

IOWA DEPARTMENT OF INSPECTIONS AND APPEALS
Division of Administrative Hearings
Wallace State Office Building
Des Moines, Iowa 50319

Appeal Number: 11IWDUI302
OC: 8/14/11
Claimant: Appellant (6)

DECISION OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE

This Decision Shall Become Final, unless within fifteen (15) days from the date below, you or any interested party appeal to the Employment Appeal Board by submitting either a signed letter or a signed Notice of Appeal, directly to the **Employment Appeal Board, 4TH Floor Lucas Building, Des Moines, Iowa 50319.**

KRYSTLE STEVENS
627 17TH AVE. NW, APT. 7212
ALTOONA, IA 50009-1182

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.

STATE CLEARLY

IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
REEMPLOYMENT SERVICES COORD.
430 EAST GRAND AVENUE
DES MOINES, IA 50309

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.

JOE WALSH, IWD

YOU MAY REPRESENT yourself in this appeal or you may obtain a lawyer or other interested party to do so provided there is no expense to the department. 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. It is important that you file your claim as directed, while this appeal is pending, to protect your continuing right to benefits.

(Administrative Law Judge)

December 23, 2011

(Decision Dated & Mailed)

Iowa Code section 17A.12(3) – Default
871 Iowa Administrative Code 26.14(6)-(7) – Failure to Appear

STATEMENT OF THE CASE

Krystle Stevens filed an appeal of a decision issued by Iowa Workforce Development (the Department) dated September 23, 2011, reference 02. The case was transmitted from Iowa Workforce Development to the Department of Inspections and Appeals on December 8, 2011 in order for a hearing to be held. A Notice of Telephone Hearing was mailed to all parties on December 12, 2011 setting a hearing date of December 23, 2011 at 8:30 AM. The notice contained instructions regarding how to participate in the telephone hearing. Neither the appellant nor any representative from the Department called in to participate in the hearing at the date and time indicated.

The Iowa Administrative Procedure Act provides that if a party fails to appear or participate in a contested case proceeding after proper service of notice, the presiding officer may enter a default decision.¹ Iowa Workforce Development regulations give the presiding officer discretion regarding whether to proceed with a hearing in the absence of one or more of the parties.² In this case, a hearing was not held and a default decision was entered against the appellant.

The challenge for the administrative law judge when neither party appears for a contested case hearing is that the administrative file is typically not sufficient, without testimony from either the appellant or the Department, to review. A contested case hearing is designed to flesh out both the reasoning of the Department in making the decision and the appellant's justification for appeal. The task of the administrative law judge is to determine, after careful consideration of the evidence available, whether the Department's decision under appeal was correct. This task is rendered nearly impossible when neither party appears for hearing. Additionally, it seems an incredible waste of resources to issue lengthy decisions on the merits in cases where neither party has enough investment in the outcome to appear at the contested case hearing and support its position.

DECISION

The appellant's appeal is dismissed. The Department shall take any action necessary to implement this decision.

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¹ Iowa Code § 17A.12(3) (2011).

² 871 Iowa Administrative Code 26.14(6)-(7).