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(ii) Identification of the State agency as the appellant and FNS as the appellee;

(iii) A statement that the notice of appeal is filed pursuant to section 14(a) of the Food Stamp Act;

(iv) A true copy of the bill for collection which constitutes the basis for the filing of the notice of appeal shall be attached to the notice.

(2) Failure to file an acceptable notice of appeal may result in a challenge by FNS to the notice and dismissal of the notice by the ALJ and a waiver of the opportunity for further appeal or review by the Judicial Officer unless the State agency pursues the options as discussed in §§ 283.17(d) and 283.20.

(e) *Receipt of notice of appeal and assignment of docket number.* Upon receipt of a notice of appeal, the Hearing Clerk shall assign the appeal a docket number. The Hearing Clerk shall:

(1) Send the State agency a letter which shall include the following information:

(i) Advise that the notice of appeal has been received and the date of receipt;

(ii) The docket number assigned to the appeal and instructions that all future communications related to the appeal shall reference the docket number, and;

(iii) That the State agency must file and serve its appeal petition, as set forth in § 283.22 not later than 60 days after receiving a notice of the claim. Failure to file a timely appeal petition may result in a waiver of further appeal rights.

(2) Send FNS a copy of the notice of appeal and a copy of the letter to the State agency.

(f) *Stay of collection.* The filing of a timely notice of appeal shall automatically stay the action of FNS to collect the QC claim asserted against the State agency until a decision is reached on the acceptability of the appeal, and in the case of an acceptable appeal, until a final administrative determination has been issued. However, interest will accrue on the outstanding claim amount during the stay as provided in section 13(a)(1) of the Food Stamp Act of 1977, as amended (7 U.S.C. 2022(a)(1)).

(g) *Content of appeal petition.* The appeal petition shall include:

(1) A brief statement of the allegations of fact and provisions of law that constitute the basis for the appeal including a statement as to whether a factual basis for good cause relief exists, and

(2) The nature of the relief sought.

(h) *FNS answer.* Upon service of the State agency appeal petition, FNS shall file an answer, pursuant to § 283.6, not later than 60 days after the State agency submits its appeal petition.

§ 283.26 Request that appeals be handled under procedures in subpart B for appeals of QC claims of \$50,000 or more.

(a) If, after the filing of its appeal petition, the State agency does not believe that the summary procedure provided in this subpart is adequate for handling the appeal and that an oral hearing is necessary, the State agency may file, no later than the date established for the conclusion of any discovery pursuant to § 283.29, a motion that its appeal be handled under the procedures in subpart B of this part.

(b) The motion shall specify why the State agency believes that the summary procedure is inadequate and what harm will result if an oral hearing is not held.

(c) FNS will have 10 days from service of the State agency's motion that the appeal be handled under subpart B of this part to submit arguments either in support of or against the State agency's position.

(d) The ALJ will review the State agency's motion and the information submitted by FNS and decide which procedures shall be used in the appeal.

§ 283.27 Procedures upon failure to file an answer.

The failure by FNS to file an answer shall constitute a waiver of the opportunity to file a cross motion for summary judgment pursuant to § 283.30. Upon such failure to file, the State agency shall file a proposed decision, along with a motion for adoption thereof, both of which shall be served upon FNS by the State agency. Within 10 days after service of such motion and proposed decision, FNS may file

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with the Hearing Clerk objections thereto. If the ALJ finds that meritorious objections have been filed, the State agency's motion shall be denied with supporting reasons. If meritorious objections are not filed, the ALJ shall issue an initial decision without further procedures. Copies of the decision or denial of State agency's motion shall be served on each of the parties and shall be included as part of the official record. Where the decision as proposed by the State agency is adopted as the ALJ's initial decision, such decision of the ALJ shall become final and effective 30 days after service unless reconsideration or review by the Judicial Officer is sought as discussed in §§ 283.17(d) and 283.20.

§ 283.28 Discovery.

Upon motion and as ordered by the ALJ, written interrogatories, written requests for admissions and written requests for the production of documents, may be served by any party to the appeal upon any other party and used in accordance with § 283.12(b).

§ 283.29 Scheduling conference.

(a) *Time and place.* The ALJ shall direct the parties or their counsel to attend a scheduling conference following the filing of a notice of appeal pursuant to § 283.25. The scheduling conference shall be held at the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, DC. Reasonable notice of the time and place of the scheduling conference shall be given. The ALJ may order each of the parties to furnish at the scheduling conference the following:

(1) An outline of the appeal or defense;

(2) The legal theories upon which the party will rely;

(3) Copies of or a list of documents that the party anticipates relying upon;

(b) *Procedures.* The ALJ shall not order any of the foregoing procedures that a party can show are inappropriate or unwarranted under the circumstances of the particular appeal.

(c) *Scheduling conference.* At the scheduling conference, the following matters shall be considered:

(1) The simplification of issues;

(2) The necessity of amendments to pleadings;

(3) Stipulations of facts and of the authenticity, accuracy, and admissibility of documents;

(4) Negotiation, compromise, or settlement of issues;

(5) The exchange of copies of proposed exhibits;

(6) The nature of and the date by which discovery, as provided in § 283.28, must be completed;

(7) The identification of documents or matters of which official notice may be requested;

(8) A schedule to be followed by the parties for the filing of cross-motions for summary judgment and completion of other actions decided at the conference; and

(9) Such other matters as may expedite and aid in the disposition of the appeal.

(d) *Reporting.* A scheduling conference will not be stenographically reported unless so directed by the ALJ.

(e) *Attendance at scheduling conference.* In the event the ALJ concludes that personal attendance by the ALJ and the parties or counsel at a scheduling conference is unwarranted or impractical, but decides that a conference would expedite the appeal, the ALJ may conduct such conference by telephone.

(f) *Order.* Actions taken as a result of a conference shall be reduced to an appropriate written order, unless the ALJ concludes that a stenographic report shall suffice.

§ 283.30 Cross motions for summary judgment.

Appeals filed pursuant to this subpart shall be determined upon cross motions for summary judgment unless the matter is heard under subpart B of this part in accordance with § 283.26. Cross motions for summary judgment shall be filed by the parties along with the appeal petition and answer or in accordance with the schedule established by the ALJ pursuant to § 283.29. Motions for summary judgment shall address the issues raised by the pleadings and may be supported by declarations. Motions and accompanying briefs in support of summary judgment