

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT  
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS BUREAU**

**COURTNEY E PAYNE**  
Claimant

**APPEAL 20A-DUA-00297-JC-T**

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE  
DECISION**

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT  
DEPARTMENT**

**OC: 03/22/20**  
**Claimant: Appellant (4)**

PL 116-136, Sec. 2012 – Federal Pandemic Unemployment Assistance

**STATEMENT OF THE CASE:**

On September 3, 2020, the claimant filed a timely appeal from the Iowa Workforce Development decision dated August 22, 2020 that determined claimant was not eligible for federal Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) benefits.

After proper notice, a telephone hearing was conducted on October 14, 2020. The claimant participated personally. Debra McDonald, mother of claimant, also participated. The administrative law judge took official notice of the administrative records. Claimant's Exhibit A was admitted.

**ISSUE:**

Is the claimant eligible for Pandemic Unemployment Assistance?

**FINDINGS OF FACT:**

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

Claimant filed a claim for state unemployment insurance benefits with an effective date of March 22, 2020. In March 2020, the United States declared a public health emergency based on the COVID-19 pandemic.

Iowa Workforce Development issued a reference 01 unemployment insurance decision dated July 1, 2020, that denied regular unemployment insurance benefits based on claimant not being able to and available for work and being on a leave of absence. The decision is final at this time.

The claimant last worked on March 19, 2020. Claimant has four children, three which attend school and one goes to daycare. Claimant's youngest child has behavioral challenges, which make securing childcare options limited. As a result of COVID-19, the school closed in-person classes after spring break and daycare closed permanently on March 27, 2020. (The childcare provider closed and moved). Claimant's children remained home all summer and claimant was unable to find a childcare provider qualified to care for her youngest child. Only the youngest child requires daycare.

On April 27, 2020, claimant applied for Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) benefits.

The new school year began August 21, 2020, with the option to attend school in-person or learn virtually. Claimant's children have remained home and will return to in-person classes on October 27, 2020. Claimant will have childcare secured for her youngest child at that time and intends to return to work.

### **REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:**

For the reasons set forth below, the administrative law judge finds that claimant is eligible for Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) from March 29, 2020 through May 30, 2020 only.

The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act, Public Law 116-136, Sec. 2102 provides for unemployment benefit assistance to any covered individual for any weeks beginning on or after January 27, 2020 and ending on or before December 31, 2020, during which the individual is unemployed, partially unemployed, or unable to work due to COVID-19.

The issue to be determined here is whether claimant is a "covered individual" within the meaning of applicable law.

Section 2102(a)(3) defines individuals who are eligible for PUA benefits.

(3) COVERED INDIVIDUAL.—The term "covered individual"—

(A) means an individual who—

(i) is not eligible for regular compensation or extended benefits under State or Federal law or pandemic emergency unemployment compensation under section 2107, including an individual who has exhausted all rights to regular unemployment or extended benefits under State or Federal law or pandemic emergency unemployment compensation under section 2107; and

(ii) provides self-certification that the individual—

(I) is otherwise able to work and available for work within the meaning of applicable State law, except the individual is unemployed, partially unemployed, or unable or unavailable to work because—

(aa) the individual has been diagnosed with COVID-19 or is experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 and seeking a medical diagnosis;

(bb) a member of the individual's household has been diagnosed with COVID-19;

(cc) the individual is providing care for a family member or a member of the individual's household who has been diagnosed with COVID-19;

(dd) a child or other person in the household for which the individual has primary caregiving responsibility is unable to attend school or another facility that is closed as a direct result of the COVID-19 public health

emergency and such school or facility care is required for the individual to work;

(ee) the individual is unable to reach the place of employment because of a quarantine imposed as a direct result of the COVID-19 public health emergency;

(ff) the individual is unable to reach the place of employment because the individual has been advised by a health care provider to self-quarantine due to concerns related to COVID-19;

(gg) the individual was scheduled to commence employment and does not have a job or is unable to reach the job as a direct result of the COVID-19 public health emergency;

(hh) the individual has become the breadwinner or major support for a household because the head of the household has died as a direct result of COVID-19;

(ii) the individual has to quit his or her job as a direct result of COVID-19;

(jj) the individual's place of employment is closed as a direct result of the COVID-19 public health emergency; or

(kk) the individual meets any additional criteria established by the Secretary for unemployment assistance under this section; or

(ll) is self-employed, is seeking part-time employment, does not have sufficient work history, or otherwise would not qualify for regular unemployment or extended benefits under State or Federal law or pandemic emergency unemployment compensation under section 2107 and meets the requirements of subclause (l); and

(B) does not include—

(i) an individual who has the ability to telework with pay; or

(ii) an individual who is receiving paid sick leave or other paid leave benefits, regardless of whether the individual meets a qualification described in items (aa) through (kk) of subparagraph (A)(i)(l).

An individual must be unemployed and the unemployment must be caused by a major disaster. 20 CFR 625.4.

Title 20 of the Code of Federal Regulations, section 626.2(t) defines an unemployed self-employed individual as follows:

(t) Unemployed self-employed individual means an individual who was self-employed in or was to commence self-employment in the major disaster area at the time the major disaster began, and whose principal source of income and livelihood is dependent upon the individual's performance of service in self-employment, and whose unemployment is caused by a major disaster as provided in § 625.5(b).

Title 20 of the Code of Federal Regulations, section 626.5(b) and (c) provide:

(b) Unemployed self-employed individual. The unemployment of an unemployed self-employed individual is caused by a major disaster if—

(1) The individual has a “week of unemployment” as defined in § 625.2(w)(2) following the “date the major disaster began” as defined in § 625.2(e), and such unemployment is a direct result of the major disaster; or

(2) The individual is unable to reach the place where services as a self-employed individual are performed, as a direct result of the major disaster; or

(3) The individual was to commence regular services as a self-employed individual, but does not have a place or is unable to reach the place where the services as a self-employed individual were to be performed, as a direct result of the major disaster; or

(4) The individual cannot perform services as a self-employed individual because of an injury caused as a direct result of the major disaster.

(c) Unemployment is a direct result of the major disaster. For the purposes of paragraphs (a)(1) and (b)(1) of this section, a worker's or self-employed individual's unemployment is a direct result of the major disaster where the unemployment is an immediate result of the major disaster itself, and not the result of a longer chain of events precipitated or exacerbated by the disaster. Such an individual's unemployment is a direct result of the major disaster if the unemployment resulted from:

(1) The physical damage or destruction of the place of employment;

(2) The physical inaccessibility of the place of employment in the major disaster area due to its closure by or at the request of the federal, state or local government, in immediate response to the disaster; or

(3) Lack of work, or loss of revenues, provided that, prior to the disaster, the employer, or the business in the case of a self-employed individual, received at least a majority of its revenue or income from an entity in the major disaster area that was either damaged or destroyed in the disaster, or an entity in the major disaster area closed by the federal, state or local government in immediate response to the disaster.

In this case, claimant is the primary caretaker of her three children. The children's school was closed due to Covid-19. Claimant needed to provide supervision and childcare. Claimant meets the requirements of subparagraph (dd) above. Claimant is eligible for PUA benefits effective March 29, 2020 through the May 30, 2020.

Effective May 31, 2020, claimant is not eligible for PUA. Claimant's unemployment effective May 31, 2020 was not directly caused by the pandemic. It was the result of a longer chain of events precipitated or exacerbated by COVID 19. Claimant's youngest child requires a certain type or level of childcare due to behavioral issues. Claimant's last childcare provider moved, and other childcare facilities are open but do not meet the child's needs or have openings, thereby requiring claimant to remain home.

While the administrative law judge is very sympathetic to claimant's situation, she does not meet the definition of an unemployed worker who is entitled to PUA benefits under the law, as outlined above. The request for Pandemic Unemployment Assistance is denied effective May 31, 2020.

**DECISION:**

The Iowa Workforce Development decision dated August 22, 2020 that determined claimant was not eligible for federal Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) is modified in favor of claimant.

Claimant is allowed PUA benefits from March 22, 2020 to May 30, 2020.

PUA benefits are denied effective May 31, 2020.



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Jennifer L. Beckman  
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October 30, 2020  
Decision Dated and Mailed

jlb/sam