

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS BUREAU**

MINDY M STEWART
Claimant

PARTY CITY CORPORATION
Employer

APPEAL 21A-UI-22111-LJ-T

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE
DECISION**

OC: 03/15/20
Claimant: Appellant (1)

Iowa Code § 96.4(3) – Ability to and Availability for Work
Iowa Code § 96.6(2) – Timeliness of Appeal

STATEMENT OF THE CASE:

On October 1, 2021, claimant Mindy M. Stewart filed an appeal from the March 3, 2021 (reference 04) unemployment insurance decision that denied benefits. The parties were properly notified of the hearing. A telephonic hearing was held at 3:00 p.m. on Monday, December 20, 2021. Appeal numbers 21A-UI-22108-LJ-T, 21A-UI-22109-LJ-T, 21A-UI-22110-LJ-T, 21A-UI-22111-LJ-T, 21A-UI-22112-LJ-T, 21A-UI-22113-LJ-T, 21A-UI-22114-LJ-T, 21A-UI-22115-LJ-T, and 21A-UI-22116-LJ-T were heard together and created one record. The claimant, Mindy M. Stewart, participated. The employer, Party City Corporation, did not appear for the hearing and did not participate. The administrative law judge took official notice of the administrative record, including all of the unemployment insurance decisions that were sent to the claimant's address of record.

ISSUE:

Did the claimant file a timely appeal?

FINDINGS OF FACT:

Having reviewed all of the evidence in the record, the administrative law judge finds: A decision finding claimant ineligible for benefits effective November 15, 2020, based on a finding that she was unable to work due to illness was mailed to her last known address of record on March 3, 2021. She did receive the decision in March 2021, shortly after it was mailed to her. The first sentence of the decision states, "If this decision denies benefits and is not reversed on appeal, it may result in an overpayment which you will be required to repay." The decision contained a warning that an appeal must be postmarked or received by the Appeals Bureau by November 22, 2020. The appeal was not filed until October 1, 2021, which is after the date noticed on the disqualification decision. Claimant explained that she "kind of read" the decision but was confused. Claimant placed one call to the agency but did not get through. She never called back. Claimant did not take any steps to appeal until she received the overpayment decisions in late September 2021.

REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:

For the reasons that follow, the administrative law judge concludes claimant failed to file a timely appeal.

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) 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 of 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) If transmitted via the State Identification Data Exchange System (SIDES), maintained by the United States Department of Labor, on the date it was submitted to SIDES.

(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.

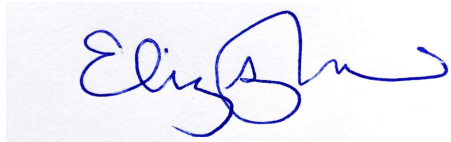
The Iowa Supreme Court has declared that there is a mandatory duty to file appeals from representatives' decisions within the time allotted by statute, and that the administrative law judge has no authority to change the decision of a representative if a timely appeal is not filed. *Franklin v. IDJS*, 277 N.W.2d 877, 881 (Iowa 1979). Compliance with appeal notice provisions is jurisdictional unless the facts of a case show that the notice was invalid. *Beardslee v. IDJS*, 276 N.W.2d 373, 377 (Iowa 1979); see also *In re Appeal of Elliott* 319 N.W.2d 244, 247 (Iowa 1982).

Here, the claimant received the decision in the mail and, therefore, had an opportunity to file an appeal prior to the appeal deadline. Claimant's delay was not due to an error or misinformation from the Department or due to delay or other action of the United States Postal Service. No

other good cause reason has been established for the delay. While the administrative law judge understands that claimant may have been confused about the decision she received, she did not take steps to alleviate her confusion by either calling Iowa Workforce Development and asking questions or by filing an appeal and trying to gain a better understanding that way. Claimant's appeal was not filed on time and the administrative law judge lacks jurisdiction (authority) to decide the other issue in this matter.

DECISION:

The November 12, 2020 (reference 04) unemployment insurance decision is affirmed. Claimant failed to file a timely appeal. The decision of the representative remains in effect.



Elizabeth A. Johnson
Administrative Law Judge
Unemployment Insurance Appeals Bureau

December 28, 2021
Decision Dated and Mailed

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