

§ 90.12**§ 90.12 Qualifications of hearing officer.**

The hearing officer, a person not involved in the preparation of the estimates being challenged, shall be appointed by the Director from a roster of employees of the Bureau of the Census who have been approved in advance by the Assistant Secretary for Administration, Department of Commerce.

§ 90.13 Offer of hearing.

The hearing officer shall receive the formal challenge and shall notify the State or unit of local government in writing of (a) its right to a hearing prior to the development of a recommended decision for the consideration of the Director; and (b) its right to the development of a recommended decision for the consideration of the Director without a hearing. If the State or unit of local government requests that a hearing be conducted, the hearing officer shall establish the date, time, and meeting place for the hearing, in accordance with § 19.14a.

§ 90.14 Hearing.

(a) The hearing shall be conducted by the same hearing officer who collected the documentary evidence, if possible, and shall be held at Bureau of the Census headquarters in Suitland, Md., unless the hearing officer determines that the hearing should be held elsewhere.

(b) The hearing shall be conducted in a manner so as to bring out the pertinent facts relating to the challenge.

(c) The rule of evidence will not be strictly enforced but irrelevant and unduly repetitious testimony shall be excluded.

(d) Cross-examination of all witnesses is permitted and all testimony shall be received under oath or affirmation.

(e) The hearing officer shall have the authority to: (1) Administer oaths or affirmations, (2) rule on the admissibility of evidence, (3) limit the number of witnesses, (4) exclude any person from the hearing room for contumacious conduct or misbehavior that obstructs the hearing, (5) perform other such acts as are necessary or appropriate to the efficient conduct of any proceeding, and (6) make initial findings, analyses, and recommendations.

(f) The hearing shall be recorded but no written record will be prepared unless the Bureau so orders or unless the challenging locality desires one in whole or part and pays the costs of such a written record, or the apportioned costs should the Bureau also desire a written record.

(g) The hearing officer shall prepare findings, analyses, and recommendations and shall transmit them along with all documentary evidence received and the tape or written record (if any) of the hearing to the Director.

[44 FR 20647, Apr. 6, 1979, as amended at 50 FR 18990, May 6, 1985]

§ 90.15 Decision by Director.

Upon receiving the material specified in § 90.14(g), the Director shall (a) review the findings and recommendations of the hearing officer, and (b) prepare and transmit a letter to the challenging State or unit of local government stating the decision and the reasons therefor. A copy of the hearing officer's findings, analyses, and recommendations shall also be transmitted to the challenging State or unit of local government, and is otherwise publicly available. This decision is final for the Department of Commerce.

§ 90.16 Notification of adjustment.

In the event that the Director finds that the population or per capita income estimate should be adjusted, the Bureau shall promptly inform the appropriate governmental agencies of the revision.

§ 90.17 Timing for hearing and decision.

A maximum period of 120 days, unless additional time is required for sufficiently meritorious reason, shall be provided beyond the closing date for the filing of informal challenges to allow for (a) resolution of informal challenges, (b) appointment of the hearing officer, and (c) the completion of formal hearings. A maximum of 30 additional days shall be allowed for deliberations by the hearing officer and staff. A maximum of an additional 30 days shall also be provided beyond this during which the Census Bureau Director must rule on all cases. Neither the