

**IN THE IOWA ADMINISTRATIVE HEARINGS DIVISION  
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS BUREAU**

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**ROY E COBB**  
Claimant

**STAFF MANAGEMENT SOLUTIONS, LLC**  
Employer

**APPEAL 24A-UI-03337-DZ-T**

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE  
DECISION**

**OC: 03/03/24  
Claimant: Appellant (2)**

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Iowa Code § 96.4(3) – Able to and Available for Work

**STATEMENT OF THE CASE:**

Roy E. Cobb, the claimant/appellant,<sup>1</sup> appealed the Iowa Workforce Development (IWD) March 21, 2024 (reference 01) unemployment insurance (UI) decision. IWD denied Mr. Cobb REGULAR (state) UI benefits as of March 3, 2024 because IWD concluded he was still employed in his job in the same way he had been before he applied for UI benefits and he is not partially unemployed. On March 28, 2024, the Iowa Department of Inspections, Appeals, and Licensing (DIAL), UI Appeals Bureau mailed a notice of hearing to Mr. Cobb and the employer for a telephone hearing scheduled for April 18, 2024.

The administrative law judge held a telephone hearing on April 18, 2024. Mr. Cobb participated in the hearing personally. The employer participated in the hearing through Susan Murphy, senior account manager. The administrative law judge took official notice of the administrative record.

The administrative law judge concludes Mr. Cobb is partially unemployed as of March 3, 2023, so he is eligible for UI benefits as of this date.

**ISSUES:**

Is Mr. Cobb able to and available for work as of March 3, 2024?

Is Mr. Cobb partially or temporarily unemployed as of March 3, 2024?

**FINDINGS OF FACT:**

The decision in this case rests, at least in part, on the credibility of the witnesses. It is the duty of the administrative law judge as the trier of fact, to determine the credibility of witnesses, weigh the evidence and decide the facts in issue.<sup>2</sup> The administrative law judge may believe all, part or none of any witness's testimony.<sup>3</sup> In assessing the credibility of witnesses, the administrative law judge should consider the evidence using his or her own observations,

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<sup>1</sup> Claimant is the person who applied for UI benefits. Appellant is the person or employer who appealed.

<sup>2</sup> *Arndt v. City of LeClaire*, 728 N.W.2d 389, 394-395 (Iowa 2007).

<sup>3</sup> *State v. Holtz*, 548 N.W.2d 162, 163 (Iowa App. 1996).

common sense and experience.<sup>4</sup> In determining the facts, and deciding what testimony to believe, the administrative law judge may consider the following factors: whether the testimony is reasonable and consistent with other believable evidence; whether a witness has made inconsistent statements; the witness's conduct, age, intelligence, memory and knowledge of the facts; the witness's interest in the trial, and the witness's motive, candor, bias and prejudice.<sup>5</sup>

The following findings of fact show how the administrative law judge has resolved the disputed factual issues in this case. The administrative law judge assessed the credibility of the witnesses, considered the applicable factors listed above, and used his own common sense and experience.

Having reviewed the evidence in the record, the administrative law judge finds: Mr. Cobb began working for the employer, a base period employer, in February 2019. He works as a full-time factory worker assigned to work at Proctor and Gamble. The employer pays him \$15.50 per hour and this is his only job. At hire, the employer told Mr. Cobb that he would work Sunday through Thursday. Mr. Cobb generally worked full-time hours over the course of his employment.

The employer usually had less work available around the end of December and into January. Usually, the employer began offering Mr. Cobb his usual hours toward the end of January. In January 2024, the employer had less work available, so it offered Mr. Cobb less hours. In March 2024, the employer continued to have less work available, and it continued to offer Mr. Cobb less work than his usual 5 days a week. As of March 2024, Mr. Cobb was working 2-3 days per week.

The employer also reduced Mr. Cobb's hours because the employer had disciplined him for attendance issues. The employer's practice is to schedule an employee for less hours if the employer gave the employee a warning for attendance. In 2024, the employer gave Mr. Cobb a written warning for attendance on January 31, and again on March 21.

Mr. Cobb applied for UI benefits effective March 3, 2024 to be able to pay his bills. IWD set Mr. Cobbs weekly UI benefit amount at \$434.00.

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

For the reasons that follow, the administrative law judge concludes Mr. Cobb is partially unemployed as of March 3, 2023, so he is eligible for UI benefits.

Iowa Code § 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 37, paragraph "b", unnumbered paragraph (1), or temporarily unemployed as defined in section 96.1A, subsection 37, paragraph "c". The work search requirements of this subsection and the disqualification

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<sup>4</sup> *Id.*

<sup>5</sup> *Id.*

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 § 96.1A(37) provides:

"Total and partial unemployment".

a. An individual shall be deemed "totally unemployed" in any week with respect to which no wages are payable to the individual and during which the individual performs no services.

b. An individual shall be deemed partially unemployed in any week in which either of the following apply:

(1) While employed at the individual's then regular job, the individual works less than the regular full-time week and in which the individual earns less than the individual's weekly benefit amount plus fifteen dollars.

(2) The individual, having been separated from the individual's regular job, earns at odd jobs less than the individual's weekly benefit amount plus fifteen dollars.

c. An individual shall be deemed temporarily unemployed if for a period, verified by the department, not to exceed four consecutive weeks, the individual is unemployed due to a plant shutdown, vacation, inventory, lack of work or emergency from the individual's regular job or trade in which the individual worked full-time and will again work full-time, if the individual's employment, although temporarily suspended, has not been terminated.

Iowa Code section 96.7(2)a(2)(a) provides:

2. Contribution rates based on benefit experience.

a. (2) The amount of regular benefits plus fifty percent of the amount of extended benefits paid to an eligible individual shall be charged against the account of the employers in the base period in the inverse chronological order in which the employment of the individual occurred.

(a) However, if the individual to whom the benefits are paid is in the employ of a base period employer at the time the individual is receiving the benefits, and the individual is receiving the same employment from the employer that the individual received during the individual's base period, benefits paid to the individual shall not be charged against the account of the employer. This provision applies to both contributory and reimbursable employers, notwithstanding subparagraph (3) and section 96.8, subsection 5.

Iowa Admin. Code r. 871-24.23(26) provide:

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

(26) Where a claimant is still employed in a part-time job at the same hours and wages as contemplated in the original contract for hire and is not working on a reduced workweek basis different from the contract for hire, such claimant cannot be considered partially unemployed.

A person claiming benefits has the burden of proof that she is be able to work, available for work, and earnestly and actively seeking work.<sup>6</sup> To be able to work, "[a]n individual must be physically and mentally able to work in some gainful employment, not necessarily in the individual's customary occupation, but which is engaged in by others as a means of livelihood."<sup>7</sup> "An evaluation of an individual's ability to work for the purposes of determining that individual's eligibility for unemployment benefits must necessarily take into consideration the economic and legal forces at work in the general labor market in which the individual resides."<sup>8</sup>

In this case, Mr. Cobb worked full-time hours for several years. Due to lack of work and to further punish Mr. Cobb for attendance issues, the employer has offered him less hours in 2024. As of March 3, 2024, the effective date of his UI claim, Mr. Cobb has worked less than his regular full-time week and he has earned less than his weekly UI benefit amount. Mr. Cobb is partially unemployed as of March 3, 2024 so he is eligible for UI benefits as of this date.

**DECISION:**

The March 21, 2024 (reference 01) UI decision is REVERSED. Mr. Cobb Mr. Cobb is partially unemployed as of March 3, 2024. Mr. Cobb is eligible for UI benefits as of March 3, 2024.



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Daniel Zeno  
Administrative Law Judge

April 19, 2024  
Decision Dated and Mailed

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<sup>6</sup> Iowa Admin. Code r. 871-24.22.

<sup>7</sup> *Sierra v. Employment Appeal Board*, 508 N.W.2d 719, 721 (Iowa 1993); *Geiken v. Lutheran Home for the Aged*, 468 N.W.2d 223 (Iowa 1991); Iowa Admin. Code r. 871-24.22(1).

<sup>8</sup> *Sierra* at 723.

**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  
6200 Park Avenue Suite 100  
Des Moines, Iowa 50321  
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  
6200 Park Avenue Suite 100  
Des Moines, Iowa 50321  
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.