

§ 2704.104

the proceeding or designating the matter for hearing. The Commission's failure to designate a proceeding as an adversary adjudication shall not preclude the filing of an application by a party who believes the proceeding is covered by the Act; whether the proceeding is covered will then be an issue for resolution in proceedings on the application.

(c) If a proceeding includes both matters covered by the Act and matters specifically excluded from coverage, any award made will include only fees and expenses related to covered issues.

§ 2704.104 Eligibility of applicants.

(a) To be eligible for an award of attorney fees and other expenses under the Act, the applicant must be a party to the adversary adjudication for which it seeks an award. The term "party" is defined in 5 U.S.C. 551(3). The applicant must show that it satisfies the conditions of eligibility set out in this subpart and in subpart B.

(b) For purposes of awards under § 2704.105(a) for prevailing parties:

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

(2) 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 administrative law judge 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 administrative law judge may determine that financial relationships of the applicant other than those described in this paragraph constitute special circumstances that would make an award unjust.

(3) An applicant who owns an unincorporated business will be considered as an "individual" rather than a "sole owner of an unincorporated business" if the issues on which the applicant prevails are related primarily to personal interests rather than to business interests.

(4) The types of eligible applicants are as follows:

(i) An individual with a net worth of not more than \$2 million;

(ii) The sole owner of an unincorporated business who has a net worth of not more than \$7 million, including both personal and business interests, and employs not more than 500 employees;

(iii) Any other partnership, corporation, association, unit of local government, or public or private organization with a net worth of not more than \$7 million and not more than 500 employees.

(c) For the purposes of awards under § 2704.105(b), eligible applicants are small entities as defined in 5 U.S.C. 601, subject to the annual-receipts and number-of-employees standards as set forth by the Small Business Administration at 13 CFR Part 121.

(d) For the purpose of eligibility, the net worth, number of employees, or annual receipts of an applicant, as applicable, shall be determined as of the date the underlying proceeding was initiated under the Mine Act.

(e) An applicant that participates in a proceeding primarily on behalf of one or more other persons or entities that would be ineligible is not itself eligible for an award.

[47 FR 10001, Mar. 9, 1982, as amended at 54 FR 6285, Feb. 9, 1989, 63 FR 63175, Nov. 12, 1998]

§ 2704.105 Standards for awards.

(a) A prevailing applicant may receive an award of fees and expenses incurred in connection with a proceeding, or in a significant and discrete substantive portion of the proceeding, unless the position of the Secretary was substantially justified. The position of the Secretary includes, in addition to the position taken by the Secretary in the adversary adjudication, the action or failure to act by the Secretary upon which the adversary adjudication is