

§ 18.5

Act (41 U.S.C. 607). Adversary adjudications conducted by the Department are adjudications under 5 U.S.C. 554 in which the position of this or any other agency of the United States, or any component of an agency, is presented by an attorney or other representative who enters an appearance and participates in the proceeding. Pursuant to section 8(c) of the Contract Disputes Act (41 U.S.C. 607(c)), the Department has arranged for appeals from decisions by contracting officers of the Department to be decided by the General Services Administration Board of Contract Appeals. This Board, in accordance with its own procedures, shall be responsible for making determinations on applications pursuant to the Act relating to appeals to the Board from decisions of contracting officers of the Department. Such determinations are final, subject to appeal under §18.23. Any proceeding in which the Department may prescribe a lawful present or future rate is not covered by the Act. Proceedings to grant or renew licenses are also excluded, but proceedings to modify, suspend, or revoke licenses are covered if they are otherwise “adversary adjudications.” The Department proceedings covered are:

(1) *Department-wide.* (i) Title VI Civil Rights hearings conducted by the Department under 42 U.S.C. 2000d-1 and 15 CFR 8.12(d).

(ii) Handicap discrimination hearings conducted by the Department under 29 U.S.C. 794(a) and 15 CFR 8.12(d).

(2) National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (“NOAA”)

(i) Proceedings concerning suspension, revocation, or modification of a permit or license issued by NOAA.

(ii) Proceedings to assess civil penalties under any of the statutes administered by NOAA.

(3) *International Trade Administration.* Enforcement proceedings under the Anti-Boycott provisions of the Export Administration Act of 1979, 50 U.S.C. app. 2407.

(4) *Patent and Trademark Office.* Disbarment proceedings of attorneys and agents under 35 U.S.C. 32.

(b) The Department may also designate a proceeding not listed in paragraph (a) of this section as an adversary adjudication for purposes of the

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Act by so stating in an order initiating the proceeding or designating the matter for hearing. The Department's failure to designate a proceeding as an adversary adjudication shall not preclude the filing of an application by a party who believes the proceeding is covered by the Act; whether the proceeding is covered will then be an issue for resolution in proceedings on the application.

(c) If a proceeding includes both matters covered by the Act and matters specifically excluded from coverage, any award made will include only fees and expenses related to covered issues.

[47 FR 13510, Mar. 31, 1982, as amended at 53 FR 6798, Mar. 3, 1988]

§ 18.5 Eligibility of applicants.

(a) To be eligible for an award of attorney fees and other expenses under the Act, the applicant must be a party to the adversary adjudication for which it seeks an award. The term “party” is defined in 5 U.S.C. 551(3). The applicant must show that it meets all conditions of eligibility set out in this part.

(b) The types of eligible applicants are as follows:

(1) An individual with a net worth of not more than \$2 million;

(2) The sole owner of an unincorporated business who has a net worth of not more than \$7 million, including both personal and business interests, and not more than 500 employees;

(3) A charitable or other tax-exempt organization described in section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code (26 U.S.C. 501(c)(3)) with not more than 500 employees;

(4) A cooperative association as defined in section 15(a) of the Agricultural Marketing Act (12 U.S.C. 1141j(a)) with not more than 500 employees; and

(5) Any other partnership, corporation, association, unit of local government, or organization with a net worth of not more than \$7 million and not more than 500 employees.

(c) For the purpose of eligibility, the net worth and number of employees of an applicant shall be determined as of the date the proceeding was initiated.

(d) An applicant who owns an unincorporated business will be considered as an “individual” rather than a “sole owner of an unincorporated business” if the issues on which the applicant

prevails are related primarily to personal interests rather than to business interests.

(e) The employees of an applicant include all persons who regularly perform services for remuneration for the applicant, under the applicant's direction and control. Part-time employees shall be included on a proportional basis.

(f) The net worth and number of employees of the applicant and all of its affiliates shall be aggregated to determine eligibility. Any individual, corporation or other entity that directly or indirectly controls or owns a majority of the voting shares or other interest of the applicant, or any corporation or other entity of which the applicant directly or indirectly owns or controls a majority of the voting shares or other interest, will be considered an affiliate for purposes of this part, unless the adjudicative officer determines that such treatment would be unjust and contrary to the purposes of the Act in light of the actual relationship between the affiliated entities. In addition, the adjudicative officer may determine that financial relationships of the applicant other than those described in this paragraph constitute special circumstances that would make an award unjust.

(g) An applicant that participates in a proceeding primarily on behalf of one or more other persons or entities that would be ineligible is not itself eligible for an award.

[47 FR 13510, Mar. 31, 1982, as amended at 53 FR 6798, Mar. 3, 1988]

§ 18.6 Standards for awards.

(a) A prevailing applicant may receive an award for fees and expenses incurred in connection with a proceeding, or in a significant and discrete substantive portion of the proceedings, unless the position of the Department over which the applicant has prevailed was substantially justified. The position of the Department includes, in addition to the position taken by the Department in the adversary adjudication, the action or failure to act by the Department upon which the adversary adjudication is based. The burden of proof that an award should not be made to an eligible prevailing appli-

cant because the Department's position was substantially justified is on the agency counsel.

(b) An award will be reduced or denied if the applicant has unduly or unreasonably protracted the proceeding or if special circumstances make the award sought unjust.

[47 FR 13510, Mar. 31, 1982, as amended at 53 FR 6799, Mar. 3, 1988]

§ 18.7 Allowable fees and expenses.

(a) Awards will be based on rates customarily charged by persons engaged in the business of acting as attorneys, agents and expert witnesses, even if the services were made available without charge or at a reduced rate to the applicant.

(b) No award for the fee of an attorney or agent under this rule may exceed \$75.00 per hour. No award to compensate an expert witness may exceed the highest rate at which the Department pays expert witnesses. However, an award may also include the reasonable expenses of the attorney, agent, or witness as a separate item, if the attorney, agent, or witness ordinarily charges clients separately for such expenses.

(c) In determining the reasonableness of the fee sought for an attorney, agent, or expert witness, the adjudicative officer shall consider the following:

(1) If the attorney, agent, or witness is in private practice, his or her customary fee for similar services, or, if an employee of the applicant, the fully allocated cost of the services;

(2) The prevailing rate for similar services in the community in which the attorney, agent or witness ordinarily performs services;

(3) The time actually spent in the representation of the applicant;

(4) The time reasonably spent in light of the difficulty or complexity of the issues in the proceedings; and

(5) Such other factors as may bear on the value of the services provided.

(d) The reasonable cost of any study, analysis, engineering report, test, project, or similar matter prepared on behalf of a party may be awarded, to the extent that the charge for the service does not exceed the prevailing rate for similar services, and the study or