

**IOWA DEPARTMENT OF INSPECTIONS AND APPEALS
ADMINISTRATIVE HEARINGS DIVISION, UI APPEALS BUREAU**

TRICIA R PENALUNA
Claimant

APPEAL 23A-UI-01019-PT-T

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE
DECISION**

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
DEPARTMENT**

**OC: 01/01/23
Claimant: Appellant (1)**

Iowa Code § 96.4(3) – Able and Available for Work
Iowa Admin. Code r. 871-24.22 – Able & Available – Benefits Eligibility Conditions

STATEMENT OF THE CASE:

Claimant filed an appeal from a decision of a representative dated January 26, 2023, (reference 02) that denied regular state unemployment insurance benefits for the week ending January 7, 2023, because Iowa Workforce Development (IWD) records indicated claimant was unable to work the major portion of the work week because of personal reasons and obligations. After due notice, a hearing was scheduled for and held on February 16, 2023. Claimant participated personally. The department did not participate in the hearing. The administrative law judge took official notice of the administrative record.

ISSUE:

Was the claimant able to work and available for work during the week ending January 7, 2023?

FINDINGS OF FACT:

Having reviewed all of the evidence in the record, the administrative law judge finds: Claimant established an original claim for benefits that was effective January 1, 2023. Claimant made weekly claims that included a weekly claim for the week ending January 7, 2023.

Prior to filing her initial claim for unemployment insurance benefits, claimant worked full-time as her son's nurse care giver. On December 28, 2022, claimant's son passed away. Claimant spent most of the week ending January 7, 2023, organizing her son's funeral, which was held on January 5, 2023. Claimant did not apply for any jobs during the week ending January 7, 2023.

In an attachment to her appeal letter, claimant wrote, "I was unable to work or look for work this week because my son...passed away unexpectedly on Dec. 28, 2022, and I was arranging his funeral services." On January 26, 2023, IWD issued the reference 02 decision that denied claimant benefits from January 1, 2023, through January 7, 2023, finding claimant was unable to work the major portion of the work week because of personal reasons and obligations.

REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:

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

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 96.1A, subsection 37, paragraph "b", subparagraph (1), or temporarily unemployed as defined in section 96.1A, subsection 37, 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) and (2) provide:

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.

(2) Available for work. The availability requirement is satisfied when an individual is willing, able, and ready to accept suitable work which the individual does not have good cause to refuse, that is, the individual is genuinely attached to the labor market. Since, under unemployment insurance laws, it is the availability of an individual that is required to be tested, the labor market must be described in terms of the individual. A labor market for an individual means a market for the type of service which the individual offers in the geographical area in which the individual offers the service. Market in that sense does not mean that job vacancies must exist; the purpose of unemployment insurance is to compensate for lack of job vacancies. It means only that the type of services which an individual is offering is generally performed in the geographical area in which the individual is offering the services.

Iowa Admin. Code r. 871-24.23(25) and (27) provide:

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

(25) If the claimant is out of town for personal reasons for the major portion of the workweek and is not in the labor market.

(27) Failure to report on a claim that a claimant made any effort to find employment will make a claimant ineligible for benefits during the period. Mere registration at the workforce development center does not establish that a claimant is able and available for suitable work. It is essential that such claimant must actively and earnestly seek work.

While claimant remained in town during the week ending January 7, 2023, the record shows that claimant spent most of the week arranging the funeral of her son, who had tragically passed away the previous week. Understandably, claimant did not apply for any jobs or make any effort to find employment during the week ending January 7, 2023. While the undersigned is sympathetic to the claimant's position, the record supports the conclusion that claimant was not available for work for most of the week ending January 7, 2023. As such, benefits are denied from January 1, 2023, through January 7, 2023.

DECISION:

The January 26, 2023, (reference 02) unemployment insurance decision is affirmed. Claimant is not eligible for benefits from January 1, 2023, through January 7, 2023, because she was not available for work. Benefits are denied from January 1, 2023, through January 7, 2023.



Patrick B. Thomas
Administrative Law Judge

February 23, 2023
Decision Dated and Mailed

pbt/mh

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 adquiriera 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.