

Federal Housing Enterprise Oversight

§ 1705.2

PART 1705—IMPLEMENTATION OF THE EQUAL ACCESS TO JUSTICE ACT

Subpart A—General Provisions

- Sec.
1705.1 Purpose and scope.
1705.2 Definitions.
1705.3 Eligible parties.
1705.4 Standards for awards.
1705.5 Allowable fees and expenses.
1705.6 Rulemaking on maximum rate for fees.
1705.7 Awards against other agencies.
1705.8–1705.9 [Reserved]

Subpart B—Information Required from Applicants

- 1705.10 Contents of the application for award.
1705.11 Request for confidentiality of net worth exhibit.
1705.12 Documentation of fees and expenses.
1705.13–1705.19 [Reserved]

Subpart C—Procedures for Filing and Consideration of the Application for Award

- 1705.20 Filing and service of the application for award and related papers.
1705.21 Answer to the application for award.
1705.22 Reply to the answer.
1705.23 Comments by other parties.
1705.24 Settlement.
1705.25 Further proceedings on the application for award.
1705.26 Decision of the adjudicative officer.
1705.27 Review by OFHEO.
1705.28 Judicial review.
1705.29 Payment of award.

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Subpart A—General Provisions

§ 1705.1 Purpose and scope.

(a) This part implements the Equal Access to Justice Act, 5 U.S.C. 504, by establishing procedures for the filing and consideration of applications for award of fees and other expenses to eligible individuals and entities who are parties to adversary adjudications before OFHEO.

(b) This part applies to the award of fees and other expenses in connection with adversary adjudications before OFHEO. However, if a court reviews the underlying decision of the adver-

sary adjudication, an award for fees and other expenses may be made only pursuant to 28 U.S.C. 2412(d)(3).

§ 1705.2 Definitions.

(a) *Adjudicative officer* means the official who presided at the underlying adversary adjudication, without regard to whether the official is designated as a hearing examiner, administrative law judge, administrative judge, or otherwise.

(b) *Adversary adjudication* means an administrative proceeding conducted by OFHEO under 5 U.S.C. 554 in which the position of OFHEO or any other agency of the United States is represented by counsel or otherwise, including but not limited to an adjudication conducted under 12 CFR part 1780. Any issue as to whether an administrative proceeding is an adversary adjudication for purposes of this part will be an issue for resolution in the proceeding on the application for award.

(c) *Affiliate* means an individual, corporation, or other entity that directly or indirectly controls or owns a majority of the voting shares or other interests of the party, or any corporation or other entity of which the party directly or indirectly owns or controls a majority of the voting shares or other interest, unless the adjudicative officer determines that it would be unjust and contrary to the purpose of the Equal Access to Justice Act in light of the actual relationship between the affiliated entities to consider them to be affiliates for purposes of this part.

(d) *Agency counsel* means the attorney or attorneys designated by the General Counsel of OFHEO to represent OFHEO in an adversary adjudication covered by this part.

(e) *Demand of OFHEO* means the express demand of OFHEO that led to the adversary adjudication, but does not include a recitation by OFHEO of the maximum statutory penalty when accompanied by an express demand for a lesser amount.

(f) *Fees and other expenses* include reasonable attorney or agent fees, the reasonable expenses of expert witnesses, and the reasonable cost of any study, analysis, engineering report, test, or project that is found by the agency to

§ 1705.3

be necessary for the preparation of the eligible party's case.

(g) *Final disposition* means the date on which a decision or order disposing of the merits of the adversary adjudication or any other complete resolution of the adversary adjudication, such as a settlement or voluntary dismissal, becomes final and unappealable, both within the agency and to the courts.

(h) *OFHEO* means the Office of Federal Housing Enterprise Oversight.

(i) *Party* means an individual, partnership, corporation, association, or public or private organization that is named or admitted as a party, that is admitted as a party for limited purposes, or that is properly seeking and entitled as of right to be admitted as a party in an adversary adjudication.

(j) *Position of OFHEO* means the position taken by OFHEO in the adversary adjudication, including the action or failure to act by OFHEO upon which the adversary adjudication was based.

§ 1705.3 Eligible parties.

(a) To be eligible for an award of fees and other expenses under § 1705.4(a), a party must be a small entity as defined in 5 U.S.C. 601.

(b)(1) To be eligible for an award of fees and other expenses for prevailing parties under § 1705.5(b), a party must be one of the following:

(i) An individual who has 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 interest, and not more than 500 employees; however, a party who owns an unincorporated business will be considered to be an "individual" rather than the "sole owner of an unincorporated business" if the issues on which the party prevails are related primarily to personal interests rather than to business interests.

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

(iv) 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; or

12 CFR Ch. XVII (1-1-05 Edition)

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

(2) For purposes of eligibility under paragraph (b) of this section:

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

(ii) The net worth and number of employees of the party and its affiliates shall be aggregated to determine eligibility.

(iii) The net worth and number of employees of a party shall be determined as of the date the underlying adversary adjudication was initiated.

(c) A party that participates in an adversary adjudication primarily on behalf of one or more entities that would be ineligible for an award is not itself eligible for an award.

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§ 1705.4 Standards for awards.

(a) An eligible party that files an application for award of fees and other expenses in accordance with this part shall receive an award of fees and other expenses related to defending against a demand of OFHEO if the demand was in excess of the decision in the underlying adversary adjudication and was unreasonable when compared with the decision under the facts and circumstances of the case, unless the party has committed a willful violation of law or otherwise acted in bad faith, or unless special circumstances make an award unjust. The burden of proof that the demand of OFHEO was substantially in excess of the decision and is unreasonable when compared with the decision is on the eligible party.

(b) An eligible party that submits an application for award in accordance with this part shall receive an award of fees and other expenses incurred in connection with an adversary adjudication in which it prevailed or in a significant and discrete substantive portion of the adversary adjudication in which it prevailed, unless the position