

Small Business Administration

§ 117.17

set down for hearing at a stated place and time. The time and place so fixed shall be reasonable and shall be subject to change for cause. The complainant shall be advised of the time and place of the hearing. An applicant or recipient may waive a hearing and submit written information and argument for the record. The failure of an applicant or recipient to appear at a hearing for which a date has been set shall be deemed to be a waiver of the right to a hearing and as consent to the making of a decision on the basis of such information as is available.

(b) *Time and place of hearing.* Hearings shall be held at OHA in Washington, DC, at a time fixed by OHA unless that office determines that the convenience of the complainant, applicant, recipient or SBA requires that another place be selected. Hearings shall be held before an administrative law judge designated in accordance with the Administrative Procedure Act.

(c) *Right to counsel.* In all proceedings under this section, the applicant or recipient and SBA shall have the right to be represented by counsel.

(d) *Procedures, evidence, and record.* (1) The hearings, decisions, and any administrative review shall be conducted in conformity with the Administrative Procedure Act and 13 CFR part 134. Such rules of procedure should be consistent with this section, relate to the conduct of the hearing, provide for giving of notices to those referred to in paragraph (a) of this section, taking of testimony, exhibits, arguments, and briefs, request for findings and other related matters. SBA, the complainant, if any, and the applicant or recipient shall be entitled to introduce all relevant evidence on the issues as stated in the notice for hearing, or as determined by the administrative law judge conducting the hearing at the outset of or during the hearing.

(2) Technical rules of evidence may be waived by the administrative law judge conducting a hearing pursuant to this part, but rules or principles designed to assure production of the most credible evidence available, and subject testimony to test by cross-examination shall be applied where reasonably necessary. The administrative law judge

may exclude irrelevant, immaterial, or unduly repetitious evidence. All documents and other evidence offered or taken for the record shall be open to examination by the parties and opportunity shall be given to refute facts and arguments advanced on either side of the issues. A transcript shall be made of the oral evidence except to the extent the substance thereof is stipulated for the record. All decisions shall be based upon the hearing record and written findings shall be made.

(e) *Consolidated or joint hearings.* In cases in which the same or related facts are asserted to constitute non-compliance or threatened noncompliance with this part, with respect to two or more forms of financial assistance to which this part applies, or non-compliance with this part and the regulations of one or more other Federal agencies issued under the Act, the Administrator may, by agreement with such other agencies, provide for the conduct of consolidated or joint hearings, and for the application to such hearings of rules and procedures not inconsistent with this part. Final decisions in such cases, insofar as this part is concerned, shall be made in accordance with § 117.17.

§ 117.17 Decisions and notices.

(a) *Decision by an administrative law judge.* If the hearing is held by an administrative law judge, such administrative law judge shall either make an initial decision, if so authorized, or certify the entire record, including recommended findings and proposed decision, to the Administrator for a final decision and a copy of such initial decision or certification shall be mailed to the applicant or recipient and the complainant. Where the initial decision is made by the administrative law judge, the applicant or recipient may, within 30 days of the mailing of such notice of initial decision, file with the Administrator exceptions to the initial decision, with the reasons therefor. In the absence of exceptions, the Administrator may, by motion within 45 days after the initial decision, serve on the applicant or recipient a notice that he/she will review the decision. Upon the filing of such exceptions or of such notice of review, the Administrator shall

review the initial decision and issue his/her decision thereon, including the reasons therefor. The decision of the Administrator shall be mailed promptly to the applicant or recipient, and the complainant, if any. In the absence of either exceptions or a notice of review, the initial decision shall constitute the final decision of the Administrator.

(b) *Decisions on record or review by the Administrator.* Whenever a record is certified to the Administrator for decision or the Administrator reviews the decision of an administrative law judge pursuant to paragraph (a) of this section, or whenever the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services or the Department of Justice conducts the hearing, the applicant or recipient shall be given reasonable opportunity to file briefs or other written statements of its contentions and a copy of the final decision of the Administrator shall be given in writing to the applicant or recipient and the complainant, if any.

(c) *Decisions on record where a hearing is waived.* Whenever a hearing is waived pursuant to § 117.16, a decision shall be made by the Administrator on the record and a copy of such decision shall be given in writing to the applicant or recipient, and to the complainant, if any.

(d) *Rulings required.* Each decision of an administrative law judge or the Administrator shall set forth the ruling on each finding, conclusion, or exception presented, and shall identify the requirement or requirements imposed by or pursuant to this part with which it is found that the applicant or recipient has failed to comply.

(e) *Decision by the Administrator.* The Administrator shall make any final decision which provides for the suspension or termination of, or the refusal to grant or continue Federal financial assistance, acceleration repayment or the imposition of any other sanction available under the regulations or taken under other means authorized by law.

(f) *Content of orders.* The final decision may provide for accelerating of repayment, suspension or termination of, or refusal to approve, disburse, or continue Federal financial assistance, in

whole or in part, to which this regulation applies, and may contain such terms, conditions, and other provisions as are consistent with and will effectuate the purposes of the Act and this part, including provisions designed to assure that no Federal financial assistance to which this regulation applies will, thereafter, be extended to the applicant or recipient determined by such decision to have failed to comply with this part, unless and until it corrects its noncompliance and satisfies the Administrator that it will fully comply with this part.

(g) *Post termination proceedings.* (1) An applicant or recipient adversely affected by an order issued under paragraph (e) of this section shall be restored to full eligibility to receive Federal financial assistance only if it satisfies the terms and conditions of that order for such eligibility and it brings itself into compliance with this regulation and provides reasonable assurance that it will fully comply with this regulation.

(2) Any applicant or recipient adversely affected by an order entered pursuant to paragraph (f) of this section may at any time request the Administrator to restore fully its eligibility to receive Federal financial assistance. Any such request shall be supported by information showing that the applicant or recipient has met the requirements of paragraph (g)(1) of this section. If the Administrator determines that those requirements have been satisfied, he/she shall restore such eligibility.

(3) If the Administrator denies any such request, the applicant or recipient may submit a request for a hearing in writing, specifying why it believes the denial to have been in error. It shall there upon be given an expeditious hearing, with a decision on the record, in accordance with rules and procedures issued by the Administrator. The applicant or recipient shall be restored to such eligibility if it proves at such hearing that it satisfied the requirements of paragraph (g)(1) of this section. While proceedings under this paragraph are pending, the sanctions imposed by the order issued under paragraph (f) of this section shall remain in effect.