

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS BUREAU**

MARIA I GOMEZ
Claimant

ADVANCE SERVICES INC
Employer

APPEAL 17A-UI-06861-NM-T

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE
DECISION**

OC: 02/19/17
Claimant: Appellant (1)

Iowa Code § 96.6(2) – Timeliness of Appeal
Iowa Code § 96.5(1)j – Voluntary Quitting – Temporary Employment

STATEMENT OF THE CASE:

The claimant filed an appeal from the June 13, 2017, (reference 02) unemployment insurance decision that denied benefits based upon her voluntary quit by failing to notify the employment firm within three days of an assignment ending. The parties were properly notified of the hearing. A telephone hearing was held on July 25, 2017. The claimant participated and testified with the assistance of a Spanish language interpreter from CTS Language Link. Also present on behalf of claimant, but not testifying was Marivel Palomino. The employer participated through Risk Manager Melissa Lewien. Employer's Exhibits 1 through 3 and Department's Exhibit D-1 were received into evidence.

ISSUE:

Is the claimant's appeal is timely?

FINDINGS OF FACT:

Having reviewed all of the evidence in the record, the administrative law judge finds: A unemployment insurance decision was mailed to the claimant's last known address of record on June 13, 2017. The decision disqualified claimant from benefits. Claimant could not recall exactly when she received the decision, but testified mail from Des Moines usually reaches her within three to four business days and she had no reason to believe it was delayed during this time period. Claimant is not proficient in English, but testified her daughter, who is fluent in English read the entire decision to her. The decision contained a warning that an appeal must be postmarked or received by the Appeals Bureau by June 23, 2017. The appeal was not filed until July 7, 2017, which is after the date noticed on the unemployment insurance decision. Claimant testified she fully understood the decision and was not sure why she did not appeal earlier, but thought she might have failed to notice the appeal deadline as her daughter read the letter to her.

REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:

For the reasons that follow, the administrative law judge concludes the claimant's appeal is untimely.

Iowa Code § 96.6(2) provides:

2. Initial determination. A representative designated by the director shall promptly notify all interested parties to the claim of its filing, and the parties have ten days from the date of mailing the notice of the filing of the claim by ordinary mail to the last known address to protest payment of benefits to the claimant. The representative shall promptly examine the claim and any protest, take the initiative to ascertain relevant information concerning the claim, and, on the basis of the facts found by the representative, shall determine whether or not the claim is valid, the week with respect to which benefits shall commence, the weekly benefit amount payable and its maximum duration, and whether any disqualification shall be imposed. The claimant has the burden of proving that the claimant meets the basic eligibility conditions of § 96.4. The employer has the burden of proving that the claimant is disqualified for benefits pursuant to § 96.5, except as provided by this subsection. The claimant has the initial burden to produce evidence showing that the claimant is not disqualified for benefits in cases involving § 96.5, subsection 10, and has the burden of proving that a voluntary quit pursuant to § 96.5, subsection 1, was for good cause attributable to the employer and that the claimant is not disqualified for benefits in cases involving § 96.5, subsection 1, paragraphs "a" through "h". Unless 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. If an administrative law judge affirms a decision of the representative, or the appeal board affirms a decision of the administrative law judge allowing benefits, the benefits shall be paid regardless of any appeal which is thereafter taken, but if the decision is finally reversed, no employer's account shall be charged with benefits so paid and this relief from charges shall apply to both contributory and reimbursable employers, notwithstanding § 96.8, subsection 5.

The ten calendar days for appeal begins running on the mailing date. The "decision date" found in the upper right-hand portion of the representative's decision, unless otherwise corrected immediately below that entry, is presumptive evidence of the date of mailing. *Gaskins v. Unempl. Comp. Bd. of Rev.*, 429 A.2d 138 (Pa. Comm. 1981); *Johnson v. Bd. of Adjustment*, 239 N.W.2d 873, 92 A.L.R.3d 304 (Iowa 1976). Pursuant to rules Iowa Admin. Code r. 871-26.2(96)(1) and 871 IAC 24.35(96)(1), appeals are considered filed when postmarked, if mailed. *Messina v. Iowa Dep't of Job Serv.*, 341 N.W.2d 52 (Iowa 1983). The postage meter mark on the last day for filing does not perfect a timely appeal if the postmark affixed by the United States Postal Service is beyond the filing date. *Pepsi-Cola Bottling Company of Cedar Rapids v. Emp't Appeal Bd.*, 465 N.W.2d 674 (Iowa Ct. App. 1990).

The record in this case shows that more than ten calendar days elapsed between the mailing date and the date this appeal was filed. 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. Iowa Dep't of Job Serv.*, 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. Iowa Dep't of Job Serv.*, 276 N.W.2d 373, 377 (Iowa 1979); see also *In re Appeal of Elliott*, 319 N.W.2d 244, 247 (Iowa 1982). The question in this case thus becomes whether the appellant was deprived of a reasonable opportunity to assert an appeal in a timely fashion. *Hendren v. Iowa Emp't Sec. Comm'n*, 217 N.W.2d 255 (Iowa 1974); *Smith v. Iowa Emp't Sec. Comm'n*, 212 N.W.2d 471, 472 (Iowa 1973). The record shows that the appellant did have a reasonable opportunity to file a timely appeal.

While there is a language barrier present, claimant testified she had someone fluent in English read the decision letter to her and that she fully understood this decision. The administrative law judge concludes that failure to file a timely appeal within the time prescribed by the Iowa Employment Security Law was not due to any Agency error or misinformation or delay or other action of the United States Postal Service pursuant to Iowa Admin. Code r. 871-24.35(2). The administrative law judge further concludes that the appeal was not timely filed pursuant to Iowa Code § 96.6(2), and the administrative law judge lacks jurisdiction to make a determination with respect to the nature of the appeal. See *Beardslee v. Iowa Dep't of Job Serv.*, 276 N.W.2d 373 (Iowa 1979) and *Franklin v. Iowa Dep't of Job Serv.*, 277 N.W.2d 877 (Iowa 1979).

DECISION:

The June 13, 2017, (reference 02) unemployment insurance decision is affirmed. The appeal in this case was not timely, and the decision of the representative remains in effect.

Nicole Merrill
Administrative Law Judge

Decision Dated and Mailed

nm/rvs