

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS BUREAU**

MICHAELA OEHLER
Claimant

APPEAL 21A-UI-16864-DZ-T

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE
DECISION**

**IOWA WORKFORCE
DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT**

OC: 04/19/20
Claimant: Appellant (1)

Iowa Code § 96.6(2) – Timely Appeal
PL116-136, Sec. 2104 – Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation

STATEMENT OF THE CASE:

Micheala Oehler, the claimant/appellant, filed an appeal from the June 24, 2021, (reference 03) unemployment insurance decision that concluded she was overpaid Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation (FPUC) benefits in the amount of \$7,800.00. Ms. Oehler was properly notified of the hearing. A telephone hearing was held on September 23, 2021. Ms. Oehler participated and testified. Patrick Oehler, Ms. Oehler's father, participated and testified on Ms. Oehler's behalf. The administrative law judge took official notice of the administrative record.

ISSUES:

Is Ms. Oehler's appeal filed on time?
Has Ms. Oehler been overpaid FPUC benefits?

FINDINGS OF FACT:

Having reviewed the evidence in the record, the administrative law judge finds: The Unemployment Insurance Decision was mailed to Ms. Oehler at the correct address on June 24, 2021. The decision states that it becomes final unless an appeal is postmarked or received by Iowa Workforce Development (IWD) Appeals Section by July 4, 2021. If the date falls on a Saturday, Sunday, or legal holiday, the appeal period is extended to the next working day. July 4, 2021 was a Sunday, and July 5, 2021 was an Iowa state holiday; therefore, the deadline was extended to July 6, 2021. Ms. Oehler did not receive the decision in the mail.

IWD had issued a different decision finding Ms. Oehler was overpaid REGULAR unemployment insurance (UI) benefits. That decision was dated February 9, 2021, (reference 02). Ms. Oehler received that decision in the mail. Ms. Oehler filed an appeal via letter sent by her father, which was postmarked on March 19, 2021. The appeal was received by Iowa Workforce Development on March 23, 2021. IWD set up appeals for both the reference 02 decision (overpayment of REGULAR UI benefits), and the reference 03 decision (overpayment of FPUC benefits).

The administrative law judge further finds: Ms. Oehler received FPUC benefits in the amount of \$7,800.00 for 13 weeks between April 19, 2020 and July 18, 2020.

FPUC is a program under the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act of 2020 that provides additional payment to those individuals that are receiving state or federal unemployment insurance (UI) payments. It is funded by the federal government, not by state unemployment taxes paid by employers. The FPUC amount was \$600.00 per week from April 5, 2020 through July 31, 2020.

On July 24, 2020, Iowa Workforce Development issued a reference 01 decision finding Ms. Oehler was not eligible for REGULAR UI benefits. The administrative law judge's decision in Appeal 21A-UI-16862-DZ-T affirmed the reference 01 decision.

REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:

For the reasons that follow, the administrative law judge concludes the Ms. Oehler's appeal of the June 24, 2021, (reference 03) decision was filed on time.

Iowa Code § 96.6(2) provides, in pertinent part: "[u]nless the claimant or other interested party, after notification or within ten calendar days after notification was mailed to the claimant's last known address, files an appeal from the decision, the decision is final and benefits shall be paid or denied in accordance with the decision."

Iowa Admin. Code r. 871-24.35(1) provides:

1. Except as otherwise provided by statute or by division rule, any payment, appeal, application, request, notice, objection, petition, report or other information or document submitted to the division shall be considered received by and filed with the division:

(a) If transmitted via the United States Postal Service on the date it is mailed as shown by the postmark, or in the absence of a postmark the postage meter mark of the envelope in which it is received; or if not postmarked or postage meter marked or if the mark is illegible, on the date entered on the document as the date of completion.

(b) If transmitted via the State Identification Data Exchange System (SIDES), maintained by the United States Department of Labor, on the date it was submitted to SIDES.

(c) If transmitted by any means other than [United States Postal Service or the State Identification Data Exchange System (SIDES)], on the date it is received by the division.

Iowa Admin. Code r. 871-24.35(2) provides:

2. The submission of any payment, appeal, application, request, notice, objection, petition, report or other information or document not within the specified statutory or regulatory period shall be considered timely if it is established to the satisfaction of the division that the delay in submission was due to division error or misinformation or to delay or other action of the United States postal service.

The Iowa Supreme Court has declared that there is a mandatory duty to file appeals from representatives' decisions within the time allotted by statute, and that the administrative law judge has no authority to change the decision of a representative if a timely appeal is not filed.

Franklin v. IDJS, 277 N.W.2d 877, 881 (Iowa 1979). Compliance with appeal notice provisions is jurisdictional unless the facts of a case show that the notice was invalid. *Beardslee v. IDJS*, 276 N.W.2d 373, 377 (Iowa 1979); see also *In re Appeal of Elliott* 319 N.W.2d 244, 247 (Iowa 1982).

When Ms. Oehler filed her appeal, postmarked on March 19, 2021, IWD set up appeals for both the reference 02 decision (overpayment of REGULAR UI benefits), and the reference 03 decision (overpayment of FPUC benefits). Since Ms. Oehler's appeal was filed before the July 6, 2021 deadline in the reference 03 decision, Ms. Oehler's appeal of the reference 03 decision is considered to have been filed on time.

The administrative law judge further concludes Ms. Oehler was overpaid FPUC benefits.

Iowa Code §96.3(7) provides, in pertinent part:

7. Recovery of overpayment of benefits.

a. If an individual receives benefits for which the individual is subsequently determined to be ineligible, even though the individual acts in good faith and is not otherwise at fault, the benefits shall be recovered. The department in its discretion may recover the overpayment of benefits either by having a sum equal to the overpayment deducted from any future benefits payable to the individual or by having the individual pay to the department a sum equal to the overpayment.

b. (1) (a) If the department determines that an overpayment has been made, the charge for the overpayment against the employer's account shall be removed and the account shall be credited with an amount equal to the overpayment from the unemployment compensation trust fund and this credit shall include both contributory and reimbursable employers, notwithstanding section 96.8, subsection 5.

PL116-136, Sec. 2104 provides, in pertinent part:

(b) Provisions of Agreement

(1) Federal pandemic unemployment compensation.--Any agreement under this section shall provide that the State agency of the State will make payments of regular compensation to individuals in amounts and to the extent that they would be determined if the State law of the State were applied, with respect to any week for which the individual is (disregarding this section) otherwise entitled under the State law to receive regular compensation, as if such State law had been modified in a manner such that the amount of regular compensation (including dependents' allowances) payable for any week shall be equal to

(A) the amount determined under the State law (before the application of this paragraph), plus

(B) an additional amount of \$600 (in this section referred to as "Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation").

....

(f) Fraud and Overpayments

(2) Repayment.--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...

Because Ms. Oehler is disqualified from receiving REGULAR UI benefits, she is also disqualified from receiving FPUC benefits. While Iowa law does not require a claimant to repay regular UI benefits when the employer does not participate in the fact-finding interview, the CARES Act makes no such exception for the repayment of FPUC benefits. Therefore, the determination of whether Ms. Oehler must repay FPUC benefits does not hinge on the employer's participation in the fact-finding interview. The administrative law judge concludes that Ms. Oehler has been overpaid FPUC benefits in the gross amount of \$7,800.00 for 13 weeks between April 19, 2020 and July 18, 2020, which should be repaid.

DECISION:

Ms. Oehler's appeal of the June 24, 2021, (reference 03) decision was filed on time. The June 24, 2021, (reference 03) unemployment insurance decision is affirmed. Ms. Oehler has been overpaid FPUC benefits in the amount of \$7,800.00, which must be repaid.



Daniel Zeno
Administrative Law Judge
Iowa Workforce Development
Unemployment Insurance Appeals Bureau
1000 East Grand Avenue
Des Moines, Iowa 50319-0209
Fax 515-478-3528

September 27, 2021
Decision Dated and Mailed

dz/kmj

NOTE TO MS. OEHLER:

- This decision determines you have been overpaid FPUC 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.
- **You may also request a waiver of this overpayment either 1) online, OR 2) in writing by mail.**

- The **online request form** is available on the Iowa Workforce Development website at: <https://www.iowaworkforcedevelopment.gov/federal-unemployment-insurance-overpayment-recovery>
- The **written request** must include the following information:
 1. Your name & address.
 2. Decision number/date of decision.
 3. Dollar amount of overpayment requested for waiver.
 4. 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.