

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

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**KAHWALA F MBEZI**  
Claimant

**APPEAL 22A-UI-13177-DB-T  
ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE  
DECISION**

**WHIRLPOOL CORPORATION**  
Employer

**OC: 12/22/19  
Claimant: Appellant (5)**

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Iowa Code § 96.6(2) – Timeliness of Appeal  
Iowa Code § 96.19(38) – Total, Partial, Temporary Unemployment  
Iowa Code § 96.4(3) – Able to and Available for Work

**STATEMENT OF THE CASE:**

The claimant/appellant filed an appeal from the March 23, 2021 (reference 01) unemployment insurance decision that found that the claimant was not eligible for benefits due to him still being employed at the same hours and same wages. The parties were properly notified of the hearing. A telephone hearing was held on July 18, 2022. The claimant participated personally. The employer did not participate. Language Link provided language interpretation services to the claimant. The administrative law judge took official notice of the claimant's unemployment insurance benefits records. The hearing was consolidated with Appeal No. 22A-UI-13178-DB-T; 22A-UI-13179-DB-T; 22A-UI-13180-DB-T; 22A-UI-13181-DB-T.

**ISSUES:**

Did the claimant file a timely appeal?  
Was the claimant totally, partially or temporarily unemployed?  
Was the claimant able to work and available for work?

**FINDINGS OF FACT:**

Having reviewed all of the evidence in the record, the administrative law judge finds: A decision that found the claimant was not eligible for benefits was mailed to the claimant's correct address of record on March 23, 2021. The claimant did not receive the decision in the mail. The decision contained a warning that an appeal must be postmarked or received by the Appeals Section by April 2, 2021. The claimant filed an appeal on May 27, 2022, when he received a statement in the mail stating he was overpaid benefits.

Claimant was employed with Whirlpool Corporation and filed an additional claim for unemployment insurance benefits effective May 31, 2020. From May 31, 2020 through August 15, 2020, there were several weeks in which the claimant had COVID-19 like symptoms, including a fever and cough. He took medications at home and eventually recovered from the illness. He was told not to come to work if he had COVID-19 like symptoms. For the week-ending June 6, 2020, the claimant reported \$188.00 in wages earned and received benefits of

\$413.00. For the weeks between June 7, 2020 and July 4, 2020, the claimant reported no earned wages. His weekly benefit amount was \$ 481.00.

For the week-ending July 11, 2020, the claimant reported vacation pay of \$752.00 and was paid \$0.00 in benefits during that week. For the weeks between July 12, 2020 and July 25, 2020, the claimant reported no wages and was paid his weekly-benefit amount each week. For the week-ending August 1, 2020, the claimant reported earning wages of \$940.00 and was paid \$0.00 in benefits. For the week-ending August 8, 2020, the claimant reported earning wages of \$940.00 and was paid \$0.00 in benefits. For the week-ending August 15, 2020, the claimant report earning wages of \$0.00 and received his weekly-benefit amount of \$481.00. Claimant received regular unemployment insurance benefits from the State of Iowa in the amount of \$3,780.00 for the weeks between May 31, 2020 and August 15, 2020. Claimant also received FPUC benefits of \$4,200.00 for the weeks between May 31, 2020 and July 25, 2020. Claimant also received LWA program benefits of \$300.00 for the week-ending August 15, 2020.

### **REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:**

For the reasons that follow, the administrative law judge concludes as follows:

Iowa Code section 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 issuance of the notice of the filing of the claim to protest payment of benefits to the claimant. All interested parties shall select a format as specified by the department to receive such notifications. 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 section 96.4. The employer has the burden of proving that the claimant is disqualified for benefits pursuant to section 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 section 96.5, subsections 10 and 11, and has the burden of proving that a voluntary quit pursuant to section 96.5, subsection 1, was for good cause attributable to the employer and that the claimant is not disqualified for benefits in cases involving section 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 issued, 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 section 96.8, subsection 5.

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

Date of submission and extension of time for payments and notices.

(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.

a. For submission that is not within the statutory or regulatory period to be considered timely, the interested party must submit a written explanation setting forth the circumstances of the delay.

b. The division shall designate personnel who are to decide whether an extension of time shall be granted.

c. No submission shall be considered timely if the delay in filing was unreasonable, as determined by the department after considering the circumstances in the case.

d. If submission is not considered timely, although the interested party contends that the delay was due to division error or misinformation or delay or other action of the United States postal service, the division shall issue an appealable decision to the interested party.

The ten calendar days for appeal begins running on the issuing 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). In this case, the claimant never received the decision in the mail due to postal service delay or error. As such, the appeal shall be considered timely pursuant to Iowa Admin. Code r. 871-24.35(2).

The next issue is whether the claimant was eligible for benefits. The administrative law judge finds that he was not.

In May of 2020, Iowa Code section 96.19(38) provided:

"Total and partial unemployment".

a. An individual shall be deemed "totally unemployed" in any week with respect to which no wages are payable to the individual and during which the individual performs no services.

b. An individual shall be deemed partially unemployed in any week in which either of the following apply:

(1) While employed at the individual's then regular job, the individual works less than the regular full-time week and in which the individual earns less than the individual's weekly benefit amount plus fifteen dollars.

(2) The individual, having been separated from the individual's regular job, earns at odd jobs less than the individual's weekly benefit amount plus fifteen dollars.

c. An individual shall be deemed temporarily unemployed if for a period, verified by the department, not to exceed four consecutive weeks, the individual is unemployed due to

a plant shutdown, vacation, inventory, lack of work or emergency from the individual's regular job or trade in which the individual worked full-time and will again work full-time, if the individual's employment, although temporarily suspended, has not been terminated.

In May of 2020, Iowa Code § 96.4(3) provided:

An unemployed individual shall be eligible to receive benefits with respect to any week only if the department finds that:

3. The individual is able to work, is available for work, and is earnestly and actively seeking work. This subsection is waived if the individual is deemed partially unemployed, while employed at the individual's regular job, as defined in § 96.19, subsection 38, paragraph "b", subparagraph 1, or temporarily unemployed as defined in § 96.19, subsection 38, paragraph "c". The work search requirements of this subsection and the disqualification requirement for failure to apply for, or to accept suitable work of § 96.5, subsection 3 are waived if the individual is not disqualified for benefits under § 96.5, subsection 1, paragraph "h".

Iowa Admin. Code r. 871-24.22(1) provides:

Benefits eligibility conditions. For an individual to be eligible to receive benefits the department must find that the individual is able to work, available for work, and earnestly and actively seeking work. The individual bears the burden of establishing that the individual is able to work, available for work, and earnestly and actively seeking work.

(1) Able to work. An individual must be physically and mentally able to work in some gainful employment, not necessarily in the individual's customary occupation, but which is engaged in by others as a means of livelihood.

a. Illness, injury or pregnancy. Each case is decided upon an individual basis, recognizing that various work opportunities present different physical requirements. A statement from a medical practitioner is considered prima facie evidence of the physical ability of the individual to perform the work required. A pregnant individual must meet the same criteria for determining ableness as do all other individuals.

b. Interpretation of ability to work. The law provides that an individual must be able to work to be eligible for benefits. This means that the individual must be physically able to work, not necessarily in the individual's customary occupation, but able to work in some reasonably suitable, comparable, gainful, full-time endeavor, other than self-employment, which is generally available in the labor market in which the individual resides.

Iowa Admin. Code r. 871-24.22(2) provides:

Benefits eligibility conditions. For an individual to be eligible to receive benefits the department must find that the individual is able to work, available for work, and earnestly and actively seeking work. The individual bears the burden of establishing that the individual is able to work, available for work, and earnestly and actively seeking work.

(2) Available for work. The availability requirement is satisfied when an individual is willing, able, and ready to accept suitable work which the individual does not have good

cause to refuse, that is, the individual is genuinely attached to the labor market. Since, under unemployment insurance laws, it is the availability of an individual that is required to be tested, the labor market must be described in terms of the individual. A labor market for an individual means a market for the type of service which the individual offers in the geographical area in which the individual offers the service. Market in that sense does not mean that job vacancies must exist; the purpose of unemployment insurance is to compensate for lack of job vacancies. It means only that the type of services which an individual is offering is generally performed in the geographical area in which the individual is offering the services.

Iowa Admin. Code r. 871-24.23(1) provides:

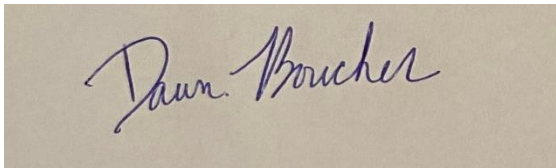
Availability disqualifications. The following are reasons for a claimant being disqualified for being unavailable for work.

(1) An individual who is ill and presently not able to perform work due to illness.

In this case, the claimant was partially unemployed for the week-ending June 6, 2020; totally unemployed for the week-ending June 13, 2020; June 20, 2020; June 27, 2020; and July 4, 2020; reported vacation pay in excess of his weekly-benefit amount, plus \$15.00 for the week-ending July 11, 2020; was totally unemployed for the week-ending July 18, 2020 and July 25, 2020; was fully employed for the week-ending August 1, 2020 and August 8, 2020; and was totally unemployed for the week-ending August 15, 2020. If the claimant was unemployed, it was because he was suffering from COVID-19 like symptoms, including fever and cough. The burden is on the claimant to establish that he is able to work and available for work within the meaning of the statute. Iowa Code § 96.6(2); Iowa Admin. Code r. 871-24.22. Because the claimant was ill and unable to work during the weeks in which he was totally or partially unemployed, he was not able to work pursuant to Iowa law. As such, regular unemployment insurance benefits funded by the State of Iowa are effective May 31, 2020 through August 15, 2020 as the claimant was not able to and available for work.

**DECISION:**

The appeal is considered timely. The March 23, 2021 (reference 01) unemployment insurance decision is modified with no change in effect. The claimant was not able to and available for work effective May 31, 2020 through August 15, 2020.



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Dawn Boucher  
Administrative Law Judge

August 12, 2022  
Decision Dated and Mailed

db/db

**APPEAL RIGHTS.** If you disagree with the 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  
4<sup>th</sup> 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>.

**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 adquiera firmeza. Puede encontrar información adicional sobre cómo presentar una petición en el Código de Iowa §17A.19, que está en línea en <https://www.legis.iowa.gov/docs/code/17A.19.pdf>.

**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.