

Office of the Secretary of Labor

§ 4.11

the follow-up option period, as the case may be.

(c) *Referral to the Chief Administrative Law Judge.* When the Administrator determines from the information available or submitted with a request for a hearing that there may be a substantial variance, the Administrator on his/her own motion or on application of any interested person will by order refer the issue to the Chief Administrative Law Judge, for designation of an Administrative Law Judge who shall conduct such a fact finding hearing as may be necessary to render a decision solely on the issue of whether the wages and/or fringe benefits contained in the collective bargaining agreement which was the basis for the wage determination at issue are substantially at variance with those which prevail for services of a character similar in the locality. However, in situations where there is also a question as to whether the collective bargaining agreement was reached as a result of "arm's-length negotiations" (see § 4.11), the referral shall include both issues for resolution in one proceeding. No authority is delegated under this section to hear and/or decide any other issues pertaining to the Service Contract Act. As provided in section 4(a) of the Act, the provisions of section 4 and 5 of the Walsh-Healey Public Contracts Act (41 U.S.C. 38, 39) shall be applicable to such proceeding, which shall be conducted in accordance with the procedures set forth at 29 CFR part 6.

(d) The Administrator shall be an interested party and shall have the opportunity to participate in the proceeding to the degree he/she considers appropriate.

§ 4.11 Arm's length proceedings.

(a) *Statutory provision.* Under section 4(c) of the Act, the wages and fringe benefits provided in the predecessor contractor's collective bargaining agreement must be reached "as a result of arm's-length negotiations." This provision precludes arrangements by parties to a collective bargaining agreement who, either separately or together, act with an intent to take advantage of the wage determination scheme provided for in sections 2(a) and 4(c) of the Act. See *Trinity Services,*

Inc. v. Marshall, 593 F.2d 1250 (D.C. Cir. 1978). A finding as to whether a collective bargaining agreement or particular wages and fringe benefits therein are reached as a result of arm's-length negotiations may be made through investigation, hearing or otherwise pursuant to the Secretary's authority under section 4(a) of the Act.

(b) *Prerequisites for hearing.* (1) A request for a determination under this section may be made by a contracting agency or other person affected or interested, including contractors or prospective contractors and associations of contractors, representatives of employees, and interested Governmental agencies. Such a request shall be submitted in writing to the Administrator, Wage and Hour Division, Employment Standards Administration, U.S. Department of Labor, Washington, DC 20210. Although no particular form is prescribed for submission of a request under this section, such request shall include the following information:

(i) A statement of the applicant's case setting forth in detail the reasons why the applicant believes that the wages and fringe benefits contained in the collective bargaining agreement were not reached as a result of arm's-length negotiations;

(ii) A statement regarding the status of the procurement and any estimated procurement dates, such as bid opening, contract award, commencement date of the contract or its follow-up option period;

(iii) Names and addresses (to the extent known) of interested parties.

(2) Pursuant to section 4(b) of the Act, requests for a hearing shall not be considered unless received as specified below except in those situations where the Administrator determines that extraordinary circumstances exist:

(i) For advertised contracts, prior to ten days before the award of the contract;

(ii) For negotiated contracts and for contracts with provisions extending the term by option, prior to the commencement date of the contract or the follow-up option period, as the case may be.

§4.12

(c)(1) The Administrator, on his/her own motion or after receipt of a request for a determination, may make a finding on the issue of arm's-length negotiations.

(2) If the Administrator determines that there may not have been arm's-length negotiations, but finds that there is insufficient evidence to render a final decision thereon, the Administrator may refer the issue to the Chief Administrative Law Judge in accordance with paragraph (d) of this section.

(3)(i) If the Administrator finds that the collective bargaining agreement or wages and fringe benefits at issue were reached as a result of arm's-length negotiations or that arm's-length negotiations did not take place, the interested parties, including the parties to the collective bargaining agreement, will be notified of the Administrator's findings, which shall include the reasons therefor, and such parties shall be afforded an opportunity to request that a hearing be held to render a decision on the issue of arm's-length negotiations.

(ii) Such parties shall have 20 days from the date of the Administrator's ruling to request a hearing. A detailed statement of the reasons why the Administrator's ruling is in error, including facts alleged to be in dispute, if any, shall be submitted with the request for a hearing.

(iii) If no hearing is requested within the time mentioned in paragraph (c)(3)(ii) of this section, the Administrator's ruling shall be final, and, in the case of a finding that arm's-length negotiations did not take place, a new wage determination will be issued for the contract. If a hearing is requested, the decision of the Administrator shall be inoperative.

(d) *Referral to the Chief Administrative Law Judge.* The Administrator on his/her own motion, under paragraph (c)(2) of this section or upon a request for a hearing under paragraph (c)(3)(ii) of this section where the Administrator determines that material facts are in dispute, shall by order refer the issue to the Chief Administrative Law Judge for designation of an Administrative Law Judge, who shall conduct such hearings as may be necessary to render a decision solely on the issue of arm's-

29 CFR Subtitle A (7-1-06 Edition)

length negotiations. However, in situations where there is also a question as to whether some or all of the collectively bargained wage rates and/or fringe benefits are substantially at variance (see §4.10), the referral shall include both issues for resolution in one proceeding. As provided in section 4(a) of the Act, the provisions of sections 4 and 5 of the Walsh-Healey Public Contracts Act (41 U.S.C. 38, 39) shall be applicable to such proceeding, which shall be conducted in accordance with the procedures set forth at 29 CFR part 6.

(e) *Referral to the Administrative Review Board.* When a party requests a hearing under paragraph (c)(3)(ii) of this section and the Administrator determines that no material facts are in dispute, the Administrator shall refer the issue and the record compiled thereon to the Administrative Review Board to render a decision solely on the issue of arm's-length negotiations. Such proceeding shall be conducted in accordance with the procedures set forth at 29 CFR part 8.

§4.12 Substantial interest proceedings.

(a) *Statutory provision.* Under section 5(a) of the Act, no contract of the United States (or the District of Columbia) shall be awarded to the persons or firms appearing on the list distributed by the Comptroller General giving the names of persons or firms who have been found to have violated the Act until 3 years have elapsed from the date of publication of the list. Section 5(a) further states that "no contract of the United States shall be awarded * * * to any firm, corporation, partnership, or association in which such persons or firms have a substantial interest * * * ." A finding as to whether persons or firms whose names appear on the debarred bidders list have a substantial interest in any other firm, corporation, partnership, or association may be made through investigation, hearing, or otherwise pursuant to the Secretary's authority under section 4(a) of the Act.

(b) *Ineligibility.* See §4.188 of this part for the Secretary's rulings and interpretations with respect to substantial interest.