

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS**

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

SANDY HUGHES-HUIZENGA
Claimant

APPEAL NO. 07A-UI-07802-BT

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE
DECISION**

L A LEASING/SEDONA STAFFING
Employer

**OC: 07/15/07 R: 04
Claimant: Respondent (2)**

Section 96.4-3 - Availability for Work
Section 96.5-3-a - Refusal of Suitable Work

STATEMENT OF THE CASE:

L A Leasing/Sedona Staffing (employer) appealed an unemployment insurance decision dated August 9, 2007, reference 02, which held that Sandy Hughes-Huizenga (claimant) was eligible for unemployment insurance benefits. After hearing notices were mailed to the parties' last-known addresses of record, a telephone hearing was held on August 29, 2007. The claimant participated in the hearing. The employer participated through Colleen McGuinty, Unemployment Benefits Administrator and Dawn Fulton, Account Manager. Claimant's Exhibits A and B were admitted into evidence. Based on the evidence, the arguments of the parties, and the law, the administrative law judge enters the following findings of fact, reasoning and conclusions of law, and decision.

ISSUE:

The issue is whether the claimant is able and available for work, and if so, whether she refused a suitable offer of work.

FINDINGS OF FACT:

The administrative law judge, having heard the testimony and considered all of the evidence in the record, finds that: The claimant signed an employment contract with the Clinton Community School District on July 9, 2007 to begin employment on August 23, 2007 at the rate of \$8.12 per hour. She filed a claim for unemployment insurance benefits effective July 15, 2007. The claimant called in her availability on July 16 and July 18, 2007. The employer offered the claimant a full-time job on July 19, 2007 as an administrative assistant with ADM Polymer which paid \$10.00 per hour. The claimant refused because she said she already had a job with the Clinton Community School District.

The claimant filed a claim for unemployment insurance benefits effective July 15, 2007 and has received benefits after the separation from employment.

REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:

The issue is whether the claimant is able and available, and if so, whether she should be disqualified for refusing a suitable offer of work.

Iowa Code section 96.5-3-a provides:

An individual shall be disqualified for benefits:

3. Failure to accept work. If the department finds that an individual has failed, without good cause, either to apply for available, suitable work when directed by the department or to accept suitable work when offered that individual. The department shall, if possible, furnish the individual with the names of employers which are seeking employees. The individual shall apply to and obtain the signatures of the employers designated by the department on forms provided by the department. However, the employers may refuse to sign the forms. The individual's failure to obtain the signatures of designated employers, which have not refused to sign the forms, shall disqualify the individual for benefits until requalified. To requalify for benefits after disqualification under this subsection, the individual shall work in and be paid wages for insured work equal to ten times the individual's weekly benefit amount, provided the individual is otherwise eligible.

a. In determining whether or not any work is suitable for an individual, the department shall consider the degree of risk involved to the individual's health, safety, and morals, the individual's physical fitness, prior training, length of unemployment, and prospects for securing local work in the individual's customary occupation, the distance of the available work from the individual's residence, and any other factor which the department finds bears a reasonable relation to the purposes of this paragraph. Work is suitable if the work meets all the other criteria of this paragraph and if the gross weekly wages for the work equal or exceed the following percentages of the individual's average weekly wage for insured work paid to the individual during that quarter of the individual's base period in which the individual's wages were highest:

- (1) One hundred percent, if the work is offered during the first five weeks of unemployment.
- (2) Seventy-five percent, if the work is offered during the sixth through the twelfth week of unemployment.
- (3) Seventy percent, if the work is offered during the thirteenth through the eighteenth week of unemployment.
- (4) Sixty-five percent, if the work is offered after the eighteenth week of unemployment.

However, the provisions of this paragraph shall not require an individual to accept employment below the federal minimum wage.

871 IAC 24.24(4) provides:

(4) Work refused when the claimant fails to meet the benefit eligibility conditions of Iowa Code section 96.4(3). Before a disqualification for failure to accept work may be imposed, an individual must first satisfy the benefit eligibility conditions of being able to work and available for work and not unemployed for failing to bump a fellow employee with less seniority. If the facts indicate that the claimant was or is not available for work, and this resulted in the failure to accept work or apply for work, such claimant shall not be disqualified for refusal since the claimant is not available for work. In such a case it is the availability of the claimant that is to be tested. Lack of transportation, illness or health conditions, illness in family, and child care problems are generally considered to be good cause for refusing work or refusing to apply for work. However, the claimant's availability would be the issue to be determined in these types of cases.

The claimant accepted employment with the Clinton Community School District on July 9, 2007 but was not scheduled to begin work until August 23, 2007. She checked in with the employer on June 16 and 18, 2007 to say that she was available for work but when the employer offered her work on July 19, 2007, she refused because she said she had another job. The employer testified the claimant also denied the job because she was pregnant and only wanted part-time work but the claimant denied telling the employer this, even though she is pregnant and due in November 2007. The offer may have been suitable, but the reason for the failure to accept the work was because the claimant was not available and this is a good cause reason for refusing work. Consequently, she is not disqualified from receiving benefits due to a job refusal, but is not eligible for benefits because she was not available. Benefits are denied.

Iowa Code section 96.3-7 provides:

7. Recovery of overpayment of benefits. 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.

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.

Because the claimant's separation was disqualifying, benefits were paid to which the claimant was not entitled. Those benefits must be recovered in accordance with the provisions of Iowa law.

DECISION:

The unemployment insurance decision dated August 9, 2007, reference 02, is reversed. Benefits are denied as of July 15, 2007 because the claimant does not meet the availability requirements of the law. The claimant is overpaid benefits in the amount of \$1,342.00.

Susan D. Ackerman
Administrative Law Judge

Decision Dated and Mailed

sda/css