

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT  
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS BUREAU**

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**RYLEE GRACE**  
Claimant

**SLATER & NORRIS PLC**  
Employer

**APPEAL 22A-UI-06192-AR-T**  
**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE  
DECISION**

**OC: 06/20/21**  
**Claimant: Respondent (2)**

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Iowa Code § 96.4(3) – Eligibility – A&A – Able to, available for, work search  
Iowa Code § 96.5(3)a – Work Refusal – % AWW  
Iowa Code § 96.5(3)b – Work Refusal – Unsuitable

**STATEMENT OF THE CASE:**

Employer filed an appeal from the March 10, 2022, (reference 01) unemployment insurance decision that allowed benefits based on a determination that claimant did not accept offered work because the conditions leading to the separation still existed. The parties were properly notified of the hearing. A telephone hearing was held on April 21, 2022. The claimant, Rylee Grace, did not participate. The employer, Slater & Norris, PLC, participated through Reagan Slater. Employer's Exhibit 1 was admitted. The administrative law judge took official notice of the administrative record.

**ISSUES:**

Is claimant able to and available for work?  
Did claimant refuse to apply for or accept an offer of suitable work?

**FINDINGS OF FACT:**

Having reviewed all of the evidence in the record, the administrative law judge finds: Claimant filed an original claim for benefits with an effective date of June 20, 2021. She filed an additional claim for benefits with an effective date of February 13, 2022.

Claimant began working for this employer in November 2021 as a legal assistant. In that role, she worked standard business hours, and earned \$35,000.00 annually. The employer had concerns about claimant's performance. On February 15, 2022, claimant was separated from employment. That evening, her supervisors reconsidered.

On February 16, 2022, Slater texted claimant to offer her the job back. Slater told claimant that she would retain her job title and hours but would have reduced job duties for a period to allow her to train and become more accustomed to the position. The employer intended to remove the job duties with which claimant struggled during her initial period of employment. The employer did not intend to reduce claimant's pay. On February 17, 2022, claimant responded to

Slater's text thanking her for the offer, but declining to return to work, because she felt humiliated by the separation that occurred on February 15, 2022.

**REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:**

For the reasons that follow, the administrative law judge concludes:

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 38, paragraph "b", subparagraph (1), or temporarily unemployed as defined in section 96.19, subsection 38, 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".

Iowa Code section 96.5(3)a provides:

An individual shall be disqualified for benefits, regardless of the source of the individual's wage credits:

3. Failure to accept work. If the department finds that an individual has failed, without good cause, either to apply for available, suitable work when directed by the department or to accept suitable work when offered that individual. The department shall, if possible, furnish the individual with the names of employers which are seeking employees. The individual shall apply to and obtain the signatures of the employers designated by the department on forms provided by the department. However, the employers may refuse to sign the forms. The individual's failure to obtain the signatures of designated employers, which have not refused to sign the forms, shall disqualify the individual for benefits until requalified. To requalify for benefits after disqualification under this subsection, the individual shall work in and be paid wages for insured work equal to ten times the individual's weekly benefit amount, provided the individual is otherwise eligible.

a. (1) In determining whether or not any work is suitable for an individual, the department shall consider the degree of risk involved to the individual's health, safety, and morals, the individual's physical fitness, prior training, length of unemployment, and prospects for securing local work in the individual's customary occupation, the distance of the available work from the individual's residence, and any other factor which the department finds bears a reasonable relation to the purposes of this paragraph. Work is suitable if the work meets all the other criteria of this paragraph and if the gross weekly wages for the work equal or exceed the following percentages of the individual's average weekly wage for insured work paid to the individual during that quarter of the individual's base period in which the individual's wages were highest:

(a) One hundred percent, if the work is offered during the first five weeks of unemployment.

(b) Seventy-five percent, if the work is offered during the sixth through the twelfth week of unemployment.

(c) Seventy percent, if the work is offered during the thirteenth through the eighteenth week of unemployment.

(d) Sixty-five percent, if the work is offered after the eighteenth week of unemployment.

(2) However, the provisions of this paragraph shall not require an individual to accept employment below the federal minimum wage.

b. Notwithstanding any other provision of this chapter, no work shall be deemed suitable and benefits shall not be denied under this chapter to any otherwise eligible individual for refusing to accept new work under any of the following conditions:

(1) If the position offered is vacant due directly to a strike, lockout, or other labor dispute;

(2) If the wages, hours, or other conditions of the work offered are substantially less favorable to the individual than those prevailing for similar work in the locality;

(3) If as a condition of being employed, the individual would be required to join a company union or to resign from or refrain from joining any bona fide labor organization.

Iowa Admin. Code r. 871—24.24(14) provides:

Failure to accept work and failure to apply for suitable work. Failure to accept work and failure to apply for suitable work shall be removed when the individual shall have worked in (except in back pay awards) and been paid wages for insured work equal to ten times the individual's weekly benefit amount, provided the individual is otherwise eligible.

(14) Employment offer from former employer.

a. The claimant shall be disqualified for a refusal of work with a former employer if the work offered is reasonably suitable and comparable and is within the purview of the usual occupation of the claimant. The provisions of Iowa Code section 96.5(3)"b" are controlling in the determination of suitability of work.

b. The employment offer shall not be considered suitable if the claimant had previously quit the former employer and the conditions which caused the claimant to quit are still in existence.

A two-step analysis is used to determine whether a claimant has refused a suitable offer of work. First, the offer must be for suitable work. If suitability is established, then, claimant must have a good cause reason for refusal. See Iowa Admin. Code r. 871—24.24(3).

To be considered suitable, an offer of work must meet minimum wage requirements set out above. Because the offer was made during claimant's first week of unemployment, the offer must meet or exceed 100% of claimant's average weekly wage to be considered suitable. Employer's offer met the standard of 100% of the average weekly wage. The offer meets or exceeds the minimum wage requirement and, therefore, is considered suitable.

Employer made a bonafide offer of employment to claimant on February 16, 2022, via text. The offer was to return to work in the same capacity, working the same hours and earning the same wages. Claimant declined the offer. Claimant has not provided a good cause reason for failure to accept the offer. Accordingly, benefits are denied.

**DECISION:**

The March 10, 2022, (reference 01) unemployment insurance decision is reversed. Employer extended an offer of suitable work to claimant during the benefit year; claimant failed to accept the offer without a good cause reason. Benefits are denied until such time as claimant works in and has been paid wages equal to ten times claimant's weekly benefit amount, provided claimant is otherwise eligible.



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Alexis D. Rowe  
Administrative Law Judge

April 26, 2022  
Decision Dated and Mailed

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