

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS BUREAU**

DEBRA S KLIMECK
Claimant

HY-VEE INC
Employer

APPEAL 21A-UI-07956-SC-T

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE
DECISION**

OC: 05/03/20
Claimant: Appellant (1)

Iowa Code § 96.4(3) – Ability to and Availability for Work
Iowa Admin. Code r. 871-24.22 – Able & Available - Benefits Eligibility Conditions

STATEMENT OF THE CASE:

On March 18, 2021, Debra S. Klimeck (claimant) filed an appeal from the March 10, 2021, reference 01, unemployment insurance decision that denied benefits effective May 3, 2020, based upon the determination she was on an approved leave of absence with Hy-Vee, Inc. (employer) and was not able to and available for work. After due notice was issued, a telephone hearing was held on May 28, 2021. The claimant participated. The employer participated through Lee Kenyon, Director of Human Resources, and it was represented by Barbara Buss of Corporate Cost Control. No exhibits were offered into the record.

ISSUE:

Was the claimant able to and available for work effective May 30, 2020?

FINDINGS OF FACT:

Having reviewed all of the evidence in the record, the administrative law judge finds: The claimant began working for the employer on May 10, 1999, as a full-time Warehouse Office Manager. On or about March 13, 2020, the claimant's doctor restricted her to no work due to the COVID-19 pandemic and her underlying health issues. The employer granted the claimant's request for a leave of absence, even though work was still available. The claimant returned to work on April 19, 2021.

REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:

For the reasons that follow, the administrative law judge concludes that the claimant was not able to and available for work effective May 3, 2020. Benefits are denied.

Iowa Code section 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 provides, in relevant part:

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.

(1) Able to work. An individual must be physically and mentally able to work in some gainful employment, not necessarily in the individual's customary occupation, but which is engaged in by others as a means of livelihood.

a. Illness, injury or pregnancy. Each case is decided upon an individual basis, recognizing that various work opportunities present different physical requirements. A statement from a medical practitioner is considered prima facie evidence of the physical ability of the individual to perform the work required. A pregnant individual must meet the same criteria for determining ableness as do all other individuals.

...

(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.

Iowa Admin. Code r. 871-24.23 provides, in relevant part:

Availability disqualifications. The following are reasons for a claimant being disqualified for being unavailable for work.

(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.

(35) Where the claimant is not able to work and is under the care of a medical practitioner and has not been released as being able to work.

An individual claiming benefits has the burden to prove that she is be able to work, available for work, and earnestly and actively seeking work. Iowa Admin. Code r. 871-24.22. The claimant's doctor removed her from work and the employer granted her a leave of absence. During her absence, the claimant was not genuinely attached to the labor market. Accordingly, she is not eligible for unemployment insurance benefits.

DECISION:

The March 10, 2021, reference 01, unemployment insurance decision is affirmed. The claimant was not able to work and available for work effective May 3, 2020. Benefits are denied.



Stephanie R. Callahan
Administrative Law Judge

June 14, 2021
Decision Dated and Mailed

src/mh

NOTE TO CLAIMANT: This decision determines you are not eligible for regular unemployment insurance benefits. 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. Individuals who do not qualify for regular unemployment insurance benefits, but who are unemployed or continue to be unemployed for reasons related to COVID-19 may qualify for Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA). **You will need to apply for PUA to determine your eligibility under the program.** Additional information on how to apply for PUA can be found at <https://www.iowaworkforcedevelopment.gov/pua-information>. If this decision becomes final or if you are not eligible for PUA, you may have an overpayment of benefits.

ATTENTION: On May 11, 2021, Governor Reynolds announced that Iowa will end its participation in federal pandemic-related unemployment benefit programs effective June 12, 2021. The last payable week for PUA in Iowa will be the week ending June 12, 2021. Additional information can be found in the press release at <https://www.iowaworkforcedevelopment.gov/iowa-end-participation-federal-unemployment-benefit-programs-citing-strong-labor-market-and>