

§ 12.105

501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code (26 U.S.C. 501(c)(3)) with not more than 500 employees;

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

(c) For the purpose of eligibility, the net worth and number of employees of an applicant shall be determined as of the date the proceeding was initiated.

(d) 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.

(e) 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.

(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 interests 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 that participates in a proceeding primarily on behalf of one or more other persons or entities that

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would be ineligible is not itself eligible for an award.

§ 12.105 Standards for awards.

(a) A prevailing applicant may receive an award for fees and expenses incurred in connection with a proceeding or a significant and discrete substantive portion of the proceeding, unless the position of the Commission over which the applicant has prevailed was substantially justified. The position of the Commission includes, in addition to the position taken by the Commission in the adversary adjudication, the action or failure to act by the Commission upon which the adversary adjudication is based. The burden of proof that an award should not be made to a prevailing applicant because the Commission's position was substantially justified is on the Commission counsel.

(b) An award will be reduced or denied if the applicant has unduly or unreasonably protracted the proceeding or if special circumstances make the award sought unjust.

§ 12.106 Allowable fees and expenses.

(a) Awards will be based on rates customarily charged by persons engaged in the business of acting as attorneys, agents, and expert witnesses, even if the services were made available without charge or at reduced rate to the applicant.

(b) No award for the fee of an attorney or agent under this part may exceed \$75.00 per hour. No award to compensate an expert witness may exceed the highest rate at which the Commission pays expert witnesses. However, an award may also include the reasonable expenses of the attorney, agent, or witness as a separate item, if the attorney, agent, or witness ordinarily charges clients separately for these expenses.

(c) In determining the reasonableness of the fee sought for an attorney, agent, or expert witness, the adjudicative officer shall consider the following:

(1) If the attorney, agent, or witness is in private practice, his or her customary fees for similar services, or, if an employee of the applicant, the fully allocated costs of the services;