

(2) Contain all information necessary for further processing.

(b) Both the complainant and the recipient shall participate in the mediation process to the extent necessary to reach an agreement or make an informed judgment that an agreement is not possible.

(c) If the complainant and the recipient reach an agreement, FMCS shall prepare a written statement of the agreement and have the complainant and the recipient sign it. The FMCS shall send the agreement to DOI. DOI, however, retains the right to monitor the recipient's compliance with the agreement.

(d) The FMCS shall protect the confidentiality of all information obtained in the course of the mediation process. No mediator shall testify in any adjudicative proceeding, produce any document, or otherwise disclose any information obtained in the course of the mediation process without prior approval of the head of the mediation agency.

(e) DOI will use the mediation process for a maximum of 60 days after receiving a complaint. Mediation ends if:

(1) 60 days elapse from the time the complaint is filed; or

(2) Prior to the end of that 60 day period, an agreement is reached; or

(3) Prior to the end of that 60 day period, the FMCS determines that an agreement cannot be reached.

(f) The FMCS shall return unresolved complaints to DOI.

§ 17.333 Investigation.

(a) *Informal investigation.* (1) DOI will investigate complaints that are unresolved after mediation or are reopened because of a violation of a mediation agreement.

(2) As part of the initial investigation, DOI will use informal fact finding methods, including joint or separate discussions with the complainant and recipient to establish the facts, and, if possible, settle the complaint on terms that are mutually agreeable to the parties. DOI may seek the assistance of any involved State program agency.

(3) DOI will put any agreement in writing and have it signed by the parties and an authorized official at DOI.

(4) The settlement shall not affect the operation of any other enforcement effort of DOI, including compliance reviews and investigation of other complaints which may involve the recipient.

(5) The settlement is not a finding of discrimination against a recipient.

(b) *Formal investigation.* If DOI cannot resolve the complaint through informal means, it will develop formal findings through further investigation of the complaint. If the investigation indicates a violation of these regulations, DOI will attempt to obtain voluntary compliance. If DOI cannot obtain voluntary compliance, it will begin enforcement as described in § 17.335.

§ 17.334 Prohibition against intimidation or retaliation.

A recipient may not engage in acts of intimidation or retaliation against any person who:

(a) Attempts to assert a right protected by the Act or these regulations; or

(b) Cooperates in any mediation, inquiry, hearing, or other part of DOI's investigation, conciliation, and enforcement process.

§ 17.335 Compliance procedure.

(a) DOI may enforce the Act and these regulations through:

(1) Termination of a recipient's Federal financial assistance from DOI under the program or activity involved where the recipient has violated the Act or these regulations. The determination of the recipient's violation may be made only after a recipient has had an opportunity for a hearing on the record before an administrative law judge.

(2) Any other means authorized by law including but not limited to:

(i) Referral to the Department of Justice for proceedings to enforce any rights of the United States or obligations of the recipient created by the Act or these regulations.

(ii) Use of any requirement of, or referral to, any Federal, State or local government agency that will have the effect of correcting a violation of the Act or these regulations.