

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS BUREAU**

ROBYN R REYNOLDS
Claimant

APPEAL 20A-DUA-00370-DG-T

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE
DECISION**

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
DEPARTMENT**

OC: 03/22/20
Claimant: Appellant (1)

PL 116-136, Sec. 2012 – Federal Pandemic Unemployment Assistance
20 CFR § 625 – Disaster Unemployment Assistance

STATEMENT OF THE CASE:

On Sept 13, 2020, the claimant/appellant filed a timely appeal from the Iowa Workforce Development decision dated September 9, 2020 that determined claimant was not eligible for federal Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA). A telephone hearing was held on October 28, 2020. The parties were properly notified of the hearing. The claimant participated personally, and was represented by Lauren Camp, Attorney at Law. Official notice was taken of the administrative record.

ISSUE:

Is the claimant eligible for Pandemic Unemployment Assistance?

FINDINGS OF FACT:

Having reviewed all of the evidence in the record, the administrative law judge finds:

Claimant filed the application for PUA on September 9, 2020. The last day claimant worked was May 8, 2020. Claimant was employed at that time by Image First as a full-time employee. In this position, claimant sorted and prepared soiled linen to be laundered. Those items came from hospitals and funeral homes.

Claimant voluntarily resigned from her employment because she believed her work was putting her at risk for contracting covid-19. Claimant did not contract the virus, and claimant did not know if any of her co-workers had contracted the virus. Claimant was not told by a physician that she was at risk for severe illness or death if she contracted the virus. No one in claimant's family contracted the illness, and claimant did not have a child or family member who was at a higher risk for illness. Claimant did not have a child who had to stay home, and needed her care because of the pandemic. Claimant did provide self-certification that she was otherwise able to work and available for work.

REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:

For the reasons set forth below, the administrative law judge finds that claimant is not eligible for PUA benefits.

The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act, Public Law 116-136, Sec. 2102 provides for unemployment benefit assistance to any covered individual for any weeks beginning on or after January 27, 2020 and ending on or before December 31, 2020, during which the individual is unemployed, partially unemployed, or unable to work due to COVID-19.

The issue to be determined here is whether claimant is a “covered individual” within the meaning of applicable law.

Section 2102(a)(3) defines individuals who are eligible for PUA benefits.

(3) COVERED INDIVIDUAL.—The term “covered individual”—

(A) means an individual who—

(i) is not eligible for regular compensation or extended benefits under State or Federal law or pandemic emergency unemployment compensation under section 2107, including an individual who has exhausted all rights to regular unemployment or extended benefits under State or Federal law or pandemic emergency unemployment compensation under section 2107; and

(ii) provides self-certification that the individual—

(I) is otherwise able to work and available for work within the meaning of applicable State law, except the individual is unemployed, partially unemployed, or unable or unavailable to work because—

(aa) the individual has been diagnosed with COVID-19 or is experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 and seeking a medical diagnosis;

(bb) a member of the individual's household has been diagnosed with COVID-19;

(cc) the individual is providing care for a family member or a member of the individual's household who has been diagnosed with COVID-19;

(dd) a child or other person in the household for which the individual has primary caregiving responsibility is unable to attend school or another facility that is closed as a direct result of the COVID-19 public health emergency and such school or facility care is required for the individual to work;

(ee) the individual is unable to reach the place of employment because of a quarantine imposed as a direct result of the COVID-19 public health emergency;

(ff) the individual is unable to reach the place of employment because the individual has been advised by a health care provider to self-quarantine due to concerns related to COVID–19;

(gg) the individual was scheduled to commence employment and does not have a job or is unable to reach the job as a direct result of the COVID–19 public health emergency;

(hh) the individual has become the breadwinner or major support for a household because the head of the household has died as a direct result of COVID–19;

(ii) the individual has to quit his or her job as a direct result of COVID–19;

(jj) the individual's place of employment is closed as a direct result of the COVID–19 public health emergency; or

(kk) the individual meets any additional criteria established by the Secretary for unemployment assistance under this section; or

(ll) is self-employed, is seeking part-time employment, does not have sufficient work history, or otherwise would not qualify for regular unemployment or extended benefits under State or Federal law or pandemic emergency unemployment compensation under section 2107 and meets the requirements of subclause (l); and

(B) does not include—

(i) an individual who has the ability to telework with pay; or

(ii) an individual who is receiving paid sick leave or other paid leave benefits, regardless of whether the individual meets a qualification described in items (aa) through (kk) of subparagraph (A)(i)(l).

An individual must be unemployed and the unemployment must be caused by a major disaster. 20 CFR 625.4.

Title 20 of the Code of Federal Regulations, section 626.2(t) defines an unemployed self-employed individual as follows:

(t) Unemployed self-employed individual means an individual who was self-employed in or was to commence self-employment in the major disaster area at the time the major disaster began, and whose principal source of income and livelihood is dependent upon the individual's performance of service in self-employment, and whose unemployment is caused by a major disaster as provided in § 625.5(b).

Title 20 of the Code of Federal Regulations, section 626.5(b) and (c) provide:

(b) Unemployed self-employed individual. The unemployment of an unemployed self-employed individual is caused by a major disaster if—

(1) The individual has a "week of unemployment" as defined in § 625.2(w)(2) following the "date the major disaster began" as defined in § 625.2(e), and such unemployment is a direct result of the major disaster; or

(2) The individual is unable to reach the place where services as a self-employed individual are performed, as a direct result of the major disaster; or

(3) The individual was to commence regular services as a self-employed individual, but does not have a place or is unable to reach the place where the services as a self-employed individual were to be performed, as a direct result of the major disaster; or

(4) The individual cannot perform services as a self-employed individual because of an injury caused as a direct result of the major disaster.

(c) Unemployment is a direct result of the major disaster. For the purposes of paragraphs (a)(1) and (b)(1) of this section, a worker's or self-employed individual's unemployment is a direct result of the major disaster where the unemployment is an immediate result of the major disaster itself, and not the result of a longer chain of events precipitated or exacerbated by the disaster. Such an individual's unemployment is a direct result of the major disaster if the unemployment resulted from:

(1) The physical damage or destruction of the place of employment;

(2) The physical inaccessibility of the place of employment in the major disaster area due to its closure by or at the request of the federal, state or local government, in immediate response to the disaster; or

(3) Lack of work, or loss of revenues, provided that, prior to the disaster, the employer, or the business in the case of a self-employed individual, received at least a majority of its revenue or income from an entity in the major disaster area that was either damaged or destroyed in the disaster, or an entity in the major disaster area closed by the federal, state or local government in immediate response to the disaster.

Here, claimant had personal concerns about her work environment and safety. Claimant chose to leave her employment, but she was not excluded from working because her or a family member was sick or at a higher risk for becoming sick from the virus. The pandemic did not affect claimant's ability to find transportation, or otherwise prevent her from going to work. Although the administrative law judge is sympathetic to claimant's situation, she does not meet the definition of an unemployed worker who is entitled to PUA benefits under the law.

The administrative law judge has reviewed the facts and applicable laws carefully, and although the administrative law judge is very sympathetic to the claimant's situation, she is not a covered individual pursuant to PL 116-136 Section 2102 a(3)(A)(ii). Pandemic Unemployment Assistance benefits are denied.

DECISION:

The Sept 9, 2020 Assessment for Pandemic Unemployment Assistance Benefits decision denying PUA benefits is affirmed. The claimant is not considered a covered individual pursuant to PL 116-136 Section 2102(a)3.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Duane L. Golden". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Duane L. Golden
Administrative Law Judge

October 30, 2020
Decision Dated and Mailed

dlg/sam