

Department of State

§ 34.9

(7) STATE's intention to enforce collection by taking one or more of the following actions if the debtor fails to pay or otherwise resolve the debt:

(i) Offset from Federal payments otherwise due to the debtor, including income tax refunds, salary, certain benefit payments, retirement, vendor payments, travel reimbursement and advances, and other Federal payments due from STATE, other Federal agencies, or through centralized disbursing from the Department of the Treasury;

(ii) Referral to private collection agency

(iii) Report to credit bureaus

(iv) Administrative Wage Garnishment

(v) Litigation by the Department of Justice

(vi) Referral to the Financial Management Service of the Department of the Treasury for collection

(vii) Liquidation of collateral

(viii) Other actions as permitted by the FCCS and applicable law;

(8) The debtor's right to inspect and copy records related to the debt;

(9) The debtor's right to an internal review of STATE's determination that the debtor owes a debt or the amount of the debt;

(10) The debtor's right, if any, to request waiver of collection of certain debts, as applicable (see § 34.18);

(11) Requirement that the debtor advise STATE of any bankruptcy proceeding of the debtor; and

(12) Provision for refund of amounts collected if later decision finds that the amount of the debt is not owed or is waived.

(c) *Exceptions to notice requirements.* STATE may omit from a notice to a debtor one or more of the provisions contained in paragraphs (b)(7) through (b)(12) of this section if STATE determines that any provision is not legally required given the collection remedies to be applied to a particular debt, or which have already been provided by prior notice, applicable agreement, or contract.

§ 34.9 Requests for internal administrative review.

(a) For all collection methods for debts owed to STATE, the debtor may request a review within State of the ex-

istence or the amount of the debt. For offset of current Federal salary under 5 U.S.C. 5514 for certain debts, debtors may also request an outside hearing. See subpart C of this part. This subpart rather than subpart C applies to collections by salary offset for debts arising under 5 U.S.C. 5705 (travel advances), 5 U.S.C. 4108 (training expenses), and other statutes specifically providing for collection by salary offset.

(b) A debtor requesting an internal review shall do so in writing to the contact office by the payment due date stated within the initial notice sent under 34.8(b) or other applicable provision. The debtor's written request shall state the basis for the dispute and include any relevant documentation in support.

(1) STATE will provide for an internal review of the debt by an appropriate official. The review may include examination of documents, internal discussions with relevant officials and discussion by letter or orally with the debtor, at STATE's discretion. An oral hearing may be provided when the matter cannot be decided on the documentary record because it involves issues of credibility or veracity. Unless otherwise required by law, such oral hearing shall not be a formal evidentiary hearing. If an oral hearing is appropriate, the time and location of the hearing shall be established by STATE. An oral hearing may be conducted, at the debtor's option, either in-person or by telephone conference. All travel expenses incurred by the debtor in connection with an in-person hearing will be borne by the debtor. All telephonic charges incurred during the hearing will be the responsibility of STATE. During the period of review, STATE may suspend collection activity, including the accrual of interest and penalties, on any disputed portion of the debt if STATE determines that suspension is in the Department's best interest or would serve equity and good conscience.

(2) If after review STATE either sustains or amends its determination, it shall notify the debtor of its intent to collect the sustained or amended debt. If previously suspended, collection actions will be re-instituted unless payment of the sustained or amended amount is received or the debtor has

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made a proposal for a payment plan to which STATE agrees, by the date specified in the notification of STATE's decision.

§ 34.10 Collection methods.

Upon completion of notice and provision of all due process rights as listed in 34.8(b) of this section and upon final determination of the existence and amount of a debt, unless other acceptable payment arrangements have been made or procedures under a specific statute apply, STATE shall collect the debt by one or more of the following methods:

(a) *Administrative offset.* (1) Payments otherwise due the debtor from the United States shall be offset from the debt in accordance with 31 CFR 901.3. These may be funds under the control of the Department of State or other Federal agencies. Collection may be made through centralized offset by the Financial Management Service ("FMS") of the Department of the Treasury.

(2) Such payments include but are not limited to vendor payments, salary, retirement, lump sum payments due upon Federal employment separation, travel reimbursements, tax refunds, loans or other assistance. For offset of Federal salary payments under 5 U.S.C. 5514 for certain types of debt see subpart C of this part.

(3) Administrative offset under this subsection does not apply to debts specified in the FCCS, 31 CFR 901.3(a)(2).

(4) Before administrative offset is instituted by another Federal agency or the FMS, STATE shall certify in writing to that entity that the debt is past due and legally enforceable and that STATE has complied with all applicable due process and other requirements as described in this part and other Federal law and regulations.

(5) Administrative offset of anticipated or future benefit payments under the Civil Service Retirement and Disability Fund will be requested by STATE pursuant to 5 CFR 831.1801-1808.

(6) *Expedited offset.* STATE may effect an offset against a debtor prior to sending a notice to the debtor as described in § 34.8, when:

(i) The offset is in the nature of a recoupment,

(ii) Offset is executed pursuant to procedures set out in the Contracts Disputes Act,

(iii) Previous notice and opportunity for review have been given, or

(iv) There is insufficient time before payment would be made to the debtor/payee to allow prior notice and an opportunity for review. In such case, STATE shall give the debtor notice and an opportunity for review as soon as practicable and shall promptly refund any money ultimately found not to have been owed to the Government.

(7) Unless otherwise provided by law, administrative offset of payments under the authority of 31 U.S.C. 3716 to collect a debt may not be conducted more than 10 years after the Government's right to collect the debt first accrued, unless facts material to the Government's right to collect the debt were not known and could not reasonably have been known by the official charged with the responsibility to discover and collect such debts. This limitation does not apply to debts reduced to a judgment.

(b) *Referral to private collection agency.* STATE may contract for collection services to recover delinquent debts, or transfer a delinquent debt to FMS for private collection action, pursuant to 31 U.S.C. 3718, 22 U.S.C. 2716 and the FCCS, 31 CFR 901.5, as applicable. STATE will not use a collection agency to collect a debt owed by a currently employed or retired Federal employee, if collection by salary or annuity offset is available.

(c) *Disclosure to consumer reporting agencies.* STATE may disclose delinquent debts to consumer reporting agencies and other automated databases in accordance with 31 U.S.C. 3711(e) and the FCCS, 31 CFR 901.4, and in compliance with the Bankruptcy Code and the Privacy Act 5 U.S.C. 552a.

(d) Liquidation of Collateral, if applicable, in accordance with the FCCS, 31 CFR 901.7.

(e) Suspension or revocation of eligibility for loans and loan guaranties, licenses, permits, or privileges in accordance with the FCCS, 31 CFR 901.6.