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§ 266.5 Order of preference in selecting a representative payee.

As a guide in selecting a representative payee, categories of preferred payees have been established. These preferences are flexible. The primary concern of the Board is to select the payee who will best serve the annuitant's interest. The preferences are:

(a) For annuitants 18 years old or older, the preference is:

(1) A legal guardian, spouse, or other relative who has custody of the annuitant or who demonstrates strong concern for the personal welfare of the annuitant;

(2) A friend who has custody of the annuitant or demonstrates strong concern for the personal welfare of the annuitant;

(3) A public or nonprofit agency or institution having custody of the annuitant;

(4) A private institution operated for profit and licensed under State law, which has custody of the annuitant; and

(5) Persons other than those listed above who are qualified to carry out the responsibilities of a representative payee and who are able and willing to serve as a payee for an annuitant; *e.g.*, members of community groups or organizations who volunteer to serve as representative payee for an annuitant.

(b) For annuitants under age 18, the preference is:

(1) A natural or adoptive parent who has custody of the annuitant, or a legal guardian;

(2) A natural or adoptive parent who does not have custody of the annuitant, but is contributing toward the annuitant's support and is demonstrating strong concern for the annuitant's well-being;

(3) A relative or stepparent who has custody of the annuitant;

(4) A natural or adoptive parent who does not have custody of the annuitant and is not contributing toward his or her support but is demonstrating strong concern for the annuitant's well-being;

(5) A relative who does not have custody of the annuitant but is contributing toward the annuitant's support and is demonstrating concern for the annuitant's well-being;

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(6) A relative or close friend who does not have custody of the annuitant but is demonstrating concern for the annuitant's well-being; and

(7) An authorized social agency or custodial institution.

§ 266.6 Information to be submitted by a representative payee-applicant; face-to-face interview.

Before the Board selects a representative payee, the Board may request the payee-applicant to provide information concerning the factors listed in § 266.4 of this part. An employee of the Board may also conduct a face-to-face interview with the payee-applicant.

(Approved by the Office of Management and Budget under control number 3220-0052)

§ 266.7 Accountability of a representative payee.

(a) A representative payee is accountable for the use of benefits. The Board will require periodic written reports from representative payees. The Board may also, at the Board's option, verify how a representative payee used benefit payments. A representative payee must keep records of what was done with all benefit payments in order to make accounting reports. The Board may ask the following questions:

(1) The amount of benefit payments on hand at the beginning of the accounting period;

(2) How the benefit payments were used;

(3) How much of the benefit payments were saved and how the savings were invested;

(4) Where the annuitant lived during the accounting period;

(5) The amount of the annuitant's income from other sources during the accounting period. The Board may ask for information about other funds to enable the Board to evaluate the use of benefit payments; and

(6) Whether the representative payee has been convicted of a felony or misdemeanor offense under the statutes administered by the Board or by the Social Security Administration within the past 15 years or whether any such charges are pending.

(b) An individual to whom payments are certified as representative payee on behalf of an annuitant shall submit a

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written report in such form and at such times as the Board may require, accounting for the payments certified to him or her on behalf of the annuitant. If, however, such payee is a court-appointed fiduciary and, as such, is required to make an annual accounting to the court, a true copy of each such account filed with the court may be submitted in lieu of the accounting form prescribed by the Board. If any representative payee fails to submit the required accounting within a reasonable period of time after it is requested, no further payments shall be made to him or her on behalf of the annuitant unless for good cause shown, the default of the representative payee is excused by the Board, and the required accounting is thereafter submitted.

(c) At any time after the Board has selected a representative payee, the Board may ask such payee to submit information showing a continuing relationship to the annuitant and a continuing responsibility for the care of the annuitant. If the representative payee does not give the Board the requested information within a reasonable period of time, the Board may stop paying such payee unless the Board determines that the payee had a good reason for not complying with the Board's request, and the Board receives the information requested.

(Approved by the Office of Management and Budget under control numbers 3220-0052 and 3220-0151)

(d) Where, pursuant to paragraph (b) or (c) of this section, the Board suspends payments, such suspension shall not exceed a period of 30 days; thereafter, the payments will be made to the annuitant except where the annuitant is an unemancipated minor under age 18 or where in the Board's judgment the interests of the annuitant would not be served by releasing payment to the annuitant.

§ 266.8 Advance notice of the determination to make representative payment.

(a) As a general rule, whenever the Board intends to make representative payment and to name a representative payee, the Board will notify the annuitant or, in the case of an

unemancipated minor under age 18, or an individual who is legally incompetent, the individual acting on his or her behalf of the Board's proposed actions. Such notice will tell the person that the Board plans to name a representative payee and who that payee will be. The notice will also ask the person to contact the Board within 15 days of the date of the notice if he or she objects to either proposed action. If he or she objects to either proposed action, the objecting party may—

(1) Review the evidence upon which the proposed actions will be based; and

(2) Submit any additional evidence regarding the proposed actions.

(b) If the objecting party objects to the proposed actions, the Board will review its proposed determinations and consider any additional information provided. The Board will then issue a decision on whether to appoint a representative payee and who that payee will be. If the objecting party is dissatisfied with either determination, he or she may request a reconsideration under part 260 of this chapter.

(c) If the objecting party does not file a timely objection to the proposed actions, the Board will issue a decision on whether to appoint a representative payee and who that payee will be. If the objecting party is dissatisfied with either determination, he or she may request a reconsideration under part 260 of this chapter.

(d) A request for reconsideration or an appeal from a determination under this section under part 260 of this chapter shall not prevent the Board from making payments to a representative payee during the pendency of such reconsideration or appeal.

(e) The Board's failure or refusal to select an individual as representative payee or the Board's termination of representative payee status with respect to an individual is not subject to a request for reconsideration or an appeal under part 260 of this chapter by such individual.

§ 266.9 Responsibilities of a representative payee.

(a) A representative payee shall, subject to review by the Board and to such requirements as it may from time-to-time prescribe, apply the payments