

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS BUREAU**

AMY E WOLFE
Claimant

MAINSTREAM LIVING INC
Employer

APPEAL 21A-UI-21989-AD-T
ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE
DECISION

OC: 03/22/20
Claimant: Appellant (5)

Iowa Code § 96.6(2) – Filing – Timely Appeal
Iowa Code § 96.4(3) – Able to and Available for Work

STATEMENT OF THE CASE:

On October 6, 2021, Amy Wolfe (claimant/appellant) filed an appeal from the decision dated November 20, 2020 (reference 01) that denied unemployment insurance benefits as of March 22, 2020 based on a finding that claimant was still employed for the same hours and wages.

A telephone hearing was held on November 30, 2021. The parties were properly notified of the hearing. Claimant participated personally. Mainstream Living Inc (employer/respondent) participated by HR Director Marcanne Lynch. HR Manager Abby Day participated as a witness for employer. Official notice was taken of the administrative record.

ISSUE(S):

- I. Is the appeal timely?
- II. Is the claimant able to and available for work?

FINDINGS OF FACT:

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

Claimant filed claims for benefits in the weeks ending March 28, April 4, and April 11, 2020. She again filed claims from the benefit week ending September 5, 2020 through the benefit week ending December 26, 2020. Claimant was unable to work in those weeks due to illness and other health issues.

Claimant does not recall receiving the decision denying benefits. Claimant was unaware there was an issue with her receipt of benefits until she received overpayment decisions nearly a year later.

The administrative law judge notes claimant was allowed federal Pandemic Unemployment Assistance effective August 30, 2020.

REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:

For the reasons that follow, the administrative law judge concludes the claimant's appeal was timely. The decision dated November 20, 2020 (reference 01) that denied unemployment insurance benefits as of March 22, 2020 based on a finding that claimant was still employed for the same hours and wages is MODIFIED with no change in effect.

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)(a) provides:

1. 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:
 - (a) 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 on 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)
 - (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.

There is a mandatory duty to file appeals from representatives' decisions within the time allotted by statute, and the Administrative Law Judge has no authority to change the decision of representative if a timely appeal is not filed. *Franklin v. Iowa Dept. Job Service*, 277 N.W.2d 877, 881 (Iowa 1979). The ten-day period for appealing an initial determination concerning a claim for benefits has been described as jurisdictional. *Messina v. Iowa Dept. of Job Service*, 341 N.W.2d 52, 55 (Iowa 1983); *Beardslee v. Iowa Dept. Job Service*, 276 N.W.2d 373 (Iowa 1979). The only basis for changing the ten-day period would be where notice to the appealing party was constitutionally invalid. *E.g. Beardslee v. Iowa Dept. Job Service*, 276 N.W.2d 373, 377 (Iowa 1979). The question in such cases becomes whether the appellant was deprived of a reasonable opportunity to assert an appeal in a timely fashion. *Hendren v. Iowa Employment Sec. Commission*, 217 N.W.2d 255 (Iowa 1974); *Smith v. Iowa Employment Sec. Commission*, 212 N.W.2d 471 (Iowa 1973). The question of whether the Claimant has been denied a reasonable opportunity to assert an appeal is also informed by rule 871-24.35(2) which states that "the submission of any ...appeal...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."

Claimant does not recall receiving the decision denying benefits. Claimant was unaware there was an issue with her receipt of benefits until she received overpayment decisions nearly a year later. The administrative law judge finds there is good cause for delay and the appeal is timely. Because the appeal is timely, the administrative law judge has jurisdiction to address the underlying issues.

Iowa Code section 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 96.19, subsection 38, paragraph "b", unnumbered paragraph (1), or temporarily unemployed as defined in section 96.19, subsection 38, paragraph "c". The work search requirements of this subsection and the disqualification 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 Admin. Code r. 871-24.22(1)a provides:

Benefits eligibility conditions. For an individual to be eligible to receive benefits the department must find that the individual is able to work, available for work, and earnestly and actively seeking work. The individual bears the burden of establishing that the individual is able to work, available for work, and earnestly and actively seeking work.

(1) Able to work. An 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.

a. Illness, injury or pregnancy. Each case is decided upon an individual basis, recognizing that various work opportunities present different physical requirements. A statement from a medical practitioner is considered prima facie evidence of the physical ability of the individual to perform the work required. A pregnant individual must meet the same criteria for determining ableness as do all other individuals.

Iowa Admin. Code r. 871-24.23 provides in relevant part:

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

(1) An individual who is ill and presently not able to perform work due to illness.

(35) Where the claimant is not able to work and is under the care of a medical practitioner and has not been released as being able to work.

Claimant filed claims for benefits in the weeks ending March 28, April 4, and April 11, 2020. She again filed claims from the benefit week ending September 5, 2020 through the benefit week ending December 26, 2020. Claimant was unable to work in those weeks due to illness and other health issues. Claimant is therefore ineligible for benefits in those weeks. The decision is modified solely to reflect that claimant was ineligible for benefits due to being unable to work.

The administrative law judge notes claimant was allowed federal Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) effective August 30, 2020. This decision does not impact claimant's eligibility for PUA. There is no charge to employer for PUA.

DECISION:

The administrative law judge concludes the claimant's appeal was timely. The decision dated November 20, 2020 (reference 01) that denied unemployment insurance benefits as of March 22, 2020 based on a finding that claimant was still employed for the same hours and wages is MODIFIED with no change in effect. Claimant is ineligible for unemployment insurance benefits in the weeks filed.



Andrew B. Duffelmeyer
Administrative Law Judge
Unemployment Insurance Appeals Bureau
1000 East Grand Avenue
Des Moines, Iowa 50319-0209
Fax (515) 478-3528

December 8, 2021
Decision Dated and Mailed

abd/abd

Note to Claimant:

If you disagree with this decision, you may file an appeal with the Employment Appeal Board by following the instructions on the first page of this decision. If this decision denies benefits, you may be responsible for paying back benefits already received.

Individuals who are disqualified from or are otherwise ineligible for **regular** unemployment insurance benefits but who are 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.** Additional information on how to apply for PUA can be found at <https://www.iowaworkforcedevelopment.gov/pua-information>.