

grant extensions of time for good reasons; to dismiss for failure to meet deadlines and other requirements; to close or suspend cases which are not ready for review; to order or assist the parties to submit relevant information; to remand a case for further action by the respondent; to waive or modify these procedures in a specific case with notice to the parties; to reconsider a Board decision where a party promptly alleges a clear error of fact or law; and to take any other action necessary to resolve disputes in accordance with the objectives of these procedures.

§ 16.14 How Board review is limited.

The Board shall be bound by all applicable laws and regulations.

§ 16.15 Failure to meet deadlines and other requirements.

(a) Since one of the objectives of administrative dispute resolution is to provide a decision as fast as possible consistent with fairness, the Board will not allow parties to delay the process unduly. The Board may grant extensions of time, but only if the party gives a good reason for the delay.

(b) If the appellant fails to meet any filing or procedural deadlines, appeal file or brief submission requirements, or other requirements established by the Board, the Board may dismiss the appeal, may issue an order requiring the party to show cause why the appeal should not be dismissed, or may take other action the Board considers appropriate.

(c) If the respondent fails to meet any such requirements, the Board may issue a decision based on the record submitted to that point or take such other measures as the Board considers appropriate.

§ 16.16 Parties to the appeal.

(a) The only parties to the appeal are the appellant and the respondent. If the Board determines that a third person is a real party in interest (for example, where the major impact of an audit disallowance would be on the grantee's contractor, not on the grantee), the Board may allow the third person to present the case on appeal for the appellant or to appear with a party in the case, after consultation with the

parties and if the appellant does not object.

(b) The Board may also allow other participation, in the manner and by the deadlines established by the Board, where the Board decides that the intervenor has a clearly identifiable and substantial interest in the outcome of the dispute, that participation would sharpen issues or otherwise be helpful in resolution of the dispute, and that participation would not result in substantial delay.

§ 16.17 Ex parte communications (communications outside the record).

(a) A party shall not communicate with a Board or staff member about matters involved in an appeal without notice to the other party. If such communication occurs, the Board will disclose it to the other party and make it part of the record after the other party has an opportunity to comment. Board members and staff shall not consider any information outside the record (see § 16.21 for what the record consists of) about matters involved in an appeal.

(b) The above does not apply to the following: Communications among Board members and staff; communications concerning the Board's administrative functions or procedures; requests from the Board to a party for a document (although the material submitted in response also must be given to the other party); and material which the Board includes in the record after notice and an opportunity to comment.

§ 16.18 Mediation.

(a) *In cases pending before the Board.* If the Board decides that mediation would be useful to resolve a dispute, the Board, in consultation with the parties, may suggest use of mediation techniques and will provide or assist in selecting a mediator. The mediator may take any steps agreed upon by the parties to resolve the dispute or clarify issues. The results of mediation are not binding on the parties unless the parties so agree in writing. The Board will internally insulate the mediator from any Board or staff members assigned to handle the appeal.

(b) *In other cases.* In any other grants dispute, the Board may, within the

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limitations of its resources, offer persons trained in mediation skills to aid in resolving the dispute. Mediation services will only be offered at the request, or with the concurrence, of a responsible federal program official in the program under which the dispute arises. The Board will insulate the mediator if any appeal subsequently arises from the dispute.

§ 16.19 How to calculate deadlines.

In counting days, include Saturdays, Sundays, and holidays; but if a due date would fall on a Saturday, Sunday or Federal holiday, then the due date is the next Federal working day.

§ 16.20 How to submit material to the Board.

(a) All submissions should be addressed as follows: Departmental Grant Appeals Board, Room 2004, Switzer Building, 330 C Street SW., Washington, DC 20201.

(b) All submissions after the notice of appeal should identify the Board's docket number (the Board's acknowledgement under §16.7 will specify the docket number).

(c) Unless the Board otherwise specifies, parties shall submit to the Board an original and two copies of all materials. Each submission other than the notice of appeal, must include a statement that one copy of the materials has been sent to the other party, identifying when and to whom the copy was sent.

(d) Unless hand delivered, all materials should be sent to the Board and the other party by certified or registered mail, return receipt requested.

(e) The Board considers material to be submitted on the date when it is postmarked or hand delivered to the Board.

§ 16.21 Record and decisions.

(a) Each decision is issued by three Board members (see §16.5(b)), who base their decision on a record consisting of the appeal file; other submissions of the parties; transcripts or other records of any meetings, conferences or hearings conducted by the Board; written statements resulting from conferences; evidence submitted at hearings; and orders and other documents

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issued by the Board. In addition, the Board may include other materials (such as evidence submitted in another appeal) after the parties are given notice and an opportunity to comment.

(b) The Board will promptly notify the parties in writing of any disposition of a case and the basis for the disposition.

§ 16.22 The effect of an appeal.

(a) *General.* Until the Board disposes of an appeal, the respondent shall take no action to implement the final decision appealed.

(b) *Exceptions.* The respondent may—
(1) Suspend funding (see §74.114 of this title);

(2) Defer or disallow other claims questioned for reasons also disputed in the pending appeal;

(3) In programs listed in Appendix A, B.(a)(1), implement a decision to disallow Federal financial participation claimed in expenditures reported on a statement of expenditures, by recovering, withholding or offsetting payments, if the decision is issued before the reported expenditures are included in the calculation of a subsequent grant; or

(4) Take other action to recover, withhold, or offset funds if specifically authorized by statute or regulation.

§ 16.23 How long an appeal takes.

The Board has established general goals for its consideration of cases, as follows (measured from the point when the Board receives the first submission after the notice of appeal):

—For regular review based on a written record under §16.8, 6 months. When a conference under §16.10 is held, the goal remains at 6 months, unless a requirement for post-conference briefing in a particular case renders the goal unrealistic.

—For cases involving a hearing under §16.11, 9 months.

—For the expedited process under §16.12, 3 months.

These are goals, not rigid requirements. The paramount concern of the Board is to take the time needed to review a record fairly and adequately in order to produce a sound decision. Furthermore, many factors are beyond the