

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS BUREAU**

68-0157 (9-06) - 3091078 - EI

RITA J THOMPSON
Claimant

APPEAL NO: 18A-UI-06746-JE-T

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE
DECISION**

DAVENPORT COMMUNITY SCH DIST
Employer

OC: 05/20/18
Claimant: Appellant (1)

871 IAC 24.23(10) – Leave of Absence
Section 96.4-3 – Able and Available

STATEMENT OF THE CASE:

The claimant filed a timely appeal from the June 13, 2018, reference 02 decision that denied benefits. After due notice was issued, a hearing was held by telephone conference call before Administrative Law Judge Julie Elder on July 9, 2018. The claimant participated in the hearing. Jamie Kroeger, Human Resources Contract Specialist, participated in the hearing on behalf of the employer.

ISSUE:

The issue is whether the claimant is able and available for work and whether she is on a leave of absence.

FINDINGS OF FACT:

Having reviewed all of the evidence in the record, the administrative law judge finds: The claimant requested and was given a leave of absence because she was unable to drive for a period of time. Under the employer's policy, when an employee requests time off and does not have any leave time left, she is required to take time off in increments of semesters or until the end of the semester she is currently working. The claimant requested time off April 12, 2018, effective April 10, 2018. She did not provide a return date at that time. The school board approved her leave of absence covering April 10 through August 22, 2018, on April 22, 2018.

REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:

For the reasons that follow, the administrative law judge concludes the claimant is not able and available for work and did take a leave of absence.

Iowa Code § 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(2)(1), (2) 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.

(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.

j. Leave of absence. A leave of absence negotiated with the consent of both parties, employer and employee, is deemed a period of voluntary unemployment for the employee-individual, and the individual is considered ineligible for benefits for the period.

(1) If at the end of a period or term of negotiated leave of absence the employer fails to reemploy the employee-individual, the individual is considered laid off and eligible for benefits.

(2) If the employee-individual fails to return at the end of the leave of absence and subsequently becomes unemployed the individual is considered as having voluntarily quit and therefore is ineligible for benefits.

Iowa Admin. Code r. 871-24.23(10) provides:

(10) The claimant requested and was granted a leave of absence, such period is deemed to be a period of voluntary unemployment and shall be considered ineligible for benefits for such period.

The claimant requested and was given a leave of absence from April 10 through August 22, 2018. While the claimant was able to return May 20, 2018, the school district requires employees who take a leave of absence to do so for the duration of the semester so as not to disrupt the classroom. The claimant is still considered to be on a leave of absence and is not able and available for work with the school district until the completion of that leave August 22, 2018. Therefore, benefits must be denied.

DECISION:

The June 13, 2018, reference 02, decision is affirmed. The claimant is not able and available for work and did take a leave of absence from April 10, 2018 to August 22, 2018. Benefits are denied until the claimant has earned ten times her weekly benefit amount, provided she is otherwise eligible.

Julie Elder
Administrative Law Judge

Decision Dated and Mailed

je/scn