

Department of Health and Human Services

§ 13.4

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APPENDIX A TO PART 13

AUTHORITY: Sec. 203(a)(1), Pub. L. 96-481, 94 Stat. 2325 (5 U.S.C. 504(c)(1)).

SOURCE: 48 FR 45252, Oct. 4, 1983, unless otherwise noted.

Subpart A—General Provisions

§ 13.1 Purpose of these rules.

These rules implement section 203 of the Equal Access to Justice Act, 5 U.S.C. 504 and 504 note, for the Department of Health and Human Services. They describe the circumstances under which the Department may award attorney fees and certain other expenses to eligible individuals and entities who prevail over the Department in certain administrative proceedings (called “adversary adjudications”). The Department may reimburse parties for expenses incurred in adversary adjudications if the party prevails in the proceeding and if the Department’s position in the proceeding was not substantially justified. These rules explain how to apply for an award. They also describe what proceedings constitute adversary adjudications covered by the Act, what types of persons and entities may be eligible for an award, and what procedures and standards the Department will use to make a determination as to whether a party may receive an award.

§ 13.2 When these rules apply.

These rules apply to adversary adjudications pending before the Department between October 1, 1981 and September 30, 1984.

§ 13.3 Proceedings covered.

(a) These rules apply only to adversary adjudications. For the purpose of these rules, only an adjudication required to be under 5 U.S.C. 554, in which the position of the Department or one of its components is represented by an attorney or other representative (“the agency’s litigating party”) who enters an appearance and participates in the proceeding, constitutes an adversary adjudication. These rules do not apply to proceedings for the purpose of establishing or fixing a rate or for the purpose of granting, denying, or renewing a license. Department proceedings covered by these rules, if the agency’s litigating party enters an appearance and participates, are listed in Appendix A.

(b) If a proceeding is covered by these rules, but also involves issues excluded under paragraph (a) of this section from the coverage of these rules, reimbursement is available only for fees and expenses resulting from covered issues.

§ 13.4 Eligibility of applicants.

(a) To be eligible for an award of attorney fees and other expenses under these regulations, the applicant must be a party, as defined in 5 U.S.C. 551(3), to the adversary adjudication for which it seeks an award. An applicant must show that it meets all conditions of eligibility set out in this subpart and in Subpart B.

(b) The categories of eligible applicants are as follows:

(1) Individuals with a net worth of not more than \$1 million;

(2) Sole owners of unincorporated businesses if the owner has a net worth of not more than \$5 million, including both personal and business interests, and not more than 500 employees;

(3) Charitable or other tax-exempt organizations described in section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code (26 U.S.C. 501(c)(3)) with not more than 500 employees;

(4) Cooperative associations as defined in section 15(a) of the Agricultural Marketing Act (12 U.S.C. 1141j(a)) with not more than 500 employees, and

(5) All other partnerships, corporations, associations or public or private organizations with a net worth of not

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more than \$5 million and with not more than 500 employees.

(c) For the purpose of determining eligibility, the net worth and number of employees of an applicant is calculated as of the date the proceeding was initiated. The net worth of an applicant is determined by generally accepted accounting principles.

(d) Whether an applicant who owns an unincorporated business will be considered as an "individual" or a "sole owner of an unincorporated business" will be determined by whether the applicant's participation in the proceeding is related primarily to individual interests or to business interests.

(e) The employees of an applicant include all those persons regularly providing services for remuneration for the applicant, under the applicant's direction and control. Part-time employees shall be included on a proportional basis.

(f) The net worth and number of employees of the applicant and all of its affiliates shall be aggregated to determine eligibility. Any individual, corporation or other entity that directly or indirectly controls or owns a majority of the voting shares or other interest of the applicant, or any corporation or other entity of which the applicant directly or indirectly owns or controls a majority of the voting shares or other interest, will be considered an affiliate for purposes of this part, unless the adjudicative officer determines that such treatment would be unjust and contrary to the purposes of the Act in light of the actual relationship between the affiliated entities. In addition, the adjudicative officer may determine that financial relationships of the applicant other than those described in this paragraph constitute special circumstances that would make an award unjust.

(g) An applicant is not eligible if it appears from the facts and circumstances that it has participated in the proceedings only or primarily on behalf of other persons or entities that are ineligible.

§ 13.5 Standards for awards.

(a) Awards will not be made for fees and expenses where the Department's

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position in the proceeding was substantially justified at the time the proceeding was initiated. The fact that a party has prevailed in a proceeding does not create a presumption that the Department's position was not substantially justified. The burden of proof that an award should not be made to an eligible prevailing applicant is on the agency's litigating party, which may avoid an award by showing that its position was reasonable in law and fact.

(b) When two or more matters are joined together for one hearing, each of which could have been heard separately (without regard to laws or rules fixing a jurisdictional minimum amount for claims), and an applicant has prevailed with respect to one or several of the matters, an eligible applicant may receive an award for expenses associated only with the matters on which it prevailed if the Department's position on those matters was not substantially justified.

(c) Awards for fees and expenses incurred before the date on which a proceeding was initiated will be made only if the applicant can demonstrate that they were reasonably incurred in preparation for the proceeding.

(d) Awards will be reduced or denied if the applicant has unduly or unreasonably protracted the proceeding or if other special circumstances make an award unjust.

§ 13.6 Allowable fees and expenses.

(a) Awards will be limited to the rates customarily charged by persons engaged in the business of acting as attorneys, agents and expert witnesses. Awards will not be made for more than the applicant's actual expenses. If a party has already received, or is eligible to receive, reimbursement for any expenses under another statutory provision or another program allowing reimbursement, its award under these rules must be reduced by the amount the prevailing party has already received, or is eligible to receive, from the Federal government.

(b) An award for the fees of an attorney or agent may not exceed \$75.00 per hour, regardless of the actual rate charged by the attorney or agent. An award for the fees of an expert witness