

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS BUREAU**

JASON P COFFIN
Claimant

HY-VEE INC
Employer

APPEAL 20A-UI-05621-S1-T

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE
DECISION**

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

Iowa Code § 96.4(3) – Ability to and Availability for Work
871 IAC 24.23(10) – Voluntary Leave of Absence
Iowa Code § 96.3-7 – Overpayment
PL 116-136 Section 2104 (B) – Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation

STATEMENT OF THE CASE:

Jason Coffin (claimant) appealed a representative's June 3, 2020, decision (reference 01) that denied benefits based on a leave of absence with the Hy-Vee (employer). After hearing notices were mailed to the parties' last-known addresses of record, a telephone hearing was held on June 30, 2020. The claimant was represented by Becky Coffin, the claimant's mother, and participated personally. Miles Coffin, the claimant's father, participated in the hearing. The employer was represented by Lisa Harroff, Hearings Representative, and participated by Julie Jones, Human Resources Manager. The claimant offered and Exhibit A was received into evidence. The administrative law judge took official notice of the administrative file.

ISSUES:

The issue is whether the claimant is available for work, whether the claimant was on an approved leave of absence, whether the claimant was overpaid benefits, and whether the claimant is eligible for Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation.

FINDINGS OF FACT:

The administrative law judge, having heard the testimony and considered all of the evidence in the record, finds that: The claimant was hired on October 10, 2018, as a part-time courtesy clerk. The claimant has a weakened immune system and a chronic kidney condition. Based on the pandemic and a recommendation of his doctor, the claimant took a leave of absence from work from March 14, 2020, through May 24, 2020. The claimant returned to work on May 25, 2020.

The claimant filed for unemployment insurance benefits with an effective date of April 5, 2020. His weekly benefit amount was determined to be \$111.00. The claimant received benefits of \$111.00 per week from April 5, 2020, to the week ending May 16, 2020. This is a total of \$666.00 in state unemployment insurance benefits. He also received \$3,600.00 in Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation.

REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:

In this case, the issue is whether the claimant is able to and available for work.

Iowa Admin. Code r. 871-24.23(10) provides:

Availability disqualifications. The following are reasons for a claimant being disqualified for being unavailable for work.

(10) The claimant requested and was granted a leave of absence, such period is deemed to be a period of voluntary unemployment and shall be considered ineligible for benefits for such period.

The employer had work available for claimant. However, the claimant informed the employer he was unable to work due to health concerns. The employer agreed to allow the claimant time off for that reason. During that time he was off, the claimant did not establish he was able to and available for work, even under the United States Department of Labor's guidance to flexibly interpret this requirement. See Unemployment Insurance Program Letter No. 10-20.

The claimant is considered to be on a leave of absence due to health issues and is not available for work. Therefore, the claimant is not eligible for regular, state-funded unemployment insurance benefits.

Even though the claimant is not eligible for regular unemployment insurance benefits under state law, he may be eligible for federally funded unemployment insurance benefits under the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act ("Cares Act"), Public Law 116-136. Section 2102 of the CARES Act creates a new temporary federal program called Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) that in general provides up to 39 weeks of unemployment benefits. An individual receiving PUA benefits may also receive the \$600 weekly benefit amount (WBA) under the Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation (FPUC) program if he or she is eligible for such compensation for the week claimed. The claimant must apply for PUA, as noted in the instructions provided in the "Note to Claimant" below.

The next issue is whether the claimant was overpaid unemployment insurance benefits.

Iowa Code section 96.3(7)a-b, as amended in 2008, provides:

7. Recovery of overpayment of benefits.

a. If an individual receives benefits for which the individual is subsequently determined to be ineligible, even though the individual acts in good faith and is not otherwise at fault, the benefits shall be recovered. The department in its discretion may recover the overpayment of benefits either by having a sum equal to the overpayment deducted from any future benefits payable to the individual or by having the individual pay to the department a sum equal to the overpayment.

The claimant received unemployment insurance benefits. This was during the period of time the claimant has been determined to be ineligible to receive benefits. This decision denies benefits. If this decision becomes final or if you are not eligible for PUA, you may have an overpayment of benefits.

The final issue is whether the claimant is eligible for or overpaid Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation. The administrative law judge finds that he is overpaid those benefits.

PL116-136, Sec. 2104 provides, in pertinent part:

(b) Provisions of Agreement

(1) Federal pandemic unemployment compensation.--Any agreement under this section shall provide that the State agency of the State will make payments of regular compensation to individuals in amounts and to the extent that they would be determined if the State law of the State were applied, with respect to any week for which the individual is (disregarding this section) otherwise entitled under the State law to receive regular compensation, as if such State law had been modified in a manner such that the amount of regular compensation (including dependents' allowances) payable for any week shall be equal to

(A) the amount determined under the State law (before the application of this paragraph), plus

(B) an additional amount of \$600 (in this section referred to as "Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation").

....

(f) Fraud and Overpayments

(2) Repayment.-- In the case of individuals who have received amounts of Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation to which they were not entitled, the State shall require such individuals to repay the amounts of such Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation to the State agency...

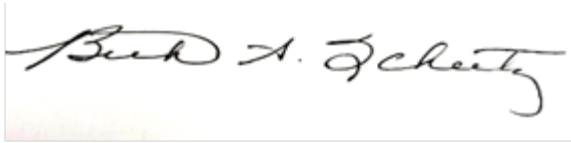
The claimant has been disqualified from receiving regular unemployment insurance benefits. The claimant has received Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation. If this decision becomes final or if you are not eligible for PUA, you may have an overpayment of benefits.

DECISION:

The June 3, 2020, (reference 01) unemployment insurance decision is affirmed. The claimant is not able to work and available for work effective April 5, 2020. Regular unemployment insurance benefits funded by the state of Iowa are denied until such time as the claimant is able to and available for work.

The claimant has received unemployment insurance benefits and Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation. This decision denies benefits. If this decision becomes final or if you are not eligible for PUA, you may have an overpayment of benefits.

Note to Claimant: This decision determines you are not eligible for regular unemployment insurance benefits. If you disagree with this decision you may file an appeal to the Employment Appeal Board by following the instructions on the first page of this decision. Individuals who do not qualify for regular unemployment insurance benefits, but who are currently unemployed for reasons related to COVID-19 may qualify for Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA). **You will need to apply for PUA to determine your eligibility under the program.** Additional information on how to apply for PUA can be found at <https://www.iowaworkforcedevelopment.gov/pua-information>.



Beth A. Scheetz
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July 9, 2020
Decision Dated and Mailed

bas/scn