

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT  
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS BUREAU**

**JENI BECKMAN**  
Claimant

**APPEAL 21A-UI-09668-WG-T**

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE  
DECISION**

**THE UNIVERSITY OF IOWA**  
Employer

**OC: 02/07/21**  
**Claimant: Appellant (1)**

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

**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 disqualified from receipt of benefits based upon her voluntarily leaving her employment without good cause. The parties were properly notified of the hearing. A telephone hearing was initiated on June 15, 2021. However, due to technical difficulties, the hearing could not be completed on that date. The hearing reconvened and was completed on June 28, 2021. The claimant, Jeni Beckman, participated personally. Claimant also called her daughter, Kelly Strein, as well as her licensed mental health provider, Beth Porter, to testify. The employer, The University of Iowa participated through its witness, Jessica Wade.

**ISSUE:**

Did the claimant file a timely appeal?

**FINDINGS OF FACT:**

Having reviewed all of the evidence in the record, the administrative law judge finds:

A decision that disqualified the claimant from receipt of unemployment insurance benefits was mailed to the claimant's correct address of record on March 23, 2021. The claimant received the decision prior to the appeal deadline listed on the decision. Claimant's daughter, Kelly Strein, testified that she believed the appeal in this case was filed on the same date the decision was received and opened by claimant. However, claimant indicated on her appeal documentation that she received the decision on or about April 1, 2021. She confirmed in her testimony at hearing that she received the decision on April 1, 2021.

Ultimately, a factual determination must be made on when claimant received the decision because claimant offered testimony from her treating licensed mental health professional that she has a mental health disorder and at times reverts to a mental age that could be six years of age. In this situation, however, there would be no reason for claimant to indicate in her appeal or concede at trial that she received the underlying decision on April 1, 2021 unless that is an accurate fact. Claimant's daughter did not manage claimant's mail at the time. Accordingly, she may not have known that the decision was previously received but only opened at a later date.

In fact, Ms. Strein conceded during the hearing that she cannot be sure of the date the decision was received by claimant. I find that claimant received the underlying decision on April 1, 2021.

The decision contained a warning that an appeal must be postmarked or received by the Appeals Section by April 2, 2021. The claimant filed her appeal on April 5, 2021 via the online appeals website. Claimant offered no explanation why she waited until April 5, 2021 to appeal the underlying decision. Ms. Strein could not recall at the time of hearing why she and claimant had indicated that the decision was received on April 1, 2021. Claimant's mental health provider testified that claimant's dissociative disorder leaves claimant feeling overwhelmed and reverting to a much younger, less mature, mental age at time. However, Ms. Porter was unable to definitively state whether claimant was mentally competent by the end of March or beginning of April 2021 to manage her own affairs. Ultimately, I find that claimant failed to prove a definitive reason or provide an excuse for her delay in filing an appeal. I specifically find that the delay in filing an appeal was not the result of any error, mistake, or delay by either the agency or the United States Postal Service.

### REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:

For the reasons that follow, the administrative law judge concludes that 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.

(emphasis added).

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).

The appeal in this case was filed online on April 5, 2021. 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 because she had received the decision in the mail prior to the due date. Claimant's 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). As such, 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 March 23, 2021 (reference 01) decision is affirmed. The appeal in this case was not timely and the decision of the representative remains in effect.



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William H. Grell  
Administrative Law Judge  
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July 13, 2021  
Decision Dated and Mailed

whg/lj