

(4) Administer oaths and affirmations,

(5) Rule on motions and other procedural items on matters pending before him or her, including issuance of protective orders or other relief to a party against whom discovery is sought;

(6) Regulate the course of the hearing and conduct of counsel therein;

(7) Examine witnesses;

(8) Receive, rule on, exclude, or limit evidence or discovery;

(9) Fix for the time for filing motions, petitions, briefs, or other items in matters pending before him or her,

(10) If the presiding officer is the Assistant Secretary, make a final decision;

(11) If the presiding officer is a person other than the Assistant Secretary, he or she shall certify the entire record, including recommended findings and proposed decision, to the Assistant Secretary;

(12) Take any action authorized by the rules in the subpart or 5 U.S.C. 551-559; and

(b) The presiding officer does not have authority to compel the production of witnesses, papers, or other evidence by subpoena.

(c) If the presiding officer is a person other than the Assistant Secretary, his or her authority is to render a recommended decision with respect to program requirements which are to be considered at the hearing. In case of any noncompliance, he or she shall recommend whether payments or allotments should be withheld with respect to the entire State plan or the activities of the State's Protection and Advocacy System, or whether the payments or allotments should be withheld only with respect to those parts of the program affected by such noncompliance.

[49 FR 11779, Mar. 27, 1984, as amended at 61 FR 51162, Sept. 30, 1996]

#### § 1386.102 Rights of parties.

All parties may:

(a) Appear by counsel, or other authorized representative, in all hearing proceedings;

(b) Participate in any prehearing conference held by the presiding officer,

(c) Agree to stipulations of facts which will be made a part of the record;

(d) Make opening statements at the hearing;

(e) Present relevant evidence on the issues at the hearing;

(f) Present witnesses who then must be available for cross-examination by all other parties;

(g) Present oral arguments at the hearing;

(h) Submit written briefs, proposed findings of fact, and proposed conclusions of law, after the hearing.

#### § 1386.103 Discovery.

The Department and any party named in the Notice issued pursuant to § 1386.90 has the right to conduct discovery (including depositions) against opposing parties as provided by the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure. There is no fixed rule on priority of discovery. Upon written motion, the presiding officer must promptly rule upon any objection to discovery action. The presiding officer also has the power to grant a protective order or relief to any party against whom discovery is sought and to restrict or control discovery so as to prevent undue delay in the conduct of the hearing. Upon the failure of any party to make discovery, the presiding officer may issue any order and impose any sanction other than contempt orders authorized by Rule 37 of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure.

#### § 1386.104 Evidentiary purpose.

The hearing is directed to receiving factual evidence and expert opinion testimony related to the issues in the proceeding. Argument will not be received in evidence; rather, it must be presented in statements, memoranda, or briefs, as directed by the presiding officer. Brief opening statements, which shall be limited to a statement of the party's position and what it intends to prove, may be made at hearings.

#### § 1386.105 Evidence.

(a) *Testimony.* Testimony by witnesses at the hearing is given orally under oath or affirmation. Witnesses

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must be available at the hearing for cross-examination by all parties.

(b) *Stipulations and exhibits.* Two or more parties may agree to stipulations of fact. Such stipulations, or any exhibit proposed by any party, must be exchanged at the prehearing conference or at a different time prior to the hearing if the presiding officer requires it.

(c) *Rules of evidence.* Technical rules of evidence do not apply to hearings conducted pursuant to this subpart, but rules or principles designed to assure production of the most credible evidence available and to subject testimony to test by cross-examination are applied where reasonably necessary by the presiding officer. A witness may be cross-examined on any matter material to the proceeding without regard to the scope of his or her direct examination. The presiding officer may exclude irrelevant, immaterial, or unduly repetitious evidence. All documents and other evidence offered or taken for the record is open to examination by the parties and opportunity must be given to refute facts and arguments advanced on either side of the issues.

**§ 1386.106 Exclusion from hearing for misconduct.**

Disrespectful, disorderly, or contumacious language or contemptuous conduct, refusal to comply with directions, or continued use of dilatory tactics by any person at the hearing before a presiding officer shall constitute grounds for immediate exclusion of such person from the hearing by the presiding officer.

**§ 1386.107 Unsponsored written material.**

Letters expressing views or urging action and other unsponsored written material regarding matters in issue in a hearing is placed in the correspondence section of the docket of the proceeding. This material is not deemed part of the evidence or record in the hearing.

**§ 1386.108 Official transcript.**

The Department will designate the official reporter for all hearings. The official transcript of testimony taken, together with any stipulations, exhib-

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its, briefs, or memoranda of law filed with them is filed with the Department. Transcripts of testimony in hearings may be obtained from the official reporter by the parties and the public at rates not to exceed the maximum rates fixed by the contract between the Department and the reporter. Upon notice to all parties, the presiding officer may authorize corrections to the transcript which involve matters of substance. Transcripts must be taken by steno-type machine and not be voice recording devices, unless otherwise agreed by all of the parties and the presiding officer.

**§ 1386.109 Record for decision.**

The transcript of testimony, exhibits, and all papers and requests filed in the proceedings, except the correspondence section of the docket, including rulings and any recommended or initial decision, constitute the exclusive record for decision.

POSTHEARING PROCEDURES, DECISIONS

**§ 1386.110 Posthearing briefs.**

The presiding officer must fix the time for filing posthearing briefs. This time may not exceed 30 days after termination of the hearing and receipt of the transcript. Briefs may contain proposed findings of fact and conclusions of law. If permitted, reply briefs may be filed no later than 15 days after filing of the posthearing briefs.

**§ 1386.111 Decisions following hearing.**

(a) If the Assistant Secretary is the presiding officer, he or she must issue a decision within 60 days after the time for submission of posthearing briefs has expired.

(b)(1) If the presiding officer is a person designated by the Assistant Secretary, he or she must, within 30 days after the time for submission of posthearing briefs has expired, certify the entire record to the Assistant Secretary including recommended findings and proposed decision. The Assistant Secretary must serve a copy of the recommended findings and proposed decision upon all parties and amici.

(2) Any party may, within 20 days, file exceptions to the recommended