

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT  
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS**

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**AARON ROBERTSON**  
Claimant

**APPEAL NO: 21A-UI-09538-JTT**

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE  
DECISION**

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT  
INVESTIGATION & RECOVERY**

**OC: 01/05/20**  
**Claimant: Appellant (6)**

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Public Law 116-136, Section 2102 – Pandemic Unemployment Assistance  
Iowa Code § 17A.12(3) – Default Decision  
Iowa Admin. Code r. 871-26.14(7) – Dismissal of Appeal on Default

**STATEMENT OF THE CASE:**

The claimant filed a timely appeal from the March 25, 2021, reference 12, decision that held the claimant was overpaid \$1,276.00 in Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) for four-week period ending January 1, 2021, due to an erroneous Agency approval of PUA benefits despite lack of evidence the claimant had a dependent child in his custody for whom he provided full-time supervision. A notice of hearing was mailed to the claimant's last-known address of record for a telephone hearing to be held at 10:20 a.m. on June 18, 2021. There were five appeal numbers set for a consolidated hearing: 21A-UI-09516-JTT, 21A-UI-09532-JTT, 21A-UI-09533-JTT, 21A-UI-09536-JTT, and 21A-UI-095398-JTT. A review of the Appeals Bureau's conference call system indicates that the claimant/appellant failed to respond to the hearing notice instructions to register a telephone number at which the claimant could be reached for the hearing. Based upon the claimant/appellant's failure to participate in the hearing and the law, the administrative law judge enters the following findings of fact, reasoning and conclusions of law and decision.

**ISSUE:**

Should the appeal be dismissed based upon the claimant/appellant not participating in the hearing?

**FINDINGS OF FACT:**

The claimant is the appellant in this matter and in four companion overpayment appeal numbers. The claimant was properly notified of the appeal hearing set for 10:20 a.m. on June 18, 2021 through the hearing notice that was mailed to the claimant's last-known address of record on May 20, 2021. Because there were five appeal numbers set for a consolidated hearing, the Appeals Bureau mailed five hearing notices to the claimant regarding the same consolidated appeal hearing. The claimant did not participate in the hearing or request a postponement of the hearing as required by the hearing notice. The claimant did not comply with the hearing notice instructions to register a telephone number at which the claimant could be reached for the hearing. The claimant did not provide a telephone number in the claimant's

appeal. The claimant has not otherwise provided the Appeals Bureau with a telephone number since filing the appeal.

The March 25, 2021, reference 12, decision held the claimant was overpaid \$1,276.00 in Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) for the four weeks ending January 2, 2021, due to an erroneous Agency approval of PUA benefits despite lack of evidence the claimant had a dependent child in his custody for whom he provided full-time supervision. The investigator's notes reflect that the four weeks in question relevant to this decision were actually the four weeks between February 21, 2021 and March 20, 2021.

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

The Iowa Administrative Procedures Act at Iowa Code § 17A.12(3) provides in pertinent part:

If a party fails to appear or participate in a contested case proceeding after proper service of notice, the presiding officer may, if no adjournment is granted, enter a default decision or proceed with the hearing and make a decision in the absence of the party. ... If a decision is rendered against a party who failed to appear for the hearing and the presiding officer is timely requested by that party to vacate the decision for good cause, the time for initiating a further appeal is stayed pending a determination by the presiding officer to grant or deny the request. If adequate reasons are provided showing good cause for the party's failure to appear, the presiding officer shall vacate the decision and, after proper service of notice, conduct another evidentiary hearing. If adequate reasons are not provided showing good cause for the party's failure to appear, the presiding officer shall deny the motion to vacate.

Iowa Administrative Code rule 871-26.14(7) provides:

(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 provide in Iowa Code section 17A.12(3). The record may be reopened if the absent party makes a request to reopen the hearing in writing under subrule 26.8(3) and shows good cause for reopening the hearing.

a. If an absent party responds to the hearing notice while the hearing is in progress, the presiding officer shall pause to admit the party, summarize the hearing to that point, administer the oath, and resume the hearing.

b. If a party responds to the notice of hearing after the record has been closed and any party which has participated is no longer on the telephone line, the presiding officer shall not take the evidence of the late party.

c. Failure to read or follow the instructions on the notice of hearing shall not constitute good cause for reopening the record.

The claimant/appellant appealed the representative's decision but failed to participate in the hearing. The claimant/appellant has therefore defaulted on the appeal pursuant to Iowa

Code §17A.12(3) and Iowa Admin. Code r. 871-24.14(7), and the representative's decision remains in force and effect.

**DECISION:**

The claimant defaulted on the appeal. The appeal is dismissed. The March 25, 2021, reference 12, decision that held the claimant was overpaid \$1,276.00 in Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) for four weeks, remains in effect.

The clerical error regarding the four weeks is question relevant to the reference 12 decision is hereby corrected to reflect the weeks were between February 21, 2021 and March 20, 2021.



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James E. Timberland  
Administrative Law Judge  
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June 30, 2021  
Decision Dated and Mailed

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