

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT  
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS**

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**ALYSSA STARNES**  
Claimant

**APPEAL 21A-UI-02977-DG-T**

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE  
DECISION**

**IOWA WORKFORCE  
DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT**

**OC: 12/20/20**  
**Claimant: Appellant (6)**

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Iowa Code § 96.4(3) – Ability to and Availability for Work  
Iowa Admin. Code r. 871-24.22(2) – Able & Available - Benefits Eligibility Conditions  
Iowa Admin. Code r. 871-24.23(27) – Active and Earnest Search for Work  
Iowa Code § 17A.12(3) – Default Decision  
Iowa Admin. Code r. 871-26.14(7) – Dismissal of Appeal on Default

**STATEMENT OF THE CASE:**

An appeal was filed from an unemployment insurance decision dated January 6, 2021 (reference 04), that issued a work search warning, but did not deny benefits. Notice of hearing was mailed to the party's last known addresses of record for a telephone hearing to be held at 4:00 p.m. on March 15, 2021. A review of the Appeals Bureau's conference call system shows the claimant/appellant failed to respond to the hearing notice and provide a telephone number at which she could be reached for the hearing.

**ISSUE:**

Should the appeal be dismissed based upon the appellant not participating in the hearing?

**FINDINGS OF FACT:**

The party was properly notified of the scheduled hearing on this appeal. The appellant failed to provide a telephone number at which she could be reached for the hearing.

The front of the hearing notice instruction specifically advises in English and Spanish:

|                  |           |
|------------------|-----------|
| MON MAR 15, 2021 | Date      |
| 4:00 PM          | Iowa Time |

**IMPORTANT NOTICE!**

YOU MUST PROVIDE YOUR PHONE NUMBER TO THE APPEALS BUREAU AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. If you do not follow these instructions, the judge will not call you for the hearing. You must also provide the name(s) and phone number(s) of any witnesses to the Appeals Bureau.

The back page of the hearing notice provides further instruction and warning in both languages:

If you do not participate in the hearing, the judge may dismiss the appeal or issue a decision without considering your evidence. The Appeals Bureau does not have a phone number for this hearing unless you provide it to us by following the instructions on the other side of this page. If you do not follow those instructions, the judge will not call you for the hearing. 871 IAC 26.14(7)

As a *courtesy* to the appellant the record was left open for a minimum grace period of 15 minutes after the hearing start time to give the appellant a *reasonable* opportunity to participate. Holding the appellant in default for failure to appear and participate during a 15-minute window after the hearing start time is reasonable.

The representative's decision held that claimant had not properly reported making two job contacts and provided a warning, but did not deny benefits.

### **REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:**

The Iowa Administrative Procedure Act at Iowa Code § 17A.12(3) provides that if a party fails to appear or participate in a hearing after proper service of notice, the judge may enter a default decision or proceed with the hearing and make a decision in the absence of the party. The statute further states that if a party makes a timely request in writing to vacate the decision and shows good cause for failing to appear, the judge shall vacate the decision and conduct another hearing.

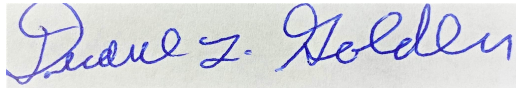
Agency rule Iowa Admin. Code r. 871-26.14(7) provides that if the appealing party has not responded to a notice of telephone hearing by providing the Appeals Bureau with the names and telephone numbers of the persons who are participating in the hearing by the scheduled starting time of the hearing or is not available at the telephone number provided, the judge may decide the appealing party is in default and dismiss the appeal as provided in Iowa Code § 17A.12(3). The record may be reopened if the absent party makes a written request to reopen the hearing and shows good cause for reopening the hearing. The rule further states that failure to read or follow the instructions on the notice of hearing is not good cause for reopening the record. Iowa Admin. Code r. 871-26.14(7)c.

The appellant appealed the unemployment insurance decision but failed to participate in the hearing. The appellant has therefore defaulted on her appeal pursuant to Iowa Code § 17A.12(3) and Iowa Admin. Code r. 871-24.14(7), and the decision remains in force and effect.

**Note to Claimant:** If this decision determines you are not eligible for regular unemployment insurance benefits and 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 currently 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.

**DECISION:**

The unemployment insurance decision dated January 6, 2021, (reference 04), is affirmed. The warning to claimant that she must make two weekly in person job contacts, but did not deny benefits, remains in effect. The appellant is in default.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Duane L. Golden", is displayed on a light gray rectangular background.

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Duane L. Golden  
Administrative Law Judge

March 17, 2021

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Decision Dated and Mailed

dlg/kmj