

Small Business Administration

§ 145.314

fairness, using the procedures in §§ 145.311 through 145.314.

§ 145.311 Investigation and referral.

Information concerning the existence of a cause for debarment from any source shall be promptly reported, investigated, and referred, when appropriate, to the debarring official for consideration. After consideration, the debarring official may issue a notice of proposed debarment.

§ 145.312 Notice of proposed debarment.

A debarment proceeding shall be initiated by notice to the respondent advising:

(a) That debarment is being considered;

(b) Of the reasons for the proposed debarment in terms sufficient to put the respondent on notice of the conduct or transaction(s) upon which it is based;

(c) Of the cause(s) relied upon under § 145.305 for proposing debarment;

(d) Of the provisions of §§ 145.311 through 145.314, and any other SBA procedures, if applicable, governing debarment decisionmaking; and

(e) Of the potential effect of a debarment.

§ 145.313 Opportunity to contest proposed debarment.

(a) *Submission in opposition.* Within 30 days after receipt of the notice of proposed debarment, the respondent may submit, in person, in writing, or through a representative, information and argument in opposition to the proposed debarment.

(b) *Additional proceedings as to disputed material facts.* (1) In actions not based upon a conviction or civil judgment, if the debarring official finds that the respondent's submission in opposition raises a genuine dispute over facts material to the proposed debarment, respondent(s) shall be afforded an opportunity to appear with a representative, submit documentary evidence, present witnesses, and confront any witness the agency presents.

(2) A transcribed record of any additional proceedings shall be made available at cost to the respondent, upon request, unless the respondent and the

agency, by mutual agreement, waive the requirement for a transcript.

(3) In accordance with § 145.314(b)(2), the debarring official may refer cases involving disputed material facts to the Office of Hearings and Appeals, which shall conduct any additional proceedings necessary in accordance with the procedures contained in part 134 of this title. Upon conclusion of such proceedings, the Office of Hearings and Appeals shall issue a recommended decision to the debarring official including proposed findings of facts and conclusions of law.

[53 FR 19176, 19204, May 26, 1988, as amended at 53 FR 19176, May 26, 1988]

§ 145.314 Debarring official's decision.

(a) *No additional proceedings necessary.* In actions based upon a conviction or civil judgment, or in which there is no genuine dispute over material facts, the debarring official shall make a decision on the basis of all the information in the administrative record, including any submission made by the respondent. The decision shall be made within 45 days after receipt of any information and argument submitted by the respondent, unless the debarring official extends this period for good cause.

(b) *Additional proceedings necessary.* (1) In actions in which additional proceedings are necessary to determine disputed material facts, written findings of fact shall be prepared. The debarring official shall base the decision on the facts as found, together with any information and argument submitted by the respondent and any other information in the administrative record.

(2) The debarring official may refer disputed material facts to another official for findings of fact. The debarring official may reject any such findings, in whole or in part, only after specifically determining them to be arbitrary and capricious or clearly erroneous.

(i) The Office of Hearings and Appeals shall conduct any proceedings regarding disputed material facts necessary under this section.

(ii) Any party to the debarment proceeding may file exceptions to the recommended decision with the debarring

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official in accordance with 13 CFR 134.35.

(3) The debarring official's decision shall be made after the conclusion of the proceedings with respect to disputed facts.

(c)(1) *Standard of proof.* In any debarment action, the cause for debarment must be established by a preponderance of the evidence. Where the proposed debarment is based upon a conviction or civil judgment, the standard shall be deemed to have been met.

(2) *Burden of proof.* The burden of proof is on the agency proposing debarment.

(d) *Notice of debarring official's decision.* (1) If the debarring official decides to impose debarment, the respondent shall be given prompt notice:

(i) Referring to the notice of proposed debarment;

(ii) Specifying the reasons for debarment;

(iii) Stating the period of debarment, including effective dates; and

(iv) Advising that the debarment is effective for covered transactions throughout the executive branch of the Federal Government unless an agency head or an authorized designee makes the determination referred to in § 145.215.

(2) If the debarring official decides not to impose debarment, the respondent shall be given prompt notice of that decision. A decision not to impose debarment shall be without prejudice to a subsequent imposition of debarment by any other agency.

[53 FR 19176, 19204, May 26, 1988, as amended at 53 FR 19176, May 26, 1988]

§ 145.315 Settlement and voluntary exclusion.

(a) When in the best interest of the Government, SBA may, at any time, settle a debarment or suspension action.

(b) If a participant and the agency agree to a voluntary exclusion of the participant, such voluntary exclusion shall be entered on the Nonprocurement List (see subpart E).

§ 145.320 Period of debarment.

(a) Debarment shall be for a period commensurate with the seriousness of the cause(s). If a suspension precedes a

debarment, the suspension period shall be considered in determining the debarment period.

(1) Debarment for causes other than those related to a violation of the requirements of subpart F of this part generally should not exceed three years. Where circumstances warrant, a longer period of debarment may be imposed.

(2) In the case of a debarment for a violation of the requirements of subpart F of this part (see § 145.305(c)(5)), the period of debarment shall not exceed five years.

(b) The debarring official may extend an existing debarment for an additional period, if that official determines that an extension is necessary to protect the public interest. However, a debarment may not be extended solely on the basis of the facts and circumstances upon which the initial debarment action was based. If debarment for an additional period is determined to be necessary, the procedures of §§ 145.311 through 145.314 shall be followed to extend the debarment.

(c) The respondent may request the debarring official to reverse the debarment decision or to reduce the period or scope of debarment. Such a request shall be in writing and supported by documentation. The debarring official may grant such a request for reasons including, but not limited to:

(1) Newly discovered material evidence;

(2) Reversal of the conviction or civil judgment upon which the debarment was based;

(3) Bona fide change in ownership or management;

(4) Elimination of other causes for which the debarment was imposed; or

(5) Other reasons the debarring official deems appropriate.

[53 FR 19176, 19204, May 26, 1988, as amended at 54 FR 4950, 4953, Jan. 31, 1989]

§ 145.325 Scope of debarment.

(a) *Scope in general.* (1) Debarment of a person under these regulations constitutes debarment of all its divisions and other organizational elements from all covered transactions, unless the debarment decision is limited by its terms to one or more specifically identified individuals, divisions or