

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS BUREAU**

MARK D WOLFE
Claimant

INFASTECH DECORAH LLC
Employer

APPEAL 21A-UI-01693-DB-T

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE
DECISION**

OC: 05/03/20
Claimant: Appellant (5)

Iowa Code § 96.4(3) – Able to and Available for Work
Iowa Code § 96.19(38) – Total, Partial, Temporary Unemployment

STATEMENT OF THE CASE:

The claimant/appellant filed an appeal from the December 18, 2020 (reference 01) unemployment insurance decision that found claimant was not eligible for unemployment benefits effective September 27, 2020 because he was still employed at the same hours and same wages as his original contract of hire. The parties were properly notified of the hearing. A telephone hearing was held on February 23, 2021. The claimant participated personally. The employer, Infastech Decorah LLC, participated through witness Alice Bjergum. The administrative law judge took administrative notice of the claimant's unemployment insurance benefits records.

ISSUES:

Was the claimant able to and available for work?
Was the claimant totally, partially, or temporarily unemployed?

FINDINGS OF FACT:

Having reviewed all of the evidence in the record, the administrative law judge finds: Claimant is employed full-time for this employer as a shipping coordinator. His employment began on March 20, 1995 and he remains employed to date.

On September 26, 2020, the claimant attended a large family gathering for a wedding he was a part of. Members of the wedding party were exposed to a person who had tested positive for COVID 19. From September 28, 2020 through October 10, 2020, the claimant was not working because he was quarantining due to potential exposure to COVID 19 from the wedding. The employer had a policy providing that employees must quarantine for 14 days following exposure to COVID 19 or a large gathering. Claimant returned to work on Monday, October 12, 2020 in his regular full-time employment. There was no layoff or loss of production during that two-week period and work would have been available to the claimant if he was able to and available for work.

REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:

For the reasons that follow, the administrative law judge concludes as follows:

Iowa Code § 96.19(38)b provides:

As used in this chapter, unless the context clearly requires otherwise:

38. "Total and partial unemployment".

a. An individual shall be deemed "totally unemployed" in any week with respect to which no wages are payable to the individual and during which the individual performs no services.

b. An individual shall be deemed partially unemployed in any week in which either of the following apply:

(1) While employed at the individual's then regular job, the individual works less than the regular full-time week and in which the individual earns less than the individual's weekly benefit amount plus fifteen dollars.

(2) The individual, having been separated from the individual's regular job, earns at odd jobs less than the individual's weekly benefit amount plus fifteen dollars.

c. An individual shall be deemed temporarily unemployed if for a period, verified by the department, not to exceed four consecutive weeks, the individual is unemployed due to a plant shutdown, vacation, inventory, lack of work, or emergency from the individual's regular job or trade in which the individual worked full-time and will again work full-time, if the individual's employment, although temporarily suspended, has not been terminated.

Iowa Code § 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 § 96.19, subsection 38, paragraph "b", subparagraph 1, or temporarily unemployed as defined in § 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 § 96.5, subsection 3 are waived if the individual is not disqualified for benefits under § 96.5, subsection 1, paragraph "h".

Iowa Admin. Code r. 871-24.22(1) provides:

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.

b. Interpretation of ability to work. The law provides that an individual must be able to work to be eligible for benefits. This means that the individual must be physically able to work, not necessarily in the individual's customary occupation, but able to work in some reasonably suitable, comparable, gainful, full-time endeavor, other than self-employment, which is generally available in the labor market in which the individual resides.

Iowa Admin. Code r. 871-24.22(2) provides:

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.

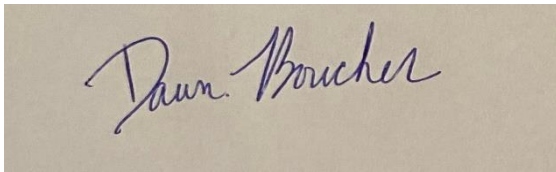
(2) Available for work. The availability requirement is satisfied when an individual is willing, able, and ready to accept suitable work which the individual does not have good cause to refuse, that is, the individual is genuinely attached to the labor market. Since, under unemployment insurance laws, 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.

The claimant was totally unemployed from September 27, 2020 through October 10, 2020 as he did not work or earn any wages during that period of time. The burden is on the claimant to establish that he was able to work and available for work within the meaning of the statute. Iowa Code § 96.6(2); Iowa Admin. Code r. 871-24.22. Because the claimant was quarantining from September 27, 2020 through October 10, 2020, he was not able to and available for work. As such, regular unemployment insurance benefits funded by the State of Iowa are denied from September 27, 2020 through October 10, 2020.

DECISION:

The December 18, 2020 (reference 01) unemployment insurance decision is modified with no change in effect. The claimant was not able to work or available for work effective September 27, 2020 through October 10, 2020. Unemployment insurance benefits are denied effective September 27, 2020 through October 10, 2020.

This decision denies unemployment insurance benefits funded by the State of Iowa. If this decision becomes final or if you are not eligible for PUA, you may have an overpayment of benefits. See Note to Claimant below.



Dawn Boucher
Administrative Law Judge

March 4, 2021
Decision Dated and Mailed

db/mh

Note to Claimant

This decision determines you are not eligible for regular unemployment insurance benefits funded by the State of Iowa 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 funded by the State of Iowa under state law, you may qualify for benefits under the Federal Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (“PUA”) section of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (“Cares Act”) that discusses eligibility for claimants who are unemployed due to the Coronavirus. You will need to apply for PUA to determine your eligibility under the program. For additional information on how to apply for PUA go to: <https://www.iowaworkforcedevelopment.gov/pua-information>.

If you are denied regular unemployment insurance benefits funded by the State of Iowa and wish to apply for PUA, please visit: <https://www.iowaworkforcedevelopment.gov/pua-information> and scroll down to “Submit Proof Here.” You will fill out the questionnaire regarding the reason you are not working and upload a picture or copy of your fact-finding decision. Your claim will be reviewed for PUA eligibility. If you are eligible for PUA, you will also be eligible for Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation (FPUC) until the program expires. Back payments PUA benefits may automatically be used to repay any overpayment of state benefits. If this does not occur on your claim, you may repay any overpayment by visiting: <https://www.iowaworkforcedevelopment.gov/unemployment-insurance-overpayment-and-recovery>.

If you have applied and have been approved for PUA benefits, this decision will **not** negatively affect your entitlement to PUA benefits.