

Food and Nutrition Service, USDA

§ 247.21

an attorney or other persons; (3) bring witnesses; (4) advance arguments without undue interference; (5) question or refute any testimony or evidence, including an opportunity to confront and cross-examine adverse witnesses; and (6) submit evidence to establish all pertinent facts and circumstances in the case.

(j) *Hearing decisions.* (1) Decisions of the hearing official shall comply with Federal law or regulations and shall be based on facts in the hearing record. The verbatim transcript or recording of testimony and exhibits, or an official report containing the substance of what transpired at the hearing, together with all papers and requests filed in the proceeding shall constitute the exclusive record for a final decision by the hearing official. This record shall be retained in accordance with § 247.13. This record shall also be available, for copying and inspection, to the appellant or representative at any reasonable time.

(2) A decision by the hearing official shall be binding on the local agency and shall summarize the facts of the case, specify the reasons for the decision, and identify the supporting evidence and the pertinent regulations. The decision shall become a part of the record.

(3) Within 45 days of the request for the hearing, the applicant or representative shall be notified in writing of the decision and the reasons for the decision in accordance with paragraph (j)(2) of this section. Also, if the decision is in the favor of the applicant and benefits were denied, benefits shall begin within this 45-day time period. If the decision is in favor of the agency, as soon as administratively feasible any continued benefits shall be terminated as decided by the hearing official.

(4) All State and local agency hearing records and decisions shall be available for public inspection and copying, subject to the disclosure safeguards provided in § 247.22(d), and provided the names and addresses of participants and other members of the public are kept confidential.

(k) *Judicial review.* If a State level decision upholds the agency action, the State agency shall explain any available State review of the decision and

any State rehearing process. If neither are available or have been exhausted, the State agency shall explain the right to pursue judicial review of the decision.

(Approved by the Office of Management and Budget under control number 0584-0063)

(44 U.S.C. 3506)

[46 FR 6341, Jan. 21, 1981, as amended at 47 FR 746, Jan. 7, 1982]

§ 247.21 Management evaluation and reviews.

(a) *General.* FNS and each State agency shall establish a management evaluation system in order to assess the accomplishment of Program objectives as provided under these regulations, the State Plan, and the written agreement with the Department. FNS will provide assistance to States in discharging this responsibility, and will establish standards and procedures to determine how well the objectives of this part are being accomplished.

(b) *Responsibilities of FNS.* FNS shall establish evaluation procedures to determine whether State agencies carry out the purposes and provisions of this part, the State Plan, and the written agreement with the Department. As a part of the evaluation procedure, FNS shall review audits performed by the State agency to ensure that the Program at both the State and local levels has been included in audit examinations at a reasonable frequency. These evaluations shall include a review of each State agency, including on-site reviews of selected local agencies. These evaluations will measure the State agency's progress toward meeting the objective outlined in its State Plan and compliance with these regulations.

(c) *Responsibilities of State agencies.* The State agency is responsible for meeting the following requirements:

(1) The State agency shall establish evaluation and review procedures and document the results of such procedures. The procedures shall include, but not be limited to:

(i) Annual monitoring of the operation of all local agencies to evaluate certification procedures, management,

§ 247.22

7 CFR Ch. II (1-1-05 Edition)

nutrition education, civil rights compliance, food storage, inventory accountability, and financial management systems. However, more frequent reviews may be performed as the State agency deems necessary. The State agency shall provide a continuing evaluation of each local agency through on-site reviews of the local agency, reviews of local agency reports including inventory reports, reviews of storage facilities and safeguards for supplemental foods.

(ii) Instituting the necessary followup procedures to correct identified problem areas.

(2) On its own initiative or when required by FNS, the State agency shall provide special reports on Program activities, and take positive action to correct deficiencies in Program operations.

(3) The State agency shall require that local agencies establish Program review procedures to be used in reviewing their own operations and those of subsidiaries or contractors.

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(44 U.S.C. 3506)

[46 FR 6341, Jan. 21, 1981, as amended at 47 FR 746, Jan. 7, 1982]

§ 247.22 Administrative appeal of State agency decisions.

(a) *Requirements.* The State agency shall provide a hearing procedure whereby a local agency adversely affected by a State action may appeal the action. The right to appeal shall be granted when the local agency's application to participate is denied, when participation is terminated, when a contract is not renewed by the State agency or when any other adverse action which affects participation is taken. The adverse action shall be postponed until a hearing decision is reached.

(b) *Procedure.* The State agency hearing procedure shall at a minimum provide the local agency:

(1) Adequate advance notice of the time and place of the hearing to provide all parties involved sufficient time to prepare for the hearing;

(2) The opportunity to present its case;

(3) The opportunity to confront and cross-examine adverse witnesses;

(4) The opportunity to be represented by counsel, if desired;

(5) The opportunity to review the case record prior to the hearing;

(6) An impartial decision maker, whose decision as to the validity of the State or local agency's action shall rest solely on the evidence presented at the hearing and the statutory and regulatory provisions governing the Program. The basis for the decision shall be stated in writing, although it need not amount to a full opinion or contain formal finding of fact and conclusions of law; and

(7) Written notification of the decision concerning the appeal, within 60 days from the date of the request for a hearing.

§ 247.23 Miscellaneous provisions.

(a) *No aid reduction.* The value of benefits or assistance available under the Program shall not be considered as income to or resources of participants or their families for any purpose under Federal, State or local laws, including, but not limited to, laws relating to taxation, welfare and public assistance programs.

(b) *Statistical information.* FNS reserves the right to use information obtained under the Program in a summary, statistical or other form which does not identify particular individuals. FNS may require the State or local agencies to supply data and other information collected under the Program in a form that does not identify particular individuals, to enable the Secretary or the State agencies to evaluate the effect of food intervention upon low-income individuals determined to be eligible for Program benefits.

(c) *Confidentiality.* Each State agency shall restrict the use or disclosure of information obtained from Program applicants or participants to persons directly connected with the administration or enforcement of the Program.

(d) *Public information.* Any person who wishes information, assistance, records or other public material shall request such information from the