

have reflected unfavorably on the party refusing to provide the requested information;

(ii) Consider the matters to which the requested information or testimony pertains to be established in favor of the opposing party;

(iii) Exclude other evidence offered by the party failing to produce the requested information or witness;

(iv) Issue a decision fully or partially in favor of the opposing party; or

(v) Take such other actions as it deems appropriate.

(d) Any investigation will be conducted by investigators with appropriate security clearances. The Commission will, upon request, supply the agency with the name of an investigator with appropriate security clearances.

(e) The agency shall complete its investigation within 180 days of the date of filing of an individual complaint or within the time period contained in an order from the Office of Federal Operations on an appeal from a dismissal pursuant to §1614.107. By written agreement within those time periods, the complainant and the respondent agency may voluntarily extend the time period for not more than an additional 90 days. The agency may unilaterally extend the time period or any period of extension for not more than 30 days where it must sanitize a complaint file that may contain information classified pursuant to Exec. Order No. 12356, or successor orders, as secret in the interest of national defense or foreign policy, provided the investigating agency notifies the parties of the extension.

(f) Within 180 days from the filing of the complaint, or where a complaint was amended, within the earlier of 180 days after the last amendment to the complaint or 360 days after the filing of the original complaint, within the time period contained in an order from the Office of Federal Operations on an appeal from a dismissal, or within any period of extension provided for in paragraph (e) of this section, the agency shall provide the complainant with a copy of the investigative file, and shall notify the complainant that, within 30 days of receipt of the investigative file, the complainant has the right to re-

quest a hearing and decision from an administrative judge or may request an immediate final decision pursuant to §1614.110 from the agency with which the complaint was filed.

(g) If the agency does not send the notice required in paragraph (f) of this section within the applicable time limits, it shall, within those same time limits, issue a written notice to the complainant informing the complainant that it has been unable to complete its investigation within the time limits required by §1614.108(f) and estimating a date by which the investigation will be completed. Further, the notice must explain that if the complainant does not want to wait until the agency completes the investigation, he or she may request a hearing in accordance with paragraph (h) of this section, or file a civil action in an appropriate United States District Court in accordance with §1614.407(b). Such notice shall contain information about the hearing procedures.

(h) Where the complainant has received the notice required in paragraph (f) of this section or at any time after 180 days have elapsed from the filing of the complaint, the complainant may request a hearing by submitting a written request for a hearing directly to the EEOC office indicated in the agency's acknowledgment letter. The complainant shall send a copy of the request for a hearing to the agency EEO office. Within 15 days of receipt of the request for a hearing, the agency shall provide a copy of the complaint file to EEOC and, if not previously provided, to the complainant.

[57 FR 12646, Apr. 10, 1992, as amended at 64 FR 37656, July 12, 1999; 77 FR 43505, July 25, 2012]

#### § 1614.109 Hearings.

(a) When a complainant requests a hearing, the Commission shall appoint an administrative judge to conduct a hearing in accordance with this section. Upon appointment, the administrative judge shall assume full responsibility for the adjudication of the complaint, including overseeing the development of the record. Any hearing will be conducted by an administrative judge or hearing examiner with appropriate security clearances.

(b) *Dismissals.* Administrative judges may dismiss complaints pursuant to § 1614.107, on their own initiative, after notice to the parties, or upon an agency's motion to dismiss a complaint.

(c) *Offer of resolution.* (1) Any time after the filing of the written complaint but not later than the date an administrative judge is appointed to conduct a hearing, the agency may make an offer of resolution to a complainant who is represented by an attorney.

(2) Any time after the parties have received notice that an administrative judge has been appointed to conduct a hearing, but not later than 30 days prior to the hearing, the agency may make an offer of resolution to the complainant, whether represented by an attorney or not.

(3) The offer of resolution shall be in writing and shall include a notice explaining the possible consequences of failing to accept the offer. The agency's offer, to be effective, must include attorney's fees and costs and must specify any non-monetary relief. With regard to monetary relief, an agency may make a lump sum offer covering all forms of monetary liability, or it may itemize the amounts and types of monetary relief being offered. The complainant shall have 30 days from receipt of the offer of resolution to accept it. If the complainant fails to accept an offer of resolution and the relief awarded in the administrative judge's decision, the agency's final decision, or the Commission decision on appeal is not more favorable than the offer, then, except where the interest of justice would not be served, the complainant shall not receive payment from the agency of attorney's fees or costs incurred after the expiration of the 30-day acceptance period. An acceptance of an offer must be in writing and will be timely if postmarked or received within the 30-day period. Where a complainant fails to accept an offer of resolution, an agency may make other offers of resolution and either party may seek to negotiate a settlement of the complaint at any time.

(d) *Discovery.* The administrative judge shall notify the parties of the right to seek discovery prior to the hearing and may issue such discovery

orders as are appropriate. Unless the parties agree in writing concerning the methods and scope of discovery, the party seeking discovery shall request authorization from the administrative judge prior to commencing discovery. Both parties are entitled to reasonable development of evidence on matters relevant to the issues raised in the complaint, but the administrative judge may limit the quantity and timing of discovery. Evidence may be developed through interrogatories, depositions, and requests for admissions, stipulations or production of documents. It shall be grounds for objection to producing evidence that the information sought by either party is irrelevant, overburdensome, repetitious, or privileged.

(e) *Conduct of hearing.* Agencies shall provide for the attendance at a hearing of all employees approved as witnesses by an administrative judge. Attendance at hearings will be limited to persons determined by the administrative judge to have direct knowledge relating to the complaint. Hearings are part of the investigative process and are thus closed to the public. The administrative judge shall have the power to regulate the conduct of a hearing, limit the number of witnesses where testimony would be repetitious, and exclude any person from the hearing for contumacious conduct or misbehavior that obstructs the hearing. The administrative judge shall receive into evidence information or documents relevant to the complaint. Rules of evidence shall not be applied strictly, but the administrative judge shall exclude irrelevant or repetitious evidence. The administrative judge or the Commission may refer to the Disciplinary Committee of the appropriate Bar Association any attorney or, upon reasonable notice and an opportunity to be heard, suspend or disqualify from representing complainants or agencies in EEOC hearings any representative who refuses to follow the orders of an administrative judge, or who otherwise engages in improper conduct.

(f) *Procedures.* (1) The complainant, an agency, and any employee of a Federal agency shall produce such documentary and testimonial evidence as

the administrative judge deems necessary. The administrative judge shall serve all orders to produce evidence on both parties.

(2) Administrative judges are authorized to administer oaths. Statements of witnesses shall be made under oath or affirmation or, alternatively, by written statement under penalty of perjury.

(3) When the complainant, or the agency against which a complaint is filed, or its employees fail without good cause shown to respond fully and in timely fashion to an order of an administrative judge, or requests for the investigative file, for documents, records, comparative data, statistics, affidavits, or the attendance of witness(es), the administrative judge shall, in appropriate circumstances:

(i) Draw an adverse inference that the requested information, or the testimony of the requested witness, would have reflected unfavorably on the party refusing to provide the requested information;

(ii) Consider the matters to which the requested information or testimony pertains to be established in favor of the opposing party;

(iii) Exclude other evidence offered by the party failing to produce the requested information or witness;

(iv) Issue a decision fully or partially in favor of the opposing party; or

(v) Take such other actions as appropriate.

(g) *Summary judgment.* (1) If a party believes that some or all material facts are not in genuine dispute and there is no genuine issue as to credibility, the party may, at least 15 days prior to the date of the hearing or at such earlier time as required by the administrative judge, file a statement with the administrative judge prior to the hearing setting forth the fact or facts and referring to the parts of the record relied on to support the statement. The statement must demonstrate that there is no genuine issue as to any such material fact. The party shall serve the statement on the opposing party.

(2) The opposing party may file an opposition within 15 days of receipt of the statement in paragraph (d)(1) of this section. The opposition may refer to the record in the case to rebut the

statement that a fact is not in dispute or may file an affidavit stating that the party cannot, for reasons stated, present facts to oppose the request. After considering the submissions, the administrative judge may order that discovery be permitted on the fact or facts involved, limit the hearing to the issues remaining in dispute, issue a decision without a hearing or make such other ruling as is appropriate.

(3) If the administrative judge determines upon his or her own initiative that some or all facts are not in genuine dispute, he or she may, after giving notice to the parties and providing them an opportunity to respond in writing within 15 calendar days, issue an order limiting the scope of the hearing or issue a decision without holding a hearing.

(h) *Record of hearing.* The hearing shall be recorded and the agency shall arrange and pay for verbatim transcripts. All documents submitted to, and accepted by, the administrative judge at the hearing shall be made part of the record of the hearing. If the agency submits a document that is accepted, it shall furnish a copy of the document to the complainant. If the complainant submits a document that is accepted, the administrative judge shall make the document available to the agency representative for reproduction.

(i) *Decisions by administrative judges.* Unless the administrative judge makes a written determination that good cause exists for extending the time for issuing a decision, an administrative judge shall issue a decision on the complaint, and shall order appropriate remedies and relief where discrimination is found, within 180 days of receipt by the administrative judge of the complaint file from the agency. The administrative judge shall send copies of the hearing record, including the transcript, and the decision to the parties. If an agency does not issue a final order within 40 days of receipt of the administrative judge's decision in accordance with 1614.110, then the decision of the administrative judge shall become the final action of the agency.

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