing. Barbara Rundle, Human Resources Manager, signed the appeal letter. The appeal letter footer included a telephone number for the employer. At the time of the hearing, the administrative law judge called the employer's

number, navigated the employer's voicemail system to get to an extension for the human resources department, and spoke with someone who later identified herself as "Julie" from the billing department. Julie stated that Ms. Rundle was not available, offered to route the administrative law judge to Ms. Rundle's voicemail, but then terminated the call without routing the administrative law judge to Ms. Rundle's voicemail. The administrative law judge immediately made a second attempt to reach Ms. Rundle for the hearing. On this second attempt, the administrative law judge navigated the employer's voicemail system to reach Ms. Rundle's extension, where the administrative law judge left an appropriate message. The administrative law judge then had the claimant stand by while the administrative law judge waited for a response from the employer. At 10:15 a.m., the administrative law judge made a third attempt to reach Ms. Rundle at her extension. When Ms. Rundle did not answer, the administrative law judge left an appropriate voicemail message. At 10:17 a.m., the administrative law judge closed the record and dismissed the claimant.

The June 24, 2020, reference 02, decision allowed benefits to the claimant for the period beginning April 5 2020, provided she met all other eligibility requirements, and held the employer's account could be charged for benefits, based on the deputy's conclusion that the claimant was able to work and available for work, but that the employer was not providing the same pattern of employment as in the base period.

REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:

The Iowa Administrative Procedures Act at Iowa Code § 17A.12(3) provides in pertinent part:

If a party fails to appear or participate in a contested case proceeding after proper service of notice, the presiding officer may, if no adjournment is granted, enter a default decision or proceed with the hearing and make a decision in the absence of the party. ... If a decision is rendered against a party who failed to appear for the hearing and the presiding officer is timely requested by that party to vacate the decision for good cause, the time for initiating a further appeal is stayed pending a determination by the presiding officer to grant or deny the request. If adequate reasons are provided showing good cause for the party's failure to appear, the presiding officer shall vacate the decision and, after proper service of notice, conduct another evidentiary hearing. If adequate reasons are not provided showing good cause for the party's failure to appear, the presiding officer shall deny the motion to vacate.

Iowa Administrative Code rule 871-26.14(7) provides:

(7) If a party has not responded to a notice of telephone hearing by providing the appeals bureau with the names and telephone numbers of the persons who are participating in the hearing by the scheduled starting time of the hearing or is not available at the telephone number provided, the presiding officer may proceed with the hearing. If the appealing party fails to provide a telephone number or is unavailable for the hearing, the presiding officer may decide the appealing party is in default and dismiss the appeal as provide in Iowa Code section 17A.12(3). The record may be reopened if the absent party makes a request to reopen the hearing in writing under subrule 26.8(3) and shows good cause for reopening the hearing.

a. If an absent party responds to the hearing notice while the hearing is in progress, the presiding officer shall pause to admit the party, summarize the hearing to that point, administer the oath, and resume the hearing.

b. If a party responds to the notice of hearing after the record has been closed and any party which has participated is no longer on the telephone line, the presiding officer shall not take the evidence of the late party.

c. Failure to read or follow the instructions on the notice of hearing shall not constitute good cause for reopening the record.

The employer/appellant appealed the representative's decision but failed to participate in the hearing. The employer/appellant has therefore defaulted on its appeal pursuant to Iowa Code §17A.12(3) and Iowa Admin. Code r. 871-24.14(7), and the representative's decision remains in force and effect.

DECISION:

The employer defaulted on its appeal. The appeal is dismissed. The June 24, 2020, reference 02, decision allowed benefits to the claimant for the period beginning April 5, 2020, provided she met all other eligibility requirements, and that held the employer's account could be charged for benefits, based on the deputy's conclusion that the claimant was able to work and available for work, but that the employer was not providing the same pattern of employment as in the base period, remains in effect.



James E. Timberland
Administrative Law Judge

August 11, 2020
Decision Dated and Mailed

jet/sam