

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS BUREAU**

SHERRY L GRETEMAN

Claimant

APPEAL 20A-UI-02127-S1-T

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE
DECISION**

**CARROLL CO COUNCIL FOR THE
PREVENTION OF CHILD ABUSE**

Employer

OC: 02/09/20

Claimant: Respondent (2)

Iowa Code § 96.5-1 - Voluntary Quit
Iowa Code § 96.3-7 – Overpayment
871 IAC 24.10 – Employer Participation in the Fact-Finding Interview

STATEMENT OF THE CASE:

Carroll Co Council for the Prevention of Child Abuse (employer) appealed a representative's February 28, 2020, decision (reference 01) that concluded Sherry Greteman (claimant) was eligible to receive unemployment insurance benefits. After hearing notices were mailed to the parties' last-known addresses of record, a telephone hearing was held on April 22, 2020. The claimant was represented by Mark McCormick, Attorney at Law, and participated personally. The employer was represented by Peggy Leight, Hearing Representative, and participated by Tim Nichols, Executive Director, and Stacey Peter, Human Resources Director. The administrative law judge took official notice of the administrative file.

ISSUE:

The issue is whether the claimant was separated from employment for any disqualifying reason.

FINDINGS OF FACT:

The administrative law judge, having heard the testimony and considered all of the evidence in the record, finds that: The claimant was hired on June 30, 2014, as a full-time development and marketing director.

The claimant was interested in moving her working location to a spot in the back of the building. To that end, on January 20, 2020, she asked the hiring supervisor if she had made a hiring decision. The hiring supervisor said she had not. The claimant walked away. The claimant understood she could not move if the decision was not made.

Later on January 20, 2020, the executive director stopped by her work area and alerted the claimant that a co-worker thought the claimant's question interfered with the co-worker's ability to obtain the job. The executive director's intent was to seek harmony in the workplace. The claimant said she would speak with the co-worker. The claimant took offense to the executive director's comment.

The claimant spoke with the co-worker and felt the two had reconciled. The claimant spoke with the hiring supervisor and received confirmation that her comment had nothing to do with the hiring decision.

In an effort to smooth out the issues between co-workers, the executive director arranged a meeting between them on January 23, 2020. The co-worker expressed that she thought the claimant's comments caused her to not be promoted. The claimant thought she was falsely accused for four days. The claimant did not return to work after January 24, 2020. Continued work was available had the claimant not resigned.

The claimant filed for unemployment insurance benefits with an effective date of February 9, 2020, and received \$4,810.00 in benefits after the separation from employment. The employer provided the name and number of Stacey Peter as the person who would participate in the fact-finding interview on February 24, 2020. The fact finder called but Ms. Peter but was not available. The fact finder left a voice message with the fact finder's name, number, and the employer's appeal rights. The employer's witness did not respond to the message.

REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:

For the reasons that follow the administrative law judge concludes the claimant voluntarily quit work without good cause attributable to the employer.

Iowa Code section 96.5(1) provides:

An individual shall be disqualified for benefits, regardless of the source of the individual's wage credits:

1. Voluntary quitting. If the individual has left work voluntarily without good cause attributable to the individual's employer, if so found by the department.

Iowa Admin. Code r. 871-24.25(21) provides:

Voluntary quit without good cause. In general, a voluntary quit means discontinuing the employment because the employee no longer desires to remain in the relationship of an employee with the employer from whom the employee has separated. The employer has the burden of proving that the claimant is disqualified for benefits pursuant to Iowa Code section 96.5. However, the claimant has the initial burden to produce evidence that the claimant is not disqualified for benefits in cases involving Iowa Code section 96.5, subsection (1), paragraphs "a" through "i," and subsection 10. The following reasons for a voluntary quit shall be presumed to be without good cause attributable to the employer:

- (21) The claimant left because of dissatisfaction with the work environment.

A voluntary leaving of employment requires an intention to terminate the employment relationship accompanied by an overt act of carrying out that intention. *Local Lodge #1426 v. Wilson Trailer*, 289 N.W.2d 608, 612 (Iowa 1980). The claimant's intention to voluntarily leave work was evidenced by her actions. When employees quit work because of dissatisfaction with the work environment, their leaving is without good cause attributable to the employer. The claimant left work because she did not like her work environment. She did not like her co-worker thinking she had something do with not getting a promotion. She did not like her

supervisor talking to her about the issue. Lastly, she did not like having a meeting about the issue. Her leaving was without good cause attributable to the employer. The claimant voluntarily quit without good cause attributable to the employer. Benefits are denied.

The unemployment insurance law requires benefits be recovered from a claimant who receives benefits and is later denied benefits even if the claimant acted in good faith and was not at fault. However, a claimant will not have to repay an overpayment when an initial decision to award benefits on an employment separation issue is reversed on appeal if two conditions are met: (1) the claimant did not receive the benefits due to fraud or willful misrepresentation, and (2) the employer failed to participate in the initial proceeding that awarded benefits. In addition, if a claimant is not required to repay an overpayment because the employer failed to participate in the initial proceeding, the employer's account will be charged for the overpaid benefits. Iowa Code section 96.3(7)a, b.

Iowa Admin. Code r. 871-24.10 provides:

Employer and employer representative participation in fact-finding interviews.

(1) "Participate," as the term is used for employers in the context of the initial determination to award benefits pursuant to Iowa Code section 96.6, subsection 2, means submitting detailed factual information of the quantity and quality that if unrebutted would be sufficient to result in a decision favorable to the employer. The most effective means to participate is to provide live testimony at the interview from a witness with firsthand knowledge of the events leading to the separation. If no live testimony is provided, the employer must provide the name and telephone number of an employee with firsthand information who may be contacted, if necessary, for rebuttal. A party may also participate by providing detailed written statements or documents that provide detailed factual information of the events leading to separation. At a minimum, the information provided by the employer or the employer's representative must identify the dates and particular circumstances of the incident or incidents, including, in the case of discharge, the act or omissions of the claimant or, in the event of a voluntary separation, the stated reason for the quit. The specific rule or policy must be submitted if the claimant was discharged for violating such rule or policy. In the case of discharge for attendance violations, the information must include the circumstances of all incidents the employer or the employer's representative contends meet the definition of unexcused absences as set forth in 871—subrule 24.32(7). On the other hand, written or oral statements or general conclusions without supporting detailed factual information and information submitted after the fact-finding decision has been issued are not considered participation within the meaning of the statute.

(2) "A continuous pattern of nonparticipation in the initial determination to award benefits," pursuant to Iowa Code section 96.6, subsection 2, as the term is used for an entity representing employers, means on 25 or more occasions in a calendar quarter beginning with the first calendar quarter of 2009, the entity files appeals after failing to participate. Appeals filed but withdrawn before the day of the contested case hearing will not be considered in determining if a continuous pattern of nonparticipation exists. The division administrator shall notify the employer's representative in writing after each such appeal.

(3) If the division administrator finds that an entity representing employers as defined in Iowa Code section 96.6, subsection 2, has engaged in a continuous pattern of nonparticipation, the division administrator shall suspend said representative for a period

of up to six months on the first occasion, up to one year on the second occasion and up to ten years on the third or subsequent occasion. Suspension by the division administrator constitutes final agency action and may be appealed pursuant to Iowa Code section 17A.19.

(4) "Fraud or willful misrepresentation by the individual," as the term is used for claimants in the context of the initial determination to award benefits pursuant to Iowa Code section 96.6, subsection 2, means providing knowingly false statements or knowingly false denials of material facts for the purpose of obtaining unemployment insurance benefits. Statements or denials may be either oral or written by the claimant. Inadvertent misstatements or mistakes made in good faith are not considered fraud or willful misrepresentation.

This rule is intended to implement Iowa Code section 96.3(7)"b" as amended by 2008 Iowa Acts, Senate File 2160.

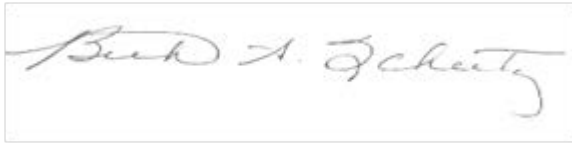
The employer did not meaningfully participate in the fact finding interview and is chargeable. The claimant's overpayment is waived.

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 due to disqualifying separations, 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>.

DECISION:

The representative's February 28, 2020, decision (reference 01) is reversed. The claimant voluntarily left work without good cause attributable to the employer. Benefits are withheld until the claimant has worked in and has been paid wages for insured work equal to ten times the claimant's weekly benefit amount provided the claimant is otherwise eligible.

The employer did not meaningfully participate in the fact finding interview and is chargeable.
The claimant's overpayment is waived.

A rectangular box containing a handwritten signature in cursive script, which appears to read "Beth A. Scheetz".

Beth A. Scheetz
Administrative Law Judge

April 24, 2020
Decision Dated and Mailed

bas/scn