

conducting the hearing at the outset of or during the hearing.

(2) Technical rules of evidence may be waived by the administrative law judge conducting a hearing pursuant to this part, but rules or principles designed to assure production of the most credible evidence available, and subject testimony to test by cross-examination shall be applied where reasonably necessary. The administrative law judge may exclude irrelevant, immaterial, or unduly repetitious evidence. All documents and other evidence offered or taken for the record shall be open to examination by the parties and opportunity shall be given to refute facts and arguments advanced on either side of the issues. A transcript shall be made of the oral evidence except to the extent the substance thereof is stipulated for the record. All decisions shall be based upon the hearing record and written findings shall be made.

(e) *Consolidated or joint hearings.* In cases in which the same or related facts are asserted to constitute non-compliance or threatened non-compliance with this part, with respect to two or more forms of financial assistance to which this part applies, or non-compliance with this part and the regulations of one or more other Federal agencies issued under the Act, the Administrator may, by agreement with such other agencies, provide for the conduct of consolidated or joint hearings, and for the application to such hearings of rules and procedures not inconsistent with this part. Final decisions in such cases, insofar as this part is concerned, shall be made in accordance with § 117.17.

§ 117.17 Decisions and notices.

(a) *Decision by an administrative law judge.* If the hearing is held by an administrative law judge, such administrative law judge shall either make an initial decision, if so authorized, or certify the entire record, including recommended findings and proposed decision, to the Administrator for a final decision and a copy of such initial decision or certification shall be mailed to the applicant or recipient and the complainant. Where the initial decision is made by the administrative law judge, the applicant or recipient may, within

30 days of the mailing of such notice of initial decision, file with the Administrator exceptions to the initial decision, with the reasons therefor. In the absence of exceptions, the Administrator may, by motion within 45 days after the initial decision, serve on the applicant or recipient a notice that he/she will review the decision. Upon the filing of such exceptions or of such notice of review, the Administrator shall review the initial decision and issue his/her decision thereon, including the reasons therefor. The decision of the Administrator shall be mailed promptly to the applicant or recipient, and the complainant, if any. In the absence of either exceptions or a notice of review, the initial decision shall constitute the final decision of the Administrator.

(b) *Decisions on record or review by the Administrator.* Whenever a record is certified to the Administrator for decision or the Administrator reviews the decision of an administrative law judge pursuant to paragraph (a) of this section, or whenever the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services or the Department of Justice conducts the hearing, the applicant or recipient shall be given reasonable opportunity to file briefs or other written statements of its contentions and a copy of the final decision of the Administrator shall be given in writing to the applicant or recipient and the complainant, if any.

(c) *Decisions on record where a hearing is waived.* Whenever a hearing is waived pursuant to § 117.16, a decision shall be made by the Administrator on the record and a copy of such decision shall be given in writing to the applicant or recipient, and to the complainant, if any.

(d) *Rulings required.* Each decision of an administrative law judge or the Administrator shall set forth the ruling on each finding, conclusion, or exception presented, and shall identify the requirement or requirements imposed by or pursuant to this part with which it is found that the applicant or recipient has failed to comply.

(e) *Decision by the Administrator.* The Administrator shall make any final decision which provides for the suspension or termination of, or the refusal to

grant or continue Federal financial assistance, acceleration repayment or the imposition of any other sanction available under the regulations or taken under other means authorized by law.

(f) *Content of orders.* The final decision may provide for accelerating of repayment, suspension or termination of, or refusal to approve, disburse, or continue Federal financial assistance, in whole or in part, under the programs involved, and may contain such terms, conditions, and other provisions as are consistent with and will effectuate the purposes of the Act and this part, including provisions designed to assure that no Federal financial assistance will, thereafter, be extended under such program to the applicant or recipient determined by such decision to have failed to comply with this part, unless and until it corrects its noncompliance and satisfies the Administrator that it will fully comply with this part.

(g) *Post termination proceedings.* (1) An applicant or recipient adversely affected by an order issued under paragraph (e) of this section shall be restored to full eligibility to receive Federal financial assistance only if it satisfies the terms and conditions of that order for such eligibility and it brings itself into compliance with this regulation and provides reasonable assurance that it will fully comply with this regulation.

(2) Any applicant or recipient adversely affected by an order entered pursuant to paragraph (f) of this section may at any time request the Administrator to restore fully its eligibility to receive Federal financial assistance. Any such request shall be supported by information showing that the applicant or recipient has met the requirements of paragraph (g)(1) of this section. If the Administrator determines that those requirements have been satisfied, he/she shall restore such eligibility.

(3) If the Administrator denies any such request, the applicant or recipient may submit a request for a hearing in writing, specifying why it believes the denial to have been in error. It shall there upon be given an expeditious hearing, with a decision on the record, in accordance with rules and proce-

dures issued by the Administrator. The applicant or recipient shall be restored to such eligibility if it proves at such hearing that it satisfied the requirements of paragraph (g)(1) of this section. While proceedings under this paragraph are pending, the sanctions imposed by the order issued under paragraph (f) of this section shall remain in effect.

§ 117.18 Judicial review.

(a) The complainant may file a civil action following the exhaustion of administrative remedies under the Act. Administrative remedies are exhausted if:

(1) 180 days have elapsed since the complainant filed the complaint and the Agency has made no finding with regard to the complaint; or

(2) The Agency has issued a finding in favor of the recipient.

(b) If the Agency fails to make a finding within 180 days or issues a finding in favor of the recipient, the Agency shall:

(1) Advise the complainant of this fact;

(2) Advise the complainant of the right to file a civil action for injunctive relief; and

(3) Inform the complainant:

(i) That the complainant may bring a civil action only in a United States district court for the district in which the recipient is found or transacts business;

(ii) That a complainant prevailing in a civil action has the right to be awarded the costs of the action, including reasonable attorney's fees, but that the complainant must demand these costs in the complaint;

(iii) That before commencing the action the complainant shall give 30 days notice by registered mail to the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services, the Attorney General of the United States and the recipient;

(iv) That the notice must state: The alleged violation of the Act; the relief requested; the court in which the complainant is bringing the action; and whether or not attorney's fees are demanded in the event the complainant prevails; and