

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

WILFREDO ACEVEDO

Claimant

APPEAL 22A-UI-14569-DZ-T

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE
DECISION**

**IOWA WORKFORCE
DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT**

**OC: 01/19/20
Claimant: Appellant (1)**

Iowa Code § 96.6(2) – Timely Appeal
Iowa Code § 96.3(7) – Recovery of Benefit Overpayment

STATEMENT OF THE CASE:

Wilfredo Acevedo, the claimant/appellant, filed an appeal from the Iowa Workforce Development (IWD) March 25, 2022 (reference 06) unemployment insurance (UI) decision that concluded he was overpaid REGULAR (state) UI benefits in the gross amount of \$7,653.04 for 16 weeks between June 7, 2020 and September 26, 2020 because of a March 16, 2022 (reference 05) UI decision that disqualified him from UI benefits because of voluntary quit from PKG Contracting, Inc. The parties were properly notified about the hearing. A telephone hearing was held on August 9, 2022. Appeals 22A-UI-14566-DZ-T, 22A-UI-14567-DZ-T, 22A-UI-14568-DZ-T, 22A-UI-14569-DZ-T, 22A-UI-14570-DZ-T, 22A-UI-14572-DZ-T, and 22A-UI-14573-DZ-T were heard together and formed one hearing record. Mr. Acevedo participated personally through a CTS Language Link Spanish interpreter. The department did not participate in the hearing. Employer PKG Contracting, Inc. did not participate in the hearing. The administrative law judge took official notice of the administrative record.

ISSUES:

Is Mr. Acevedo's appeal filed on time?
Has Mr. Acevedo been overpaid REGULAR (state) UI benefits?

FINDINGS OF FACT:

Having reviewed the evidence in the record, the administrative law judge finds: IWD mailed the UI decision to Mr. Acevedo at the correct address on March 25, 2022. The UI decision states that it becomes final unless an appeal is postmarked or received by the IWD Appeals Section by April 4, 2022.

Mr. Acevedo had moved from New Jersey to Puerto Rico in June 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Mr. Acevedo did not update his address with the United States Postal Service.¹

¹ The United States Postal Service considers mail to and from Puerto Rico domestic mail. See "What US Possessions, US Territories, and Freely Associated States are Considered Domestic?" <https://faq.usps.com/s/article/What-US-Possessions-US-Territories-and-Freely-Associated-States-are-Considered-Domestic> (last accessed August 10, 2022)

Instead, Mr. Acevedo had someone check his mail in New Jersey and send the mail to his Puerto Rico address. Mr. Acevedo received the decision in the mail but does not recall when he received it.

On March 25, 2022, IWD mailed Mr. Acevedo the following three additional UI decisions:

- a reference 07 decision that concluded he was overpaid Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation (PEUC) benefits in the gross amount of \$6,253.00 for 13 weeks between September 27, 2020 and December 26, 2020,
- a reference 08 decision that concluded he was overpaid Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation (FPUC) benefits in the gross amount of \$4,200.00 for 7 weeks between June 7, 2020 and July 25, 2020, and
- a reference 09 decision that concluded he was overpaid Lost Wage Assistance Payments (LWAP) benefits in the gross amount of \$1,500.00 for 5 weeks between July 26, 2020 and August 29, 2020.

Mr. Acevedo received these three decisions in the mail but does not recall when he received them.

On April 15, 2022, IWD mailed Mr. Acevedo a statement showing he owed IWD an overpayment of \$20,687.04 (\$481.00 in REGULAR (state) UI benefits + \$600.00 in FPUC benefits + \$7,653.04 in REGULAR (state) UI benefits + \$6,253.00 in PEUC benefits + \$4,200.00 in FPUC benefits + \$1,500.00 in LWAP benefits). Mr. Acevedo received the statement in the mail in Puerto Rico on, or about, June 22, 2022. Mr. Acevedo called IWD about the statement and the representative told him that he could file an appeal. Mr. Acevedo filed an appeal via email on June 29, 2022. The appeal was received on June 29, 2022.

IWD had previously mailed Mr. Acevedo two UI decisions on March 7, 2022. The reference 03 decision concluded that Mr. Acevedo was overpaid REGULAR (state) UI benefits in the gross amount of \$481.00 for the week of May 17-23, 2020. The reference 04 decision concluded that Mr. Acevedo was overpaid FPUC benefits in the gross amount of \$600.00 for the week of May 17-23, 2020. On March 16, 2022, IWD mailed Mr. Acevedo another UI decision. That decision, a reference 05 decision, denied REGULAR (state) UI benefits because IWD records indicated Mr. Acevedo had voluntarily quit from employment with this employer on June 5, 2020. Based on Mr. Acevedo's appeal letter, appeals were set up for the reference 03, 04, 05, 06, 07, 08, and 09 UI decisions.

REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:

For the reasons that follow, the administrative law judge concludes Mr. Acevedo's appeal of the March 25, 2022 (reference 06) UI decision was not filed on time.

Iowa Code § 96.6(2) provides, in pertinent part: “[u]nless 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.”

Iowa Admin. Code r. 871-24.35(1) provides:

2. Except as otherwise provided by statute or by division rule, any payment, appeal, application, request, notice, objection, petition, report or other information or

document submitted to the division shall be considered received by and filed with the division:

(2) If transmitted via the United States Postal Service 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 is 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.

(b) If transmitted via the State Identification Data Exchange System (SIDES), maintained by the United States Department of Labor, on the date it was submitted to SIDES.

(c) If transmitted by any means other than [United States Postal Service or the State Identification Data Exchange System (SIDES)], on the date it is received by the division.

Iowa Admin. Code r. 871-24.35(2) provides:

2. The submission of any payment, appeal, application, request, notice, objection, petition, report or other information or document not within the specified statutory or regulatory period shall be considered timely if it is established to the satisfaction of the division that the delay in submission was due to division error or misinformation or to delay or other action of the United States postal service.

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).

Mr. Acevedo received the March 25, 2022 (reference 06) UI decision at his address of record by the April 4, 2022 deadline and, therefore, could have filed an appeal by the appeal deadline. The notice provision of the decision was valid. The delay Mr. Acevedo experienced in getting his mail was due to Mr. Acevedo choosing to have his mail continue to be sent to his New Jersey address and then having someone send the mail to him in Puerto Rico. Mr. Acevedo's delay in filing his appeal was not due to an error or misinformation from the Department or due to delay or other action of the United States Postal Service. No other good cause reason has been established for the delay in filing his appeal. Mr. Acevedo's appeal of the March 25, 2022 (reference 06) UI decision was not filed on time and the administrative law judge lacks jurisdiction (authority) to decide the other issue in this matter.

DECISION:

Mr. Acevedo's appeal of the March 25, 2022 (reference 06) UI decision was not filed on time. The March 25, 2022 (reference 06) UI decision is AFFIRMED.



Daniel Zeno
Administrative Law Judge

__September 27, 2022__
Decision Dated and Mailed

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NOTE TO MR. ACEVEDO:

- If you were unemployed for reasons related to COVID-19, you may qualify for Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) benefits. **You must apply for PUA benefits to determine your eligibility under the program.** To apply for PUA benefits,
 - First go to <https://www.iowaworkforcedevelopment.gov/unemployment-insurance-appeals>
 - Go to the "WHAT TO EXPECT FROM THE HEARING" section.
 - Go to the last two sentences in that section.
 - The PUA application link is at the end of the second-to-last sentence of the section.
 - The reference number/authorization number is the pin number you used for the appeal hearing: 114566.
- **If IWD finds you eligible for federal PUA benefits, you can use the PUA benefits to pay off the REGULAR (state) UI overpayment.**
- **If you do not apply for and are not approved for PUA, you may be required to repay the benefits you've received so far.**
- Iowa Governor Reynolds ended Iowa's participation in federal pandemic-related unemployment benefit programs, including the PUA program, effective June 12, 2021. **But you can still apply for PUA benefits at the link above if you were unemployed for reasons related to COVID-19 between February 2, 2020, and June 12, 2021.**

- To check on your PUA application contact IWD online, via email, or by phone.
 - Online: Go to www.iowaworkforce.gov, click on "Contact Us" then click on "Unemployment Help Request" and complete the form.
 - Email: uicclaimshelp@iwd.iowa.gov
 - Phone: 1-866-239-0843

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> or by contacting the District Court Clerk of Court <https://www.iowacourts.gov/iowa-courts/court-directory/>.

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 adquiera firmeza. Puede encontrar información adicional sobre cómo presentar una petición en el Código de Iowa §17A.19, que se encuentra en línea en <https://www.legis.iowa.gov/docs/code/17A.19.pdf> o comunicándose con el Tribunal de Distrito Secretario del tribunal <https://www.iowacourts.gov/iowa-courts/court-directory/>.

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.