

**IOWA DEPARTMENT OF INSPECTIONS AND APPEALS
ADMINISTRATIVE HEARINGS DIVISION, UI APPEALS BUREAU**

JADA A OAKES

Claimant

APPEAL 22R-UI-18656-DZ-T

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE
DECISION**

**IOWA WORKFORCE
DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT**

**OC: 12/22/19
Claimant: Appellant (6)**

PL 116-136, Sec. 2107 – Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation
Iowa Code § 17A.12(3) – Default Decision
Iowa Admin. Code r. 871-26.14(7) – Dismissal of Appeal on Default

STATEMENT OF THE CASE:

Jada A. Oakes, the claimant/appellant, filed an appeal from the Iowa Workforce Development (IWD) May 11, 2022 (reference 09) unemployment insurance (UI) decision. The decision concluded Ms. Oakes was overpaid Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation (PEUC) benefits in the gross amount of \$2,136.00 for 12 weeks between April 5, 2020 and June 27, 2020. A telephone hearing was scheduled for July 7, 2022. The parties were properly notified about the hearing. Ms. Oakes did not participate in the hearing. The department did not participate in the hearing. Because Ms. Oakes filed the appeal but did not participate in the hearing, no hearing was held. The administrative law judge's September 7, 2022 decision dismissed Ms. Oakes's appeal because she did not participate in the hearing.

Ms. Oakes appealed to the Employment Appeal Board (EAB). The EAB concluded that Ms. Oakes did not receive the notice for the July 7, 2022 hearing and remanded (sent back) the case back to an administrative law judge for a new hearing. A new hearing was scheduled for December 1, 2022. Notices of hearing were mailed to the parties' last known addresses of record. Ms. Oakes did not call the toll-free number listed on hearing notice at the time the hearing was scheduled to begin. The department did not call the toll-free number listed on hearing notice at the time the hearing was scheduled to begin. Because Ms. Oakes filed the appeal but did not call in, no hearing was held.

ISSUE:

Should Ms. Oakes' appeal be dismissed based on her not appearing and participating?

FINDINGS OF FACT:

The parties were properly notified of the scheduled hearing for this appeal. Ms. Oakes did not call the toll-free number listed on the hearing notice at the time scheduled for this appeal hearing. She did not request a postponement of the hearing before the hearing date. She did not call in before the record was closed, 15 minutes after the hearing was scheduled to begin. No hearing was held.

The hearing notice lists the hearing date of December 1, 2022, and the hearing time as 1:00 p.m. Iowa time. The hearing notice also advises parties:

IMPORTANT NOTICE!

YOU MUST CALL the toll-free number...at the time of the hearing. You may call up to 5 minutes before the hearing. You are not the organizer – Do **NOT** press 2.

The administrative law judge **WILL NOT** call you for the hearing, you **MUST** call into the number provided above to participate. Failure to participate in the hearing may result in the dismissal of your appeal. **Failure to participate in the hearing may result in dismissal of your appeal.**

The record was left open for a grace period of 15 minutes after the hearing start time to give Ms. Oakes a *reasonable* opportunity to participate. This reasonable amount of time is appropriate because if a hearing were conducted with the non-appealing party alone it would have likely concluded in 15 minutes or less. Holding Ms. Oakes in default for not appearing and participating during a 15-minute window after the hearing start time is reasonable considering the time allocated for each appeal hearing. Allowing this additional time period is more than reasonable under the circumstances.

The UI decision had concluded that Ms. Oakes was overpaid PEUC benefits in the gross amount of \$2,136.00 for 12 weeks between April 5, 2020 and June 27, 2020.

REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:

The Iowa Administrative Procedures Act at Iowa Code § 17A.12(3) provides in pertinent part:

If a party fails to appear or participate in a contested case proceeding after proper service of notice, the presiding officer may, if no adjournment is granted, enter a default decision or proceed with the hearing and make a decision in the absence of the party. ... If a decision is rendered against a party who failed to appear for the hearing and the presiding officer is timely requested by that party to vacate the decision for good cause, the time for initiating a further appeal is stayed pending a determination by the presiding officer to grant or deny the request. If adequate reasons are provided showing good cause for the party's failure to appear, the presiding officer shall vacate the decision and, after proper service of notice, conduct another evidentiary hearing. If adequate reasons are not provided showing good cause for the party's failure to appear, the presiding officer shall deny the motion to vacate.

Iowa Admin. Code r. 26.14(7) provides:

If a 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 presiding officer may proceed with the hearing. If the appealing party fails to provide a telephone number or is unavailable for the hearing, the presiding officer may decide the appealing party is in default and dismiss the appeal as provide in Iowa Code section 17A.12(3). The record may be reopened if the absent party makes a request in writing to

reopen the hearing under subrule 26.8(3) and shows good cause for reopening the hearing.

a. If an absent party responds to the hearing notice while the hearing is in progress, the presiding officer shall pause to admit the party, summarize the hearing to that point, administer the oath, and resume the hearing.

b. If a party responds to the notice of hearing after the record has been closed and any party which has participated is no longer on the telephone line, the presiding officer shall not take the evidence of the late party.

c. Failure to read or follow the instructions on the notice of hearing shall not constitute good cause for reopening the record.

Due process requires notice and an opportunity to be heard, both of which were provided to the parties. The appellant is responsible for going forward with the case in a prompt and thoughtful manner. The appellant must be present at the start of the hearing to avoid a default judgment. Iowa Code § 17A.12(3) and Iowa Admin. Code r. 26.14(7). The hearing notice instructs the parties to call the toll-free number listed on hearing notice at the time the hearing is scheduled to begin

The Iowa Supreme Court has held a default should not be set aside due to the appellant's negligence, carelessness, or inattention. See *Houlihan v. Emp't Appeal Bd.*, 545 N.W.2d 863 (Iowa 1996). Similarly, a default should not be set aside because the appellant has ignored clear requirements in the rules. Rather, a party must show it intended to proceed with the appeal and took steps to do so, but did not to appear because of some misunderstanding, accident, mistake or excusable neglect. Ms. Oakes was not present at the start of the hearing. As a *courtesy*, Ms. Oakes was granted additional time not required by statute or rule. The representative's decision remains in force and effect.

DECISION:

The May 11, 2022 (reference 09) UI decision finding Ms. Oakes overpaid PEUC benefits in the gross amount of \$2,136.00 remains in effect as Ms. Oakes is in default and the appeal is DISMISSED.



Daniel Zeno
Administrative Law Judge

December 6, 2022
Decision Dated and Mailed

NOTE TO MS. OAKES:

- This decision determines that you have been overpaid PEUC benefits. If you disagree with this decision, you have the right to file an appeal. Appeal information is on the last page of this decision.
- **You may also request a waiver of the PEUC overpayment by 1) applying for a waiver online, 2) applying for a waiver in writing by mail, or 3) filing an appeal.**
- The **online waiver request form** is available on the IWD website at: <https://www.iowaworkforcedevelopment.gov/federal-unemployment-insurance-overpayment-recovery>
- The **written waiver request form** must include the following information:
 - Your name & address.
 - Decision number/date of decision.
 - Dollar amount of overpayment requested for waiver.
 - Relevant facts that you feel would justify a waiver.
- The request should be sent to:

Iowa Workforce Development
Overpayment waiver request
1000 East Grand Avenue
Des Moines, IA 50319
- If this decision becomes final and you are not eligible for a waiver, you will have to repay the benefits you received.
- To check on your waiver application call **888-848-7442** or email iwduiatax@iwdiowa.gov

APPEAL RIGHTS. If you disagree with this decision, you or any interested party may:

1. Appeal to the Employment Appeal Board within fifteen (15) days of the date under the judge's signature by submitting a written appeal via mail, fax, or online to:

**Employment Appeal Board
4th Floor – Lucas Building
Des Moines, Iowa 50319
Fax: (515)281-7191
Online: eab.iowa.gov**

The appeal period will be extended to the next business day if the last day to appeal falls on a weekend or a legal holiday.

AN APPEAL TO THE BOARD SHALL STATE CLEARLY:

- 1) The name, address, and social security number of the claimant.
- 2) A reference to the decision from which the appeal is taken.
- 3) That an appeal from such decision is being made and such appeal is signed.
- 4) The grounds upon which such appeal is based.

An Employment Appeal Board decision is final agency action. If a party disagrees with the Employment Appeal Board decision, they may then file a petition for judicial review in district court.

2. If no one files an appeal of the judge's decision with the Employment Appeal Board within fifteen (15) days, the decision becomes final agency action, and you have the option to **file a petition for judicial review in District Court** within thirty (30) days after the decision becomes final. Additional information on how to file a petition can be found at Iowa Code §17A.19, which is online at <https://www.legis.iowa.gov/docs/code/17A.19.pdf> or by contacting the District Court Clerk of Court <https://www.iowacourts.gov/iowa-courts/court-directory/>.

Note to Parties: YOU MAY REPRESENT yourself in the appeal or obtain a lawyer or other interested party to do so provided there is no expense to Workforce Development. If you wish to be represented by a lawyer, you may obtain the services of either a private attorney or one whose services are paid for with public funds.

Note to Claimant: It is important that you file your weekly claim as directed, while this appeal is pending, to protect your continuing right to benefits.

SERVICE INFORMATION:

A true and correct copy of this decision was mailed to each of the parties listed.

DERECHOS DE APELACIÓN. Si no está de acuerdo con la decisión, usted o cualquier parte interesada puede:

1. Apelar a la Junta de Apelaciones de Empleo dentro de los quince (15) días de la fecha bajo la firma del juez presentando una apelación por escrito por correo, fax o en línea a:

**Employment Appeal Board
4th Floor – Lucas Building
Des Moines, Iowa 50319
Fax: (515)281-7191
En línea: eab.iowa.gov**

El período de apelación se extenderá hasta el siguiente día hábil si el último día para apelar cae en fin de semana o día feriado legal.

UNA APELACIÓN A LA JUNTA DEBE ESTABLECER CLARAMENTE:

- 1) El nombre, dirección y número de seguro social del reclamante.
- 2) Una referencia a la decisión de la que se toma la apelación.
- 3) Que se interponga recurso de apelación contra tal decisión y se firme dicho recurso.
- 4) Los fundamentos en que se funda dicho recurso.

Una decisión de la Junta de Apelaciones de Empleo es una acción final de la agencia. Si una de las partes no está de acuerdo con la decisión de la Junta de Apelación de Empleo, puede presentar una petición de revisión judicial en el tribunal de distrito.

2. Si nadie presenta una apelación de la decisión del juez ante la Junta de Apelaciones Laborales dentro de los quince (15) días, la decisión se convierte en acción final de la agencia y usted tiene la opción de **presentar una petición de revisión judicial en el Tribunal de Distrito** dentro de los treinta (30) días después de que la decisión adquiriera firmeza. Puede encontrar información adicional sobre cómo presentar una petición en el Código de Iowa §17A.19, que se encuentra en línea en <https://www.legis.iowa.gov/docs/code/17A.19.pdf> o comunicándose con el Tribunal de Distrito Secretario del tribunal <https://www.iowacourts.gov/iowa-courts/court-directory/>.

Nota para las partes: USTED PUEDE REPRESENTARSE en la apelación u obtener un abogado u otra parte interesada para que lo haga, siempre que no haya gastos para Workforce Development. Si desea ser representado por un abogado, puede obtener los servicios de un abogado privado o uno cuyos servicios se paguen con fondos públicos.

Nota para el reclamante: es importante que presente su reclamo semanal según las instrucciones, mientras esta apelación está pendiente, para proteger su derecho continuo a los beneficios.

SERVICIO DE INFORMACIÓN:

Se envió por correo una copia fiel y correcta de esta decisión a cada una de las partes enumeradas.