

BEFORE THE
EMPLOYMENT APPEAL BOARD
Lucas State Office Building
Fourth floor
Des Moines, Iowa 50319

ASHLEY BRUNELLI

Claimant

and

INTERNATIONAL PAPER COMPANY

Employer

HEARING NUMBER: 20BUI-05672

EMPLOYMENT APPEAL BOARD
DECISION

N O T I C E

THIS DECISION BECOMES FINAL unless (1) a **request for a REHEARING** is filed with the Employment Appeal Board within **20 days** of the date of the Board's decision or, (2) a **PETITION TO DISTRICT COURT IS FILED WITHIN 30 days** of the date of the Board's decision.

A REHEARING REQUEST shall state the specific grounds and relief sought. If the rehearing request is denied, a petition may be filed in **DISTRICT COURT** within **30 days** of the date of the denial.

SECTION: 96.4-3, 96.3-7

D E C I S I O N

UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS ARE DENIED

The Claimant appealed this case to the Employment Appeal Board. The members of the Employment Appeal Board reviewed the entire record. The Appeal Board finds the administrative law judge's decision is correct. The administrative law judge's Findings of Fact and Reasoning and Conclusions of Law are adopted by the Board as its own. The administrative law judge's decision is **AFFIRMED**.

We point out to the Claimant that although the Claimant is denied benefits under state unemployment law, **this does not bar receipt of certain special pandemic related benefits**. In fact, being ineligible from state unemployment benefits is a prerequisite to some of these benefits. Of particular interest to the Claimant is Pandemic Unemployment Assistance [PUA]. That law provides benefits to persons who are unavailable for work due to certain pandemic related reasons. Such persons may be able to collect PUA during any week this situation persists, going back to February 8, 2020 (for a maximum of 39 weeks). The federal Department of Labor has instructed that **eligible persons would include:**

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.

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UIPL 16-20, Attachment 1, p. I-4

(https://wdr.doleta.gov/directives/attach/UIPL/UIPL_16-20_Attachment_1.pdf).

It is further our understanding that federal law requires all PUA claims to be backdated to as early as February 8, depending on when the applicant's self-quarantine began. The upshot is that if Claimant can make the necessary PUA showing of a need for self-quarantine Claimant may very well be eligible for PUA for any week such a quarantine was or is in place, and so is well-advised to pursue this avenue of federal benefits through Iowa Workforce. **Our ruling today is no bar to PUA.**

Notably today we have made a decision that denies regular unemployment, but allows regular benefits once the Claimant offers to return to work, but is rejected. 871 IAC 24.22(2)(j)(1) ("If at the end of a period or term of negotiated leave of absence the employer fails to reemploy the employee-individual, the individual is considered laid off and eligible for benefits."). What this means is that if the Claimant can get PUA the Claimant would receive that benefit so long as the Claimant is unavailable because on a leave of absence for COVID reasons, and then receive regular state benefits if Claimant returns and offers services once that COVID leave ends but is not rehired. The Employer should note it can avoid charges by bringing the Claimant back to work at the end of the COVID leave.

Should the Claimant wish to apply for PUA, and the information on how to do so if found at:

<https://www.iowaworkforcedevelopment.gov/pua-information>

Ashley R. Koopmans

James M. Strohman

Myron R. Linn

RRA/fnv