

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT  
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS BUREAU**

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**REGINA R ROMEO**  
Claimant

**APPEAL 20A-UI-09626-NM-T**

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE  
DECISION**

**SUNDANCE INC**  
Employer

**OC: 04/05/20**  
**Claimant: Appellant (1)**

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Iowa Code § 96.6(2) – Timeliness of Appeal  
Iowa Code § 96.4(3) – Ability to and Availability for Work  
Iowa Code § 96.19(38) – Total, Partial, and Temporary Unemployment

**STATEMENT OF THE CASE:**

The claimant filed an appeal from the June 1, 2020, (reference 01) unemployment insurance decision that denied benefits based upon a determination that found she was still employed at the same hours and wages as contemplated at the time of hire. The parties were properly notified of the hearing. A telephone hearing was held on September 28, 2020. The claimant, Regina Romeo, participated and testified. The employer, Sundance Inc., participated through its general manager, Dakota Holliday.

**ISSUE:**

Is the claimant's appeal timely?

**FINDINGS OF FACT:**

Having reviewed all of the evidence in the record, the administrative law judge finds: A disqualifying unemployment insurance decision was mailed to the claimant's last known address of record on June 1, 2020. Claimant received the decision within the appeal period. The decision contained a warning that an appeal must be postmarked or received by the Appeals Bureau by June 11, 2020. The appeal was not filed until August 13, 2020, which is after the date noticed on the unemployment insurance decision. Claimant initially stated that she did not know how to file an appeal because she has a learning disability. She stated she attempted to contact the Iowa Workforce Development Customer Service line, but got voicemail. She stated she also attempted to contact the Appeals Bureau, but not until sometime in August. Claimant had several other adult family members living with her, but did not ask them for assistance in reading the appeal rights. Claimant also acknowledged, she did not file an appeal because she believed she had other work and would not need benefits.

**REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:**

For the reasons that follow, the administrative law judge concludes the claimant's appeal is untimely.

Iowa Code § 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 § 96.4. The employer has the burden of proving that the claimant is disqualified for benefits pursuant to § 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 § 96.5, subsection 10, and has the burden of proving that a voluntary quit pursuant to § 96.5, subsection 1, was for good cause attributable to the employer and that the claimant is not disqualified for benefits in cases involving § 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 § 96.8, subsection 5.

The ten calendar days for appeal begins running on the mailing date. The "decision date" found in the upper right-hand portion of the representative's decision, unless otherwise corrected immediately below that entry, is presumptive evidence of the date of mailing. *Gaskins v. Unempl. Comp. Bd. of Rev.*, 429 A.2d 138 (Pa. Comm. 1981); *Johnson v. Bd. of Adjustment*, 239 N.W.2d 873, 92 A.L.R.3d 304 (Iowa 1976).

The record in this case shows that more than ten calendar days elapsed between the mailing date and the date this appeal was filed. 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. Iowa Dep't of Job Serv.*, 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. Iowa Dep't of Job Serv.*, 276 N.W.2d 373, 377 (Iowa 1979); see also *In re Appeal of Elliott*, 319 N.W.2d 244, 247 (Iowa 1982). The question in this case thus becomes whether the appellant was deprived of a reasonable opportunity to assert an appeal in a timely fashion. *Hendren v. Iowa Emp't Sec. Comm'n*, 217 N.W.2d 255 (Iowa 1974); *Smith v. Iowa Emp't Sec. Comm'n*, 212 N.W.2d 471, 472 (Iowa 1973). The record shows that the appellant did have a reasonable opportunity to file a timely appeal.

Here, the claimant admitted that she waited to file an appeal because she did not believe she would need benefits. Even if the delay were caused because claimant did not understand her appeal rights, the amount of time in which she took to reach out and ask for assistance, several months, is not reasonable. The administrative law judge concludes that failure to file a timely appeal within the time prescribed by the Iowa Employment Security Law was not due to any Agency error or misinformation or delay or other action of the United States Postal Service pursuant to Iowa Admin. Code r. 871-24.35(2). The administrative law judge further concludes that the appeal was not timely filed pursuant to Iowa Code § 96.6(2), and the administrative law judge lacks jurisdiction to make a determination with respect to the nature of the appeal. See *Beardslee v. Iowa Dep't of Job Serv.*, 276 N.W.2d 373 (Iowa 1979) and *Franklin v. Iowa Dep't of Job Serv.*, 277 N.W.2d 877 (Iowa 1979).

**DECISION:**

The June 1, 2020, (reference 01) unemployment insurance decision is affirmed. The appeal in this case was not timely, and the decision of the representative remains in effect.



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Nicole Merrill  
Administrative Law Judge

September 30, 2020  
Decision Dated and Mailed

nm/mh

**NOTE TO CLAIMANT:**

- This decision determines you are not eligible for regular unemployment insurance benefits under state law. If you disagree with this decision you may file an appeal to the Employment Appeal Board by following the instructions on the first page of this decision.
- If you do not qualify for regular unemployment insurance benefits under state law and are currently unemployed for reasons related to COVID-19, you may qualify for Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA). **You will need to apply for PUA to determine your eligibility under the program.** For more information on how to apply for PUA, go to <https://www.iowaworkforcedevelopment.gov/pua-information>. **If you do not apply for and are not approved for PUA, you may be required to repay the benefits you've received so far.**