

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS**

CHRISTINE R CHAMBERLAIN
Claimant

RUFFALO NOEL LEVITZ LLC
Employer

APPEAL 21A-UI-13394-AD-T

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE
DECISION**

OC: 03/29/20
Claimant: Appellant (6R)

Iowa Code § 96.6(2) – Filing – Timely Appeal
Iowa Admin. Code r. 871-24.35 – Filing

STATEMENT OF THE CASE:

On June 2, 2021, Christine Chamberlain (claimant/appellant) filed an appeal from the September 11, 2020 (reference 01) unemployment insurance decision that denied benefits as of March 29, 2020 based on a finding claimant requested and was granted a leave of absence.

A telephone hearing was held on August 11, 2021. The parties were properly notified of the hearing. Claimant participated personally. Ruffalo Noel Levitz LLC (employer/respondent) did not register a number for the hearing or participate. Official notice was taken of the administrative record.

ISSUE(S):

- I. Is the appeal timely?

FINDINGS OF FACT:

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

The Unemployment Insurance Decision was mailed to claimant at the above address on September 11, 2020. That was claimant's correct address and she did receive the decision around that time. The decision states that it becomes final unless an appeal is postmarked or received by Iowa Workforce Development Appeals Section by September 21, 2020. However, if the due date falls on a Saturday, Sunday or legal holiday, the appeal period is extended to the next working day. Claimant appealed the decision on June 2, 2021. Claimant did not appeal the decision because she was told to apply for Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) and believed doing so was essentially appealing. She later appealed when she got a decision finding she was overpaid benefits.

The administrative law judge notes claimant was allowed PUA effective March 29, 2020. However, the administrative record indicates PUA has not paid out.

REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:

For the reasons that follow, the administrative law judge concludes the claimant's appeal was untimely. The September 11, 2020 (reference 01) unemployment insurance decision that denied benefits as of March 29, 2020 based on a finding claimant requested and was granted a leave of absence is therefore final and remains in force.

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)(a) 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 on 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)
 - (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.

There is a mandatory duty to file appeals from representatives' decisions within the time allotted by statute, and the Administrative Law Judge has no authority to change the decision of representative if a timely appeal is not filed. *Franklin v. Iowa Dept. Job Service*, 277 N.W.2d 877, 881 (Iowa 1979). The ten-day period for appealing an initial determination concerning a claim for benefits has been described as jurisdictional. *Messina v. Iowa Dept. of Job Service*, 341 N.W.2d 52, 55 (Iowa 1983); *Beardslee v. Iowa Dept. Job Service*, 276 N.W.2d 373 (Iowa 1979). The only basis for changing the ten-day period would be where notice to the appealing party was constitutionally invalid. *E.g. Beardslee v. Iowa Dept. Job Service*, 276 N.W.2d 373, 377 (Iowa 1979). The question in such cases becomes whether the appellant was deprived of a reasonable opportunity to assert an appeal in a timely fashion. *Hendren v. Iowa Employment Sec. Commission*, 217 N.W.2d 255 (Iowa 1974); *Smith v. Iowa Employment Sec. Commission*, 212 N.W.2d 471 (Iowa 1973). The question of whether the Claimant has been denied a reasonable opportunity to assert an appeal is also informed by rule 871-24.35(2) which states that “the submission of any ...appeal...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.”

Claimant received the decision in a timely manner. The delay in appealing was due to claimant not closely reading the decision and following the directions to appeal. This is not a good cause reason for delay and the administrative law judge therefore concludes the appeal is not timely. Because the appeal is not timely, the decision has become final and the administrative law judge lacks jurisdiction to change it.

The administrative law judge notes claimant was allowed PUA effective March 29, 2020. However, the administrative record indicates PUA has not paid out. This matter is remanded for issuance of PUA payments due to claimant and offsetting of any overpayment of regular unemployment insurance benefits to the extent allowed by law.

DECISION:

The administrative law judge concludes the claimant's appeal was untimely. The September 11, 2020 (reference 01) unemployment insurance decision that denied benefits as of March 29, 2020 based on a finding claimant requested and was granted a leave of absence is therefore final and remains in force.

REMAND:

The is remanded for issuance of PUA payments due to claimant and offsetting of any overpayment of regular unemployment insurance benefits to the extent allowed by law.



Andrew B. Duffelmeyer
Administrative Law Judge
Unemployment Insurance Appeals Bureau
1000 East Grand Avenue
Des Moines, Iowa 50319-0209
Fax (515) 478-3528

August 18, 2021
Decision Dated and Mailed

abd/scn