

helpful toward a more thorough understanding of the issue(s) in dispute;

(v) The relief sought by the State agency;

(vi) The identity of the person(s) presenting the State agency's position when a hearing is involved; and

(vii) A list of prospective State agency witnesses when a hearing is involved.

(c) *FNS action.* (1) When a hearing is requested pursuant to this section, the Administrative Review Officer will, within 60 days after receipt of the State agency's information, schedule and conduct the hearing. The State agency will be advised of the time, date and location of the hearing at least 10 days in advance.

(2) When a hearing is requested, the FNS Administrative Review Officer will make a final determination within 30 days after the hearing, and the final determination will take effect upon delivery of the written notice of this final decision to the State agency.

(3) When a review is requested, the FNS Administrative Review Officer will review information presented by a State agency and will make a final determination within 30 days after receipt of that information. The final determination will take effect upon delivery of the written notice of this final decision to the State agency.

§ 246.23 Claims and penalties.

(a) *Claims against State agencies.* (1) If FNS determines through a review of the State agency's reports, program or financial analysis, monitoring, audit, or otherwise, that any Program funds provided to a State agency for supplemental foods or nutrition services and administration purposes were, through State or local agency negligence or fraud, misused or otherwise diverted from Program purposes, a formal claim will be assessed by FNS against the State agency. The State agency shall pay promptly to FNS a sum equal to the amount of the nutrition services and administration funds or the value of supplemental foods or food instruments so misused or diverted.

(2) If FNS determines that any part of the Program funds received by a State agency; or supplemental foods, either purchased or donated commod-

ities; or food instruments, were lost as a result of thefts, embezzlements, or unexplained causes, the State agency shall, on demand by FNS, pay to FNS a sum equal to the amount of the money or the value of the supplemental foods or food instruments so lost.

(3) The State agency shall have full opportunity to submit evidence, explanation or information concerning alleged instances of noncompliance or diversion before a final determination is made in such cases.

(4) FNS will establish a claim against any State agency that has not accounted for the disposition of all redeemed food instruments and cash-value vouchers and taken appropriate follow-up action on all redeemed food instruments and cash-value vouchers that cannot be matched against valid enrollment and issuance records, including cases that may involve fraud, unless the State agency has demonstrated to the satisfaction of FNS that it has:

(i) Made every reasonable effort to comply with this requirement;

(ii) Identified the reasons for its inability to account for the disposition of each redeemed food instrument or cash-value voucher; and

(iii) Provided assurances that, to the extent considered necessary by FNS, it will take appropriate actions to improve its procedures.

(b) *Interest charge on claims against State agencies.* If an agreement cannot be reached with the State agency for payment of its debts or for offset of debts on its current Letter of Credit within 30 days from the date of the first demand letter from FNS, FNS will assess an interest (late) charge against the State agency. Interest accrual shall begin on the 31st day after the date of the first demand letter, bill or claim, and shall be computed monthly on any unpaid balance as long as the debt exists. From a source other than the Program, the State agency shall provide the funds necessary to maintain Program operations at the grant level authorized by FNS.

(c) *Claims—(1) Claims against participants.* (i) *Procedures.* If the State agency determines that program benefits

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have been obtained or disposed of improperly as the result of a participant violation, the State agency must establish a claim against the participant for the full value of such benefits. For all claims, the State agency must issue a letter demanding repayment. If full restitution is not made or a repayment schedule is not agreed on within 30 days of receipt of the letter, the State agency must take additional collection actions until restitution is made or a repayment schedule is agreed on, unless the State agency determines that further collection actions would not be cost-effective. The State agency must establish standards, based on a cost benefit analysis, for determining when collection actions are no longer cost-effective. At the time the State agency issues the demand letter, the State agency must advise the participant of the procedures to follow to obtain a fair hearing pursuant to §246.9 and that failure to pay the claim may result in disqualification. In addition to establishing a claim, the State agency must determine whether disqualification is required by §246.12(u)(2).

(ii) *Types of restitution.* In lieu of financial restitution, the State agency may allow participants or parents or caretakers of infant or child participants for whom financial restitution would cause undue hardship to provide restitution by performing in-kind services determined by the State agency. Restitution may not include offsetting the claim against future program benefits, even if agreed to by the participant or the parent or caretaker of an infant or child participant.

(iii) *Disposition of claims.* The State agency must document the disposition of all participant claims.

(2) *Claims against the State agency.* FNS will assert a claim against the State agency for losses resulting from program funds improperly spent as a result of dual participation, if FNS determines that the State agency has not complied with the requirements in §246.7(l)(1).

(3) *Delegation of claims responsibility.* The State agency may delegate to its local agencies the responsibility for collecting participant claims.

(d) *Penalties.* In accordance with section 12(g) of the National School Lunch

Act, whoever embezzles, willfully misapplies, steals or obtains by fraud any funds, assets or property provided under section 17 of the Child Nutrition Act of 1966, as amended, whether received directly or indirectly from USDA, or whoever receives, conceals or retains such funds, assets or property for his or her own interest, knowing such funds, assets or property have been embezzled, willfully misapplied, stolen, or obtained by fraud shall, if such funds, assets or property are of the value of \$100 or more, be fined not more than \$25,000 or imprisoned not more than five years, or both, or if such funds, assets or property are of a value of less than \$100, shall be fined not more than \$1,000 or imprisoned for not more than one year, or both.

[50 FR 6121, Feb. 13, 1985, as amended at 52 FR 21238, June 4, 1987; 65 FR 83288, Dec. 29, 2000; 71 FR 56731, Sept. 27, 2006; 72 FR 68998, Dec. 6, 2007]

§ 246.24 Procurement and property management.

(a) *Requirements.* State and local agencies shall ensure that subgrantees comply with the requirements of 7 CFR part 3016, the nonprocurement debarment/suspension requirements of 7 CFR part 3017, and if applicable, the lobbying restrictions as required in 7 CFR part 3018 concerning the procurement and allowability of food in bulk lots, supplies, equipment and other services with Program funds. These requirements are adopted to ensure that such materials and services are obtained for the Program in an effective manner and in compliance with the provisions of applicable law and executive orders.

(b) *Contractual responsibilities.* The standards contained in A-130 and 7 CFR part 3016 do not relieve the State or local agency of the responsibilities arising under its contracts. The State agency is the responsible authority, without recourse to FNS, regarding the settlement and satisfaction of all contractual and administrative issues arising out of procurements entered into in connection with the Program. This includes, but is not limited to, disputes, claims, protests of award, source evaluation, or other matters of a contractual nature. Matters concerning violation of law are to be referred to such