

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

AMANDA BURNS
Claimant

APPEAL 23A-UI-06269-AW-T

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE
DECISION**

**IOWA WORKFORCE
DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT**

OC: 04/19/20
Claimant: Appellant (2)

PL 116-136, Sec. 2104(f) – Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation Waiver

STATEMENT OF THE CASE:

Claimant filed an appeal from the June 8, 2023 decision that denied claimant's application to waive repayment of Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation (FPUC) and Lost Wage Assistance Program (LWAP) benefit overpayments. Claimant was properly notified of the hearing. A telephone hearing was held on July 24, 2023. Claimant participated. No exhibits were admitted. Official notice was taken of the administrative record.

ISSUES:

Whether repayment of claimant's FPUC overpayment should be waived.
Whether repayment of claimant's LWAP overpayment should be waived.

FINDINGS OF FACT:

Having reviewed all of the evidence in the record, the administrative law judge finds:

Claimant filed an original claim for regular unemployment insurance benefits effective April 19, 2020 and ongoing weekly claims between April 19, 2020 and September 26, 2020 and between November 29, 2020 and March 27, 2021.

On March 31, 2023, an administrative law judge issued a decision in appeal 23A-UI-01218-JT-T that found claimant was not eligible for benefits during the benefit weeks ending April 25, 2020, August 15, 2020 and September 26, 2020 because she was not available for work.

On April 10, 2023, Iowa Workforce Development (IWD) issued a decision (reference 04) finding claimant was overpaid unemployment insurance (UI) benefits for the three benefit weeks outlined above. The decision also found that claimant was overpaid FPUC of \$600.00 for the benefit week ending April 25, 2020 and LWAP of \$300.00 for the week ending August 15, 2020. The overpayment decision was affirmed on appeal. (See appeal number 23A-UI-04300-SN-T). Claimant applied for a waiver of the overpayment of FPUC and LWAP benefits. IWD denied claimant's application.

Claimant received benefits because IWD chose to release benefits to claimants before making initial determinations regarding eligibility. Claimant provided all information she believed IWD

needed to make its decision. Claimant was honest in her application for benefits and had no reason to believe that she was not entitled to them. Claimant applied for benefits in good faith and continued filing weekly claims upon the advice and at the direction of IWD.

Claimant used the benefits that she received to pay for necessary living expenses for herself and her two children. Claimant just started a new job and does not know how much she will earn each month; historically, claimant's monthly bills have exceeded her monthly income. Claimant has no money in savings with which to repay the overpayment. Repayment would cause claimant a financial hardship.

REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:

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

PL 116-136 Section 2104 of the CARES Act created a program in which an additional \$600.00 per week was payable to claimants who were eligible for at least \$1.00 per week in benefits stemming from other programs including regular unemployment insurance funded by the State of Iowa, Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation, Pandemic Unemployment Assistance, Iowa Extended benefits, and Trade Act benefits. This initial program ran from March 29, 2020 through July 25, 2020. Claimants were only eligible to receive FPUC payments if they were entitled to receive benefits from another applicable program. The payments of FPUC benefits were automatic so long as a claimant was determined to be eligible under one of the other applicable programs.

The CARES Act provides that a State agency may waive repayment of an overpayment in certain circumstances.

PL 116-136, Sec. 2104(f)2 provides:

EMERGENCY INCREASE IN UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION BENEFITS.

(f) Fraud and Overpayments. –

- (1) In general. – If an individual knowingly has made, or caused to be made by another, a false statement or representation of a material fact, or knowingly has failed, or caused another to fail, to disclose a material fact, and as a result of such false statement or representation or of such nondisclosure such individual has received an amount of Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation to which such individual was not entitled, such individual –
 - (A) Shall be ineligible for further Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation in accordance with the provisions of the applicable State unemployment compensation law relating to fraud in connection with a claim for unemployment compensation; and
 - (B) Shall be subject to prosecution under section 1001 of title 18, United States Code.
- (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 amount of such Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation to the State agency, except that the State agency may waive such repayment if it determines that –

- (A) the payment of such Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation was without fault on the part of any such individual and;
- (B) such repayment would be contrary to equity and good conscience.

On August 8, 2020, President Trump issued a memorandum to provide additional financial assistance to those individuals receiving unemployment benefits that met the eligibility requirements of the program through a grant from FEMA. The Lost Wages Assistance Program (LWAP) required claimants to be eligible for a weekly benefit amount of at least \$100.00 stemming from either State of Iowa funded unemployment insurance benefits, Federal Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation (PEUC) benefits program, Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) program, Extended Benefits program, Voluntary Shared Work program, Short Term Compensation program, or Trade Act benefits program. The weekly benefit amount of the LWAP program was \$300.00 and the program ran from July 26, 2020 through September 5, 2020.

The Continued Assistance For Unemployed Workers Act of 2020 provides in pertinent part:

Section 262. Lost Wages Assistance Recoupment Fairness.

(a) Definitions. – In this section –

- (1) the term “covered assistance” means assistance provided for supplemental lost wages payments under subsections (e)(2) and (f) of section 408 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5174), as authorized under the emergency declaration issued by the President on March 13, 2020, pursuant to section (501)b of such Act (42 U.S.C. 5191(b)) and under any subsequent major disaster declaration under section 401 of such Act (42 U.S.C. 5170) that supersedes such emergency declaration; and
- (2) the term “State” has the meaning given the term in section 102 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5122).

(b) Waiver Authority For State Liability. – In the case of any individual who has received amounts of covered assistance to which the individual is not entitled, the State shall require the individual to repay the amounts of such assistance to the State agency, except that the State agency may waive such repayment if the State agency determines that –

- (1) the payment of such covered assistance was without fault on the part of the individual; and
- (2) such repayment would be contrary to equity and good conscience.

In determining whether the payment of benefits was without fault on the part of the claimant, several factors must be considered. Those factors include whether a material statement or representation was made by the claimant in connection with the application for benefits and whether the claimant knew or should have known that the statement was inaccurate; whether the claimant failed or caused another to fail to disclose a material fact in connection with the application for benefits that resulted in the overpayment and whether the claimant knew or should have known that the fact was material; whether the claimant knew or could have been expected to know that they were not entitled to the compensation payment; and whether the overpayment resulted directly or indirectly, and partially or totally, from any act or omission of

the claimant or of which the claimant had knowledge and which was erroneous or inaccurate or otherwise wrong. Cf. Iowa Admin. Code r. 871-24.50(7)(factors for waiver of temporary extended unemployment compensation).

In deciding whether repayment would be contrary to equity and good conscience, several factors must be considered. Those factors include whether repayment would cause financial hardship to the claimant; or, that the claimant (regardless of financial circumstances) can establish that they have relinquished a valuable right or changed positions for the worse; or, recovery would be unconscionable under the circumstances. See UIPL No. 20-21(4)d. Other factors include whether the overpayment was the result of a decision on appeal; whether the state agency had given notice to the claimant that they may be required to repay the overpayment in the event of a reversal of the eligibility determination on appeal; and whether recovery of the overpayment will cause financial hardship to the claimant. Cf. Iowa Admin. Code r. 871-24.50(7)(factors for waiver of temporary extended unemployment compensation).

Claimant was paid FPUC and LWAP benefits before IWD determined claimant was ineligible for those benefits. Claimant made no material misstatements or misrepresentations when filing for benefits. Claimant did not know or should not have known that they would be denied unemployment insurance benefits at a later date. The overpayment was not a direct result of any knowing actions or omissions of the claimant. As such, the payment of FPUC and LWAP benefits was without fault on the part of the claimant.

Further, based upon the claimant's financial circumstances, recovery of the overpayment would cause a financial hardship to the claimant. The household income is used nearly entirely to cover necessary living expenses, and other overpayments have been imposed, some of which were not eligible for waiver. Accordingly, recovery of an overpayment for which claimant was not a fault would be contrary to equity and good conscience.

Accordingly, claimant's repayment of the FPUC overpayment of \$600.00 and LWAP overpayment of \$300.00 shall be waived; claimant has no obligation to repay those FPUC and LWAP benefits received.

DECISION:

The June 8, 2023 decision is REVERSED. Claimant's FPUC overpayment in of \$600.00 is waived. Claimant's LWAP overpayment of \$300.00 is waived. The claimant is not obligated to pay back the FPUC and LWAP benefits.



Adrienne C. Williamson
Administrative Law Judge

July 26, 2023
Decision Dated and Mailed

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.