

EMPLOYMENT APPEALS BOARD DECISION
2023-EAB-0863-R

Request for Reconsideration Allowed
EAB Decision 2023-EAB-0863 Adhered to on Reconsideration

PROCEDURAL HISTORY AND FINDINGS OF FACT: On December 15, 2021, the Oregon Employment Department (the Department) served notice of an administrative decision concluding that claimant received unemployment insurance benefits to which he was not entitled, and assessing an overpayment of \$1,500 in Lost Wages Assistance (LWA) benefits that he was required to repay to the Department (decision # 0564110). Claimant filed a timely request for hearing. On July 10, 2023, ALJ Ramey conducted a hearing, and on July 19, 2023 issued Order No. 23-UI-230766, affirming decision # 0564110. On August 7, 2023, claimant filed an application for review with the Employment Appeals Board (EAB). On September 21, 2023, EAB issued EAB Decision 2023-EAB-0863, reversing Order No. 23-UI-230766 by concluding that claimant was not liable for an overpayment of benefits that he was required to repay the Department. On October 11, 2023, the Department filed a request for reconsideration of EAB Decision 2023-EAB-0863. This decision is issued pursuant to EAB's authority under ORS 657.290(3).

CONCLUSIONS AND REASONS: The Department's request for reconsideration is allowed. On reconsideration, EAB Decision 2023-EAB-0863 is adhered to as clarified herein.

ORS 657.290(3) authorizes EAB to reconsider any previous EAB decision, including "the making of a new decision to the extent necessary and appropriate for the correction of previous error of fact or law." "Any party may request reconsideration to correct an error of material fact or law, or to explain any unexplained inconsistency with Employment Department rule, or officially stated Employment Department position, or prior Employment Department practice." OAR 471-041-0145(1) (May 13, 2019). The request is subject to dismissal unless it includes a statement that a copy was provided to the other parties, and is filed on or before the 20th day after the decision sought to be reconsidered was mailed. OAR 471-041-0145(2).

The Department filed its request for reconsideration consistent with the requirements set forth in OAR 471-041-0145. The request for reconsideration therefore is allowed.

On December 15, 2021, the Department issued an administrative decision concluding that claimant received benefits to which he was not entitled and assessed an overpayment of \$1,500 in Lost Wages Assistance (LWA) benefits that claimant was required to repay for a time period concluding on or before August 31, 2020 (decision # 0564110). After a hearing on the merits of that decision, OAH issued Order No. 23-UI-230766, which affirmed the administrative overpayment decision. The decision under reconsideration reversed Order No. 23-UI-230766 because the overpayment decision amended the decisions to pay claimant more than a year after the decisions to pay had been made, and is barred by ORS 657.267(4). EAB Decision 2023-EAB-0863 at 3–4.

In its request for reconsideration, the Department assigns error to this decision, asserting that despite the fact that more than a year had passed after the original decisions to allow payment, it nevertheless had authority to issue the overpayment decision, explaining, in relevant part:

As stated in the EAB order, OED issued an overpayment decision (# 0564110) on December 15, 2021[.]

While it's correct that this overpayment decision was issued more than 12 months after weeks were paid, decision #0564110 merely informed the claimant of an overpayment that resulted from the **prior**, denying separation decision. Nothing about decision #0564110 amended or altered decision #133113. Decision #133113 found that the claimant had been discharged for misconduct connected with work and was therefore disqualified from receiving benefits effective March 15, 2020. Prior payments for the period at issue were made within 12 months of the issuance of decision #133113. Therefore, the Department had authority to deny the weeks at issue with no continuous jurisdiction necessary and the overpayment should stand.

Oregon Employment Department's Request for Reconsideration at 1 (emphasis in original).

The Department does not cite to any authority to support its argument that the overpayment decision “merely informed” claimant about the overpayment, or that decision # 133113 is the amendment to the Department's previous decisions to pay claimant. Decision # 133113 does not reverse the decisions to pay claimant. Instead, decision # 133113 only concludes that claimant was denied benefits effective March 15, 2020, based on a disqualifying work separation. Decision # 133113 did not conclude that claimant was denied, overpaid, or required to repay benefits for any of the weeks at issue. The overpayment decision, however, amends the decision to pay by reversing the payment decisions and requiring claimant to repay benefits received. The overpayment decision therefore does not “merely inform.” Instead, it creates a financial liability to claimant, well over a thousand dollars, more than a year after payments were made, when the payments were not made due to a willful misrepresentation or fraud. Moreover, ORS 657.267(4) excludes amendments in cases of alleged fraud from the one-year time limitation. This implies that overpayment decisions, whether they be fraud, claimant fault but non-fraud, or agency error, are what the statute contemplates as the amendment of the original decisions to allow payment. Since the one enumerated (but excepted) type of case, an alleged case of fraud, takes the form of an overpayment decision, it follows that the one-year time limitation applies to claimant fault but non-fraud and agency error cases, and that ORS 657.267(4) contemplates the overpayment decisions that give rise to those kinds of cases as the amendment.

A review of the legislative history of ORS 657.267(4) lends further support to the conclusion that overpayment decisions amend payment decisions. The one-year time limit was added to the language of the statute out of concern that it would be inequitable to allow OED to go years when there was an “honest mistake.” If ORS 657.267(4) is construed to permit the Department to assess non-fraud overpayments without a time limitation, the practical effect is that the Department could be allowed to assess overpayments years after the circumstances giving rise to the overpayment occurred, contrary to the addition of the one-year time limit in the language of the statute.

The Department further argued that “In the absence of an actual factual record regarding if or when the claimant earned an amount sufficient to overcome the separation disqualification, EAB should remand for development of the record rather than decide against any party on an issue facts that OAH did not develop.” Oregon Employment Department’s Request for Reconsideration at 1. The Department refers here to the explanation in the decision under reconsideration that “decision # 133113 did not amend the Department’s original decisions to allow payment for the weeks at issue partly because it did not purport to assess whether claimant had requalified for benefits each week and, accordingly, whether each weekly claim was allowed or denied on that basis.” EAB Decision 2023-EAB-0863 at 4. However, remand is not necessary in this matter. Even excepting the consideration of whether, or when, claimant had requalified for benefits, the record is clear that, for the above reasons, decision # 0564110 constituted the amendments to the original decisions to allow payment.

The Department’s request for reconsideration therefore fails to establish that EAB Decision 2023-EAB-0863 contained an error of material fact or law, and does not offer support for its position. EAB Decision 2023-EAB-0863 therefore is adhered to on reconsideration.

DECISION: The Department’s request for reconsideration is allowed. On reconsideration, EAB Decision 2023-EAB-0863 is adhered to as clarified herein.

D. Hettle and A. Steger-Bentz;
S. Serres, not participating.

DATE of Service: November 22, 2023

NOTE: You may appeal this decision by filing a Petition for Judicial Review with the Oregon Court of Appeals within 30 days of the date of service listed above. *See* ORS 657.282. For forms and information, you may write to the Oregon Court of Appeals, Records Section, 1163 State Street, Salem, Oregon 97310 or visit the Court of Appeals website at courts.oregon.gov. Once on the website, use the ‘search’ function to search for ‘petition for judicial review employment appeals board’. A link to the forms and information will be among the search results.

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Understanding Your Employment Appeals Board Decision

English

Attention – This decision affects your unemployment benefits. If you do not understand this decision, contact the Employment Appeals Board immediately. If you do not agree with this decision, you may file a Petition for Judicial Review with the Oregon Court of Appeals following the instructions written at the end of the decision.

Simplified Chinese

注意 – 本判決會影響您的失業救濟金。如果您不明白本判決，請立即聯繫就業上訴委員會。如果您不同意此判決，您可以按照該判決結尾所寫的說明，向俄勒岡州上訴法院提出司法複審申請。

Traditional Chinese

注意 – 本判決會影響您的失業救濟金。如果您不明白本判決，請立即聯繫就業上訴委員會。如果您不同意此判決，您可以按照該判決結尾所寫的說明，向俄勒岡州上訴法院提出司法複審申請。

Tagalog

Paalala – Nakakaapekto ang desisyong ito sa iyong mga benepisyo sa pagkawala ng trabaho. Kung hindi mo naiintindihan ang desisyong ito, makipag-ugnayan kaagad sa Lupon ng mga Apela sa Trabaho (Employment Appeals Board). Kung hindi ka sumasang-ayon sa desisyong ito, maaari kang maghain ng isang Petisyon sa Pagsusuri ng Hukuman (Petition for Judicial Review) sa Hukuman sa Paghahabol (Court of Appeals) ng Oregon na sinusunod ang mga tagubilin na nakasulat sa dulo ng desisyon.

Vietnamese

Chú ý - Quyết định này ảnh hưởng đến trợ cấp thất nghiệp của quý vị. Nếu quý vị không hiểu quyết định này, hãy liên lạc với Ban Kháng Cáo Việc Làm ngay lập tức. Nếu quý vị không đồng ý với quyết định này, quý vị có thể nộp Đơn Xin Tái Xét Tư Pháp với Tòa Kháng Cáo Oregon theo các hướng dẫn được viết ra ở cuối quyết định này.

Spanish

Atención – Esta decisión afecta sus beneficios de desempleo. Si no entiende esta decisión, comuníquese inmediatamente con la Junta de Apelaciones de Empleo. Si no está de acuerdo con esta decisión, puede presentar una Aplicación de Revisión Judicial ante el Tribunal de Apelaciones de Oregon siguiendo las instrucciones escritas al final de la decisión.

Russian

Внимание – Данное решение влияет на ваше пособие по безработице. Если решение Вам непонятно – немедленно обратитесь в Апелляционный Комитет по Трудоустройству. Если Вы не согласны с принятым решением, вы можете подать Ходатайство о Пересмотре Судебного Решения в Апелляционный Суд штата Орегон, следуя инструкциям, описанным в конце решения.

Khmer

ចំណុចសំខាន់ – សេចក្តីសម្រេចនេះមានផលប៉ះពាល់ដល់អត្ថប្រយោជន៍គ្មានការងារធ្វើរបស់លោកអ្នក។ ប្រសិនបើលោកអ្នកមិនយល់អំពីសេចក្តីសម្រេចនេះ សូមទាក់ទងគណៈកម្មការឧទ្ធរណ៍ការងារភ្លាមៗ។ ប្រសិនបើលោកអ្នកមិនយល់ស្របចំពោះសេចក្តីសម្រេចនេះទេ លោកអ្នកអាចដាក់ពាក្យប្តឹងសុំឲ្យមានការពិនិត្យរឿងក្តីឡើងវិញជាមួយតុលាការឧទ្ធរណ៍រដ្ឋ Oregon ដោយអនុវត្តតាមសេចក្តីណែនាំដែលសរសេរនៅខាងចុងបញ្ចប់នៃសេចក្តីសម្រេចនេះ។

Laotian

ເອົາໃຈໃສ່ – ຄໍາຕັດສິນນີ້ມີຜົນກະທົບຕໍ່ກັບເງິນຊ່ວຍເຫຼືອການຫວ່າງງານຂອງທ່ານ. ຖ້າທ່ານບໍ່ເຂົ້າໃຈຄໍາຕັດສິນນີ້, ກະລຸນາຕິດຕໍ່ຫາຄະນະກຳມະການອຸທອນການຈ້າງງານໃນທັນທີ. ຖ້າທ່ານບໍ່ເຫັນດີນຳຄໍາຕັດສິນນີ້, ທ່ານສາມາດຍື່ນຄໍາຮ້ອງຂໍການທົບທວນຄໍາຕັດສິນນຳສານອຸທອນລັດ Oregon ໄດ້ໂດຍປະຕິບັດຕາມຄໍາແນະນຳທີ່ບອກໄວ້ຢູ່ຕອນທ້າຍຂອງຄໍາຕັດສິນນີ້.

Arabic

هذا القرار قد يؤثر على منحة البطالة الخاصة بك، إذا لم تفهم هذا القرار، إتصل بمجلس منازعات العمل فوراً، و إذا كنت لا توافق على هذا القرار، يمكنك رفع شكوى للمراجعة القانونية بمحكمة الاستئناف بأوريغون و ذلك بإتباع الإرشادات المدرجة أسفل القرار.

Farsi

توجه - این حکم بر مزایای بیکاری شما تاثیر می گذارد. اگر با این تصمیم موافق نیستید، بلافاصله با هیأت فرجام خواهی استخدام تماس بگیرید. اگر از این حکم رضایت ندارید، می‌توانید با استفاده از دستور العمل موجود در پایان آن، از دادگاه تجدید نظر اورگان درخواست تجدید نظر کنید.

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