

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS**

JOSE L MUNIZ
Claimant

APPEAL 15A-UI-02489-H2T

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE
DECISION**

**IOWA WORKFORCE
DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT**

**OC: 12/28/14
Claimant: Appellant (2)**

Iowa Code § 96.3(7) – Recovery of Benefit Overpayment
Iowa Code § 96.6-2 – Timeliness of Appeal

STATEMENT OF THE CASE:

The claimant appealed the January 26, 2015, reference 04, decision that concluded the claimant was overpaid unemployment insurance benefits in the amount of \$1021 as a result of a disqualification decision. After due notice was issued, a telephone hearing was held on March 27, 2015. The claimant did participate and was assisted by interpreter Ike Rocha.

FINDINGS OF FACT:

Having reviewed all of the evidence in the record, the administrative law judge finds: The overpayment issue in this case was created by a disqualification that has now been modified in favor of the claimant.

REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:

The first issue to be considered in this appeal is whether the claimant's appeal is timely. The administrative law judge determines it is.

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 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, subsection 10, 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 in a timely fashion. Without timely 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 filed the appeal within one days of receipt. Therefore, the appeal shall be accepted as timely.

Iowa Code § 96.3-7, as amended in 2008, provides:

7. Recovery of overpayment of benefits.

a. If an individual receives benefits for which the individual is subsequently determined to be ineligible, even though the individual acts in good faith and is not otherwise at fault, the benefits shall be recovered. The department in its discretion may recover the overpayment of benefits either by having a sum equal to the overpayment deducted from any future benefits payable to the individual or by having the individual pay to the department a sum equal to the overpayment.

b. (1) If the department determines that an overpayment has been made, the charge for the overpayment against the employer's account shall be removed and the account shall be credited with an amount equal to the overpayment from the unemployment compensation trust fund and this credit shall include both contributory and reimbursable employers, notwithstanding section 96.8, subsection 5. However, provided the benefits were not received as the result of fraud or willful misrepresentation by the individual, benefits shall not be recovered from an individual if the employer did not participate in the initial determination to award benefits pursuant to section 96.6, subsection 2, and an overpayment occurred because of a subsequent reversal on appeal regarding the issue of the individual's separation from employment. The employer shall not be charged with the benefits.

(2) An accounting firm, agent, unemployment insurance accounting firm, or other entity that represents an employer in unemployment claim matters and demonstrates a continuous pattern of failing to participate in the initial determinations to award benefits, as determined and defined by rule by the department, shall be denied permission by the department to represent any employers in unemployment insurance matters. This subparagraph does not apply to attorneys or counselors admitted to practice in the courts of this state pursuant to section 602.10101.

The administrative law judge concludes that the claimant has not been overpaid unemployment insurance benefits in the amount of \$1021 pursuant to Iowa Code Section 96.3-7, as the disqualification decision that created the overpayment decision has now been modified in favor of the appellant.

DECISION:

The January 26, 2015, reference 04 decision is reversed. The claimant has not been overpaid unemployment insurance benefits in the amount of \$1021.

Teresa K. Hillary
Administrative Law Judge

Decision Dated and Mailed

tkh/can