

**BEFORE THE
EMPLOYMENT APPEAL BOARD
Lucas State Office Building, 4TH Floor
Des Moines, Iowa 50319
eab.iowa.gov**

JESSICA L WOECKENER

Claimant

: **APPEAL NUMBER:** 22B-UI-12609
: **ALJ HEARING NUMBER:** 22A-UI-12609

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**EMPLOYMENT APPEAL BOARD
DECISION**

NOTICE

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: 96.6-2, 96.3-7

DECISION

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. With the following modification, 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** with the following **MODIFICATION IN THE CLAIMANT'S FAVOR**:

The Administrative Law Judge's discussion of the recovery of overpaid FPUC, PEUC, and LWAP benefits is modified to be consistent with the following discussion:

The CARES Act, as amended, provides:

In the case of individuals who have received amounts of Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation to which they were not entitled, the State shall require such individuals to repay the amounts of such Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation to the State agency, **except** that the State agency may waive such repayment if it determines that—

(A) the payment of such Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation was without fault on the part of any such individual; and

(B) such repayment would be contrary to equity and good conscience

PL116-136, Sec. 2104(f)(2). In this case the Claimant was paid FPUC in addition to regular state benefits. We now consider whether the FPUC overpayment can be waived.

The Administrative Law Judge's discussion of the recovery of overpaid PEUC benefits is modified to be consistent with the following discussion:

The CARES Act, as amended, also provides:

SEC. 2107. PANDEMIC EMERGENCY UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION.

(e)(2) Repayment.--In the case of individuals who have received amounts of pandemic emergency unemployment compensation under this section to which they were not entitled, the State shall require such individuals to repay the amounts of such pandemic unemployment compensation to the State agency, **except** that the State agency may waive such repayment if it determines that—

(A) the payment of such pandemic emergency unemployment compensation was without fault on the part of any such individual; and

(B) such repayment would be contrary to equity and good conscience.

PL116-136, Sec. 2104(f)(2); 2107(e)(2). In this case the Claimant was paid PEUC. We will also consider whether the PEUC overpayment can be waived.

The *Continued Assistance for Unemployed Workers Act of 2020* signed into law on December 27, 2020 provides:

SEC. 262. Lost Wages Assistance Recoupment Fairness.

(a) Definitions.—In this section—

(1) the term “covered assistance” means assistance provided for supplemental lost wages payments under subsections (e)(2) and (f) of section 408 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5174), as authorized under the emergency declaration issued by the President on March 13, 2020, pursuant to section 501(b) of such Act (42 U.S.C. 5191(b)) and under any subsequent major disaster declaration under section 401 of such Act (42 U.S.C. 5170) that supersedes such emergency declaration; and

(2) the term “State” has the meaning given the term in section 102 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5122).

(b) Waiver Authority For State Liability.—In the case of any individual who has received amounts of covered assistance to which the individual is not entitled, the State shall require the individual to repay the amounts of such assistance to the State agency, except that the State agency may waive such repayment if the State agency determines that—

- (1) the payment of such covered assistance was without fault on the part of the individual; and
- (2) such repayment would be contrary to equity and good conscience.

(c) Waiver Authority For Federal Liability.—Any waiver of debt issued by a State under subsection (b) shall also waive the debt owed to the United States.

H.R. 133, 116 Congress, Sec. 262. In this case the Claimant was paid LWA in addition to regular state benefits. We will also consider whether the LWA overpayment can be waived.

In deciding the question of fault, we will consider factors such as whether a material statement or representation was made by the Claimant in connection with the application for benefits, whether the Claimant knew or should have known that a fact was material and failed to disclose it, whether the Claimant should have known the Claimant was not eligible for benefits, and whether the overpayment was otherwise directly caused by the knowing actions of the Claimant. Cf. 871 IAC 24.50(7) (setting out factors for similar issue under TEUC from 2002). In deciding equity and good conscience we utilize the federal directives by considering the following:

- It would cause financial hardship to the person for whom it is sought; or
- The recipient of the overpayment can show (regardless of their financial circumstances) that due to the notice that such payment would be made or because of the incorrect payment either they have relinquished a valuable right or changed positions for the worse; or
- Recovery would be unconscionable under the circumstances.

UIPL 20-21 p. 6-7 (DOL ETA 5/5/2021).

Applying these factors to the totality of the circumstances in this case including that there is no evidence of material misrepresentation, we find on this individualized basis that the **FPUC, PEUC, and LWA overpayments** should be waived on the ground that the Claimant's knowing actions were not directly at fault for the overpayment, and recovery would be unconscionable.

The Employer should note that the Employer will not be charged for any waived FPUC, PEUC, or LWA.

If after today the Claimant should receive an overpayment decision concerning the overpayment(s) we have waived then the Claimant should appeal that decision. The Claimant should retain our decision to present to IWD in response to any such decision. The Claimant likewise should present this order to IWD if the Claimant should receive a bill for a waived overpayment.

DECISION:

The decision of the Administrative Law Judge dated September 7, 2022 is **AFFIRMED AS MODIFIED IN THE CLAIMANT'S FAVOR.**

THE EAB hereby waives the following overpayments:

- **PEUC benefit overpayment in the amount of \$1,816.00**
- **FPUC benefit overpayment in the amount of \$10,200.00**
- **LWA benefit overpayment in the amount of \$1,800.00**

The Claimant has no obligation to pay back those benefits. This waiver is effective only if the Claimant does not receive additional payments of FPUC, PEUC, or LWA covering the same weeks. Also PEUC benefits are waived *only if* the Claimant does not receive payments covering the same weeks as a result of her approval for PUA. If the Claimant does receive such additional payments covering the same period of time as this case, then Claimant will not be allowed to retain the double payment. In all other respects, the decision of the Administrative Law Judge is affirmed.

The Claimant remains overpaid on regular benefits and/or extended benefits as set out in the Administrative Law Judge's decision. We note we have no legal authority to waive regular benefit or extended benefit overpayments.

James M. Strohman

Ashley R. Koopmans

Myron R. Linn

RRA/fnv