

§ 16.9

(2) A written statement of the appellant's argument concerning why the respondent's final decision is wrong (appellant's brief).

(b) *The respondent's responsibility.* Within 30 days after receiving the appellant's submission under paragraph (a) of this section, the respondent shall submit the following to the Board (with a copy to the appellant):

(1) A supplement to the appeal file containing any additional documents supporting the respondent's position, organized and indexed as indicated under paragraph (a) of this section. The respondent should avoid submitting duplicates of documents submitted by the appellant.

(2) A written statement (respondent's brief) responding to the appellant's brief.

(c) *The appellant's reply.* Within 15 days after receiving the respondent's submission, the appellant may submit a short reply. The appellant should avoid repeating arguments already made.

(d) *Cooperative efforts.* Whenever possible, the parties should try to develop a joint appeal file, agree to preparation of the file by one of them, agree to facts to eliminate the need for some documents, or agree that one party will submit documents identified by the other.

(e) *Voluminous documentation.* Where submission of all relevant documents would lead to a voluminous appeal file (for example where review of a disputed audit finding of inadequate documentation might involve thousands of receipts), the Board will consult with the parties about how to reduce the size of the file.

§ 16.9 How the Board will promote development of the record.

The Board may, at the time it acknowledges an appeal or at any appropriate later point, request additional documents or information; request briefing on issues in the case; issue orders to show cause why a proposed finding or decision of the Board should not become final; hold preliminary conferences (generally by telephone) to establish schedules and refine issues; and take such other steps as the Board

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determines appropriate to develop a prompt, sound decision.

§ 16.10 Using a conference.

(a) Once the Board has reviewed the appeal file, the Board may, on its own or in response to a party's request, schedule an informal conference. The conference will be conducted by the presiding Board member. The purposes of the conference are to give the parties an opportunity to make an oral presentation and the Board an opportunity to clarify issues and question both parties about matters which the Board may not yet fully understand from the record.

(b) If the Board has decided to hold a conference, the Board will consult or correspond with the parties to schedule the conference, identify issues, and discuss procedures. The Board will identify the persons who will be allowed to participate, along with the parties' representatives, in the conference. The parties can submit with their briefs under § 16.8 a list of persons who might participate with them, indicating how each person is involved in the matter. If the parties wish, they may also suggest questions or areas of inquiry which the Board may wish to pursue with each participant.

(c) Unless the parties and the Board otherwise agree, the following procedures apply:

(1) Conferences will be recorded at Department expense. On request, a party will be sent one copy of the transcript. The presiding Board member will insure an orderly transcript by controlling the sequence and identification of speakers.

(2) Only in exceptional circumstances will documents be received at a conference. Inquiry will focus on material in the appeal file. If a party finds that further documents should be in the record for the conference, the party should supplement the appeal file, submitting a supplementary index and copies of the documents to the Board and the other party not less than ten days prior to the conference.

(3) Each party's representative may make an oral presentation. Generally, the only oral communications of other participants will consist of statements requested by the Board or responses to

the Board's questions. The Board will allow reply comment, and may allow short closing statements. On request, the Board may allow the participants to question each other.

(4) There will be no post-conference submissions, unless the Board determines they would be helpful to resolve the case. The Board may require or allow the parties to submit proposed findings and conclusions.

§ 16.11 Hearing.

(a) *Electing a hearing.* If the appellant believes a hearing is appropriate, the appellant should specifically request one at the earliest possible time (in the notice of appeal or with the appeal file). The Board will approve a request (and may schedule a hearing on its own or in response to a later request) if it finds there are complex issues or material facts in dispute the resolution of which would be significantly aided by a hearing, or if the Board determines that its decisionmaking otherwise would be enhanced by oral presentations and arguments in an adversary, evidentiary hearing. The Board will also provide a hearing if otherwise required by law or regulation.

(b) *Preliminary conference before the hearing.* The Board generally will hold a prehearing conference (which may be conducted by telephone conference call) to consider any of the following: the possibility of settlement; simplifying and clarifying issues; stipulations and admissions; limitations on evidence and witnesses that will be presented at the hearing; scheduling the hearing; and any other matter that may aid in resolving the appeal. Normally, this conference will be conducted informally and off the record; however, the Board, after consulting with the parties, may reduce results of the conference to writing in a document which will be made part of the record, or may transcribe proceedings and make the transcript part of the record.

(c) *Where hearings are held.* Hearings generally are held in Washington, DC. In exceptional circumstances, the Board may hold the hearing at an HHS Regional Office or other convenient facility near the appellant.

(d) *Conduct of the hearing.* (1) The presiding Board member will conduct the hearing. Hearings will be as informal as reasonably possible, keeping in mind the need to establish an orderly record. The presiding Board member generally will admit evidence unless it is determined to be clearly irrelevant, immaterial or unduly repetitious, so the parties should avoid frequent objections to questions and documents. Both sides may make opening and closing statements, may present witnesses as agreed upon in the prehearing conference, and may cross-examine. Since the parties have ample opportunity to develop a complete appeal file, a party may introduce an exhibit at the hearing only after explaining to the satisfaction of the presiding Board member why the exhibit was not submitted earlier (for example, because the information was not available).

(2) The Board may request the parties to submit written statements of witnesses to the Board and each other prior to the hearing so that the hearing will primarily be concerned with cross-examination and rebuttal.

(3) False statements of a witness may be the basis for criminal prosecution under sections 287 and 1001 of Title 18 of the United States Code.

(4) The hearing will be recorded at Department expense.

(e) *Procedures after the hearing.* The Board will send one copy of the transcript to each party as soon as it is received by the Board. At the discretion of the Board, the parties may be required or allowed to submit post-hearing briefs or proposed findings and conclusions (the parties will be informed at the hearing). A party should note any major prejudicial transcript errors in an addendum to its post-hearing brief (or if no brief will be submitted, in a letter submitted within a time limit set by the Board).

§ 16.12 The expedited process.

(a) *Applicability.* Where the amount in dispute is \$25,000 or less, the Board will use these expedited procedures, unless the Board Chair determines otherwise under paragraph (b) of this section. If the Board and the parties agree, the Board may use these procedures in cases of more than \$25,000.