



unemployment insurance benefits for lack of jurisdiction because it was untimely filed. On appeal, plaintiff contends that this was the first time that she applied for unemployment benefits, she did everything she was supposed to do, and she was never offered any help. We affirm.

¶ 3 The record reveals that plaintiff was employed by Total Maintenance Cleaning, Inc. (Total Maintenance), from 1999 until 2013.<sup>1</sup> Plaintiff then applied for unemployment benefits. Total Maintenance contested the claim, alleging that plaintiff was terminated for falsifying her timesheets. The Illinois Department of Employment Security denied plaintiff's claim for unemployment benefits because she was discharged for misconduct connected to her work, *i.e.*, falsifying timesheets. The denial letter was mailed June 4, 2013, and stated that if plaintiff wished to appeal the denial of benefits, she must file an appeal within 30 days.

¶ 4 On July 8, 2013, plaintiff filed a request for reconsideration alleging that she was falsely accused of falsifying timesheets because she had been injured on the job and her employer was worried she might sue.

¶ 5 Although a hearing was set, neither plaintiff nor Total Maintenance appeared. The referee then dismissed plaintiff's appeal as untimely because the denial letter was mailed to plaintiff on June 4, 2013, and she did not file her appeal until July 8, 2013, more than 30 days later. The referee's decision stated that if plaintiff wished to appeal to the Board, she must file such an appeal in writing within 30 days of July 17, 2013, the date that the referee's decision was mailed. Plaintiff filed her appeal on October 22, 2013.

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<sup>1</sup> Total Maintenance Cleaning, Inc. is also referred to as Total Facility Maintenance, Inc. in the record.

¶ 6 The Board subsequently determined that it did not have jurisdiction to review plaintiff's appeal because it was untimely. Specifically, the Board concluded that because the referee's decision was mailed on July 17, 2013, plaintiff's appeal was due 30 days later on August 16, 2013. Because plaintiff's appeal was filed on October 22, 2013, it was untimely and had to be dismissed. Plaintiff then filed a *pro se* complaint for administrative review of the Board's decision in the circuit court. The court subsequently affirmed the Board's decision.

¶ 7 On appeal, plaintiff contends that this was the first time that she applied for unemployment benefits, that she did the best she could, and that she was not given any help.

¶ 8 Initially, this court notes that plaintiff has failed to comply with our supreme court's rules governing appellate review. See Supreme Court Rules 341 (eff. Feb. 6, 2013), and 342 (eff. Jan.1, 2005). Most notably, plaintiff has failed to articulate an organized and cohesive legal argument, and her brief is completely devoid of any citation to legal authority. Plaintiff's *pro se* status does not relieve her of the burden of complying with the format for appeals as mandated by our supreme court's rules (*Twardowski v. Holiday Hospitality Franchising*, 321 Ill. App. 3d 509, 511 (2001)), and her noncompliance with these rules subjects her appeal to dismissal (*LaGrange Memorial Hospital v. St. Paul Insurance Co.*, 317 Ill. App. 3d 863, 876 (2000)). However, because the issue on appeal is straightforward and we have the benefit of a cogent appellee's brief (see *Twardowski*, 321 Ill. App. 3d at 511), we choose to entertain the appeal (see *Harvey v. Carponelli*, 117 Ill. App. 3d 448, 451 (1983)).

¶ 9 Final administrative decisions are appealable only as provided by law, and a party seeking administrative review must strictly comply with the relevant statutory provisions. *Thompson v. Department of Employment Security*, 399 Ill. App. 3d 393, 395 (2010). This court

reviews *de novo* an agency's determination that it lacks the jurisdiction to hear an untimely appeal. *Thompson*, 399 Ill. App. 3d at 394-95.

¶ 10 Pursuant to section 801(A) of the Unemployment Insurance Act, the decision of a referee becomes final unless, within 30 calendar days after the date that the decision is mailed, an appeal to the Board is filed. 820 ILCS 405/801(A) (West 2012). The 30-day period is calculated from the date of service. *Thompson*, 399 Ill. App. 3d at 395. Service is completed by mailing the decision to the last known address of the party entitled to receive it. *Thompson*, 399 Ill. App. 3d at 395.

¶ 11 Here, the referee's decision was mailed to plaintiff on July 17, 2013. She then had 30 days from that date to file an appeal to the Board. The 30 days elapsed on August 16, 2013. Plaintiff filed her appeal on October 22, 2013. Therefore, plaintiff's appeal was untimely when it was filed more than 30 days after the date that the referee's decision was mailed (820 ILCS 405/801(A) (West 2012)). As the Board lacks jurisdiction to consider untimely appeals (*Thompson*, 399 Ill. App. 3d at 395), it properly dismissed plaintiff's appeal. Accordingly, we affirm the Board's dismissal of plaintiff's appeal.

¶ 12 Affirmed.