

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS BUREAU**

AMAJA RUCKER
Claimant

APPEAL 21A-DUA-00297-S1-T

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE
DECISION**

**IOWA WORKFORCE
DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT**

OC: 05/17/20
Claimant: Appellant (1)

Iowa Code § 96.6(2) - Timeliness of Appeal
PL 116-136 Section 2102 – Pandemic Unemployment Assistance
20 CFR 625 – Disaster Unemployment Assistance

STATEMENT OF THE CASE:

Amaja Rucker (claimant/appellant) filed an appeal from the Iowa Workforce Development decision dated December 10, 2020, reference 04, that determined claimant was not eligible for federal Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) as of December 10, 2020. After a hearing notice was mailed to the claimant's last-known address of record, a telephone hearing was held on February 26, 2021. The claimant participated personally.

Department's Exhibit D-1 was admitted to the record. The administrative law judge took official notice of the administrative file. 20A-UI-01858.S1, 20A-DUA-00297.S1, and 20A-DUA-00298.S1 were heard at the same time.

ISSUE:

The issue is whether the appeal was filed in a timely manner and, if so, whether the claimant is eligible Pandemic Unemployment Assistance.

FINDINGS OF FACT:

The administrative law judge, having heard the testimony and considered all of the evidence in the record, finds that: The claimant worked for Wells Fargo Bank from August 1, 2019, through March 10, 2020. She quit to work for Robert Half International because it had better hours.

The claimant worked for Robert Half International from March 13, 2020, through May 15, 2020. The daycare had to be closed from May 18, 2020, to June 1, 2020, due to a Covid-19 outbreak. The claimant was in quarantine with her three children. Robert Half International had no work for her after June 1, 2020. The claimant filed her claim for state unemployment insurance benefits with an effective date of May 17, 2020, and started receiving her weekly benefit amount of \$464.00 each week

The claimant worked for Walmart also from March 13, 2020, through May 15, 2020. She reported she was in quarantine and asked for a leave of absence. Walmart said it did not receive her communication and ended her employment.

For the week ending August 22, 2020, the claimant started receiving Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation. The claimant started working for Discovery Trail Healthcare as a certified nursing assistant on September 20, 2020.

The claimant is not eligible for regular compensation or extended benefits under state or federal law or Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation (PEUC). She exhausted all state unemployment insurance benefits on August 15, 2020, and Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation on November 21, 2020.

The claimant filed the application for PUA and provided self-certification that she was otherwise able to work and available for work but was unemployed, partially unemployed, or unable or unavailable to work because "A child or other person in my household for whom I am the primary care giver is unable to attend school or another facility that is closed as a direct result of the COVID-19 public health emergency and such school or facility care is required for me to work".

The claimant went on to explain, "I was working for Robert half and my kids daycare closed by job at the time never brought me back after the 2 week daycare closure I have been actively looking for employment and was hired at Rehab center of Des Moines by shortly after MULTIPLE CASES OF COVID were in my job due to my sons asthma COVID is something I can not allow my son to be exposed to. I will also provide documentation from my sons doctor with his diagnose of asthma (sic)". Telework was not available.

A disqualification decision was mailed to claimant's last known address of record on December 10, 2020. She did not receive the decision. The decision contained a warning that an appeal must be postmarked or received by the Appeals Section by December 21, 2020. The appeal was not filed until December 29, 2020. On December 23, 2020, a worker told the claimant about the decision but did not give her instructions about how to appeal.

REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:

Iowa Code section 96.6(2) provides:

2. Initial determination. A representative designated by the director shall promptly notify all interested parties to the claim of its filing, and the parties have ten days from the date of mailing the notice of the filing of the claim by ordinary mail to the last known address to protest payment of benefits to the claimant. The representative shall promptly examine the claim and any protest, take the initiative to ascertain relevant information concerning the claim, and, on the basis of the facts found by the representative, shall determine whether or not the claim is valid, the week with respect to which benefits shall commence, the weekly benefit amount payable and its maximum duration, and whether any disqualification shall be imposed. The claimant has the burden of proving that the claimant meets the basic eligibility conditions of section 96.4. The employer has the burden of proving that the claimant is disqualified for benefits pursuant to section 96.5, except as provided by this subsection. The claimant has the initial burden to produce evidence showing that the claimant is not disqualified for benefits in cases involving section 96.5, subsections 10 and 11, and has the burden of proving that a voluntary quit pursuant to section 96.5, subsection 1, was for good cause attributable to the employer and that the claimant is not disqualified for benefits in cases involving section 96.5, subsection 1, paragraphs "a" through "h". Unless 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. If an administrative law judge affirms a decision of the representative, or the appeal board affirms a decision of the administrative law judge allowing benefits, the benefits shall be paid regardless of any appeal which is thereafter taken, but if the decision is finally reversed, no employer's account shall be charged with benefits so paid and this relief from charges shall apply to both contributory and reimbursable employers, notwithstanding section 96.8, subsection 5.

The claimant did not have an opportunity to appeal the fact-finder's decision because the decision was not received. Without notice of a disqualification, no meaningful opportunity for appeal exists. See *Smith v. Iowa Employment Security Commission*, 212 N.W.2d 471, 472 (Iowa 1973). The claimant appealed the decision as soon as she could. Therefore, the appeal shall be accepted as timely.

For the reasons set forth below, the claimant is not eligible for federal Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) as of December 10, 2020.

The CARES Act was established to provide PUA benefits to qualified individuals who were not eligible for regular compensation or extended benefits under State or Federal law or pandemic emergency unemployment compensation. PL 116-136 Section 2102(a), (b), (c), (d), and (h) provide as follows:

SEC. 2102. PANDEMIC UNEMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE.

(a) DEFINITIONS. — In this section:

(3) COVERED INDIVIDUAL. — The term “covered individual”—

(A) means an individual who—

(i) is not eligible for regular compensation or extended benefits under State or Federal law or pandemic emergency unemployment compensation under section 2107, including an individual who has exhausted all rights to regular unemployment or extended benefits under State or Federal law or pandemic emergency unemployment compensation under section 2107; and

(ii) provides self-certification that the individual— (I) is otherwise able to work and available for work within the meaning of applicable State law, except the individual is unemployed, partially unemployed, or unable or unavailable to work because—

(aa) the individual has been diagnosed with COVID–19 or is experiencing symptoms of COVID–19 and seeking a medical diagnosis;

(bb) a member of the individual's household has been diagnosed with COVID–19;

(cc) the individual is providing care for a family member or a member of the individual's household who has been diagnosed with COVID–19;

(dd) a child or other person in the household for which the individual has primary caregiving responsibility is unable to attend school or another facility that is closed as a direct result of the COVID–19 public health emergency and such school or facility care is required for the individual to work;

(ee) the individual is unable to reach the place of employment because of a quarantine imposed as a direct result of the COVID–19 public health emergency;

(ff) the individual is unable to reach the place of employment because the individual has been advised by a health care provider to self-quarantine due to concerns related to COVID-19;

(gg) the individual was scheduled to commence employment and does not have a job or is unable to reach the job as a direct result of the COVID-19 public health emergency;

(hh) the individual has become the breadwinner or major support for a household because the head of the household has died as a direct result of COVID-19;

(ii) the individual has to quit his or her job as a direct result of COVID-19;

(jj) the individual's place of employment is closed as a direct result of the COVID-19 public health emergency; or

(kk) the individual meets any additional criteria established by the Secretary for unemployment assistance under this section; or

(ll) is self-employed, is seeking part-time employment, does not have sufficient work history, or otherwise would not qualify for regular unemployment or extended benefits under State or Federal law or pandemic emergency unemployment compensation under section 2107 and meets the requirements of subclause (l); and

(B) does not include—

(i) an individual who has the ability to telework with pay; or

(ii) an individual who is receiving paid sick leave or other paid leave benefits, regardless of whether the individual meets a qualification described in items (aa) through (kk) of subparagraph (A)(i)(l).

(b) ASSISTANCE FOR UNEMPLOYMENT AS A RESULT OF COVID-19. —

Subject to subsection (c), the Secretary shall provide to any covered individual unemployment benefit assistance while such individual is unemployed, partially unemployed, or unable to work for the weeks of such unemployment with respect to which the individual is not entitled to any other unemployment compensation (as that term is defined in section 85(b) of title 26, United States Code) or waiting period credit.

(c) APPLICABILITY. —

(1) IN GENERAL. — Except as provided in paragraph (2), the assistance authorized under subsection (b) shall be available to a covered individual — (A) for weeks of unemployment, partial unemployment, or inability to work caused by COVID-19— (i) beginning on or after January 27, 2020; and (ii) ending on or before December 31, 2020; and (B) subject to subparagraph (A)(ii), as long as the covered individual's unemployment, partial unemployment, or inability to work caused by COVID-19 continues.

(2) LIMITATION ON DURATION OF ASSISTANCE.—The total number of weeks for which a covered individual may receive assistance under this section shall not exceed 39 weeks and such total shall include any week for which the covered individual received regular compensation or extended benefits under any Federal or State law, except that if after the date of enactment of this Act, the duration of extended benefits is extended, the 39-week period described in this paragraph shall be extended by the number of weeks that is equal to the number of weeks by which the extended benefits were extended.

(d) AMOUNT OF ASSISTANCE. —

(1) IN GENERAL. — The assistance authorized under subsection (b) for a week of unemployment, partial unemployment, or inability to work shall be— (A)(i) the weekly benefit amount authorized under the unemployment compensation law of the State where the covered individual was employed, except that the amount may not be less than the minimum weekly benefit amount described in section 625.6 of title 20, Code of Federal Regulations, or any successor thereto; and (ii) the amount of Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation under section 2104; and (B) in the case of an increase of the weekly benefit amount after the date of enactment of this Act, increased in an amount equal to such increase.

(2) CALCULATIONS OF AMOUNTS FOR CERTAIN COVERED INDIVIDUALS. — In the case of a covered individual who is self-employed, who lives in a territory described in subsection (c) or (d) of section 625.6 of title 20, Code of Federal Regulations, or who would not otherwise qualify for unemployment compensation under State law, the assistance authorized under subsection (b) for a week of unemployment *shall be calculated in accordance with section 625.6 of title 20, Code of Federal Regulations*, or any successor thereto, and shall be increased by the amount of Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation under section 2104.

(emphasis added).

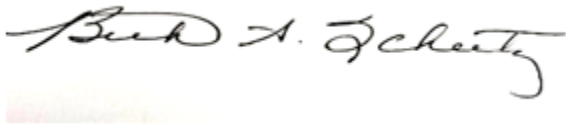
(h) RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PANDEMIC UNEMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE AND DISASTER UNEMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE. —

Except as otherwise provided in this section or to the extent there is a conflict between this section and section 625 of title 20, Code of Federal Regulations, such section 625 shall apply to this section as if— (1) the term “COVID–19 public health emergency” were substituted for the term “major disaster” each place it appears in such section 625; and (2) the term “pandemic” were substituted for the term “disaster” each place it appears in such section 625.

The first requirement for eligibility for Pandemic Unemployment Assistance is that the claimant must not be eligible for state unemployment insurance benefits. In this case, the claimant points to the situation that occurred from May 18, 2020, when the daycare closed through September 20, 2020, when she found work with Discovery Trail Healthcare. During this period, the claimant was eligible for and receiving unemployment insurance benefits funded by the State of Iowa. The claimant therefore **does not** meet the requirements of PL 116-136 Section 2102(a)(3)(A)(i) under the CARES Act.

DECISION:

The Iowa Workforce Development decision dated December 10, 2020, reference 04, that determined claimant was not eligible for federal Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) is affirmed. The appeal in this case was timely. The claimant is not considered a covered individual pursuant to PL 116-136 Section 2102(a)3. The claimant therefore **does not** meet the requirements of PL 116-136 Section 2102(a)(3)(A)(i) under the CARES Act.



Beth A. Scheetz
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March 5, 2021
Decision Dated and Mailed

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