

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS BUREAU**

CHELSEA JOHNSON ERICKSON
Claimant

APPEAL NO: 22R-UI-01589-SN-T

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE
DECISION**

**IOWA WORKFORCE
DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT**

OC: 03/15/20
Claimant: Appellant (1)

PL 116-136, Sec. 2104 – Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation

STATEMENT OF THE CASE:

The claimant filed an appeal from the July 12, 2021, (reference 06) unemployment insurance decision that concluded she was overpaid \$5400.00 in Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation benefits. A hearing was scheduled for September 7, 2021 at 3:05 p.m. The claimant did not participate in the hearing.

On August 17, 2021, the claimant sent an email to the Appeals Bureau stating the date and time did not work for her. She did not provide any additional information upon which the administrative law judge could discern whether a postponement could be granted under Iowa Admin. Code r. 871-26.8(3).¹ The administrative law judge's clerk attempted to get this information at 12:34 p.m. on September 7, 2021, but was unsuccessful. The administrative law judge issued a default decision, 21A-UI-15698-SN-T, reasoning he only has the authority to postpone with good cause and he had insufficient information to determine whether there was a good cause.

The claimant appealed the default decision to the Employment Appeal Board (EAB). The EAB remanded the hearing back to the administrative law judge reasoning that a request for postponement should have been granted, even without any information regarding a good cause reason.

After proper notice, a telephone hearing was scheduled for February 9, 2022 at 11:05 a.m. The hearing was held jointly with appeal 22R-UI-01588-SN-T. A review of the Appeals Bureau's conference call system indicates that the appellant failed to call the toll-free number listed on the hearing notice at the time of the hearing. No hearing was held.

ISSUE:

Whether the appeal should be dismissed based on the appellant's failure to appear and participate.

¹ This rule states postponements can only be made for "good cause" and generally describes good cause reasons as reasons beyond the party's control.

FINDINGS OF FACT:

The appellant was properly notified of the scheduled hearing for this appeal. The appellant failed to call the toll-free number listed on the hearing notice at the time of the hearing. The appellant did not participate or request a postponement of the hearing as required by the hearing notice. Official notice of the Clear2there hearing control screen is taken to establish that appellant did not call at the time of the hearing.

The hearing notice instruction specifically advises parties of the date and time of hearing. It also states:

IMPORTANT NOTICE!

YOU MUST CALL the toll-free number: **866-783-7021** at the time of the hearing. When instructed, enter the PIN Number . . . followed by the pound key [#] and wait for the administrative law judge to begin the hearing.

The administrative law judge **WILL NOT** call you for the hearing, you **MUST** call into the number provided above to participate. **Failure to participate in the hearing may result in the dismissal of your appeal.**

The back page of the hearing notice provides further hearing instructions stating, "You must call the toll-free number on the front of this notice at the time of the hearing to participate." This information also appears on the hearing notice in Spanish.

An insert was sent along with the hearing notice stating:

ATTENTION!

Instructions for participating in a hearing have changed.

Please review the enclosed hearing notice carefully and follow the instructions on how to join the call on the scheduled day and time of the hearing.

As a courtesy to the appellant the record was left open for a minimum of 15 minutes after the hearing start time to give the appellant a reasonable opportunity to participate. Holding the appellant in default for failure to appear and participate during a 15-minute window after the hearing start time is reasonable considering the time allocated for unemployment hearings.

The representative's decision concluded that the claimant had been overpaid \$5,400.00 in Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation (FPUC) benefits.

REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:

The Iowa Administrative Procedure Act at Iowa Code § 17A.12(3) provides that if a party fails to appear or participate in a hearing after proper service of notice, the judge may enter a default decision or proceed with the hearing and make a decision in the absence of the party.

Iowa Admin. Code r. 871-26.14(7) provides, in pertinent part:

(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

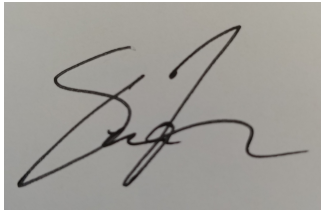
participating in the hearing by the scheduled starting time of the hearing or is not available at the telephone number provided, the presiding officer may proceed with the hearing. If the appealing party fails to provide a telephone number or is unavailable for the hearing, the presiding officer may decide the appealing party is in default and dismiss the appeal as provided in Iowa Code section 17A.12(3).

In this case, the appellant did not call the toll-free number listed on the hearing notice at the time of the hearing. The appellant is in default. The appeal should be dismissed.

If the appellant disagrees with this decision, the appellant may appeal the decision directly to the Employment Appeal Board, whose address is listed at the top right caption.

DECISION:

The July 12, 2021 (reference 06) unemployment insurance decision finding claimant was overpaid benefits remains in effect as the appellant is in default and the appeal is dismissed.



Sean M. Nelson
Administrative Law Judge
Unemployment Insurance Appeals Bureau
1000 East Grand Avenue
Des Moines, Iowa 50319-0209
Fax (515) 725-9067

February 28, 2022
Decision Dated and Mailed

smn/kmj