

§ 218.32

achieve voluntary compliance with the Act. If voluntary compliance cannot be achieved, the agency will arrange for enforcement as described in § 143.36

§ 218.32 Complaints.

(a) Any person, individually or as a member of a class or on behalf of others, may file a complaint with an agency, alleging discrimination prohibited by these regulations based on an action occurring on or after July 1, 1979. A complainant shall file a complaint within 180 days from the date the complainant first had knowledge of the alleged act of discrimination. However, for good cause shown, the agency may extend this time limit.

(b) The agency will attempt to facilitate the filing of complaints wherever possible, including taking the following measures:

(1) Accepting as a sufficient complaint, any written statement which identifies the parties involved, describes generally the action or practice complained of, and is signed by the complainant.

(2) Freely permitting a complainant to add information to the complaint to meet the requirements of a sufficient complaint.

(3) Widely disseminating information regarding the obligations of recipients under the Act and these regulations.

(4) Notifying the complainant and the recipient of their rights under the complaint procedure, including the right to have a representative at all stages of the complaint process.

(5) Notifying the complainant and the recipient (or their representatives) of their right to contact the agency for information and assistance regarding the complaint resolution process.

(c) The agency will return to the complainant any complaint outside the jurisdiction of these regulations and will state the reason(s) why it is outside the jurisdiction of these regulations.

§ 218.33 Mediation.

(a) *Referral of complaints for mediation.* The agency will refer to the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service all complaints that:

(1) fall within the jurisdiction of these regulations; and

(2) Contain all information necessary for further processing.

(b) Both the complainant and the recipient shall participate in the mediation process to the extent necessary to reach an agreement or make an informed judgment that an agreement is not possible. There must be at least one meeting with the mediator, before the agency will accept a judgment that an agreement is not possible. However, the recipient and the complainant need not meet with the mediator at the same time.

(c) If the complainant and the recipient reach an agreement, the mediator shall prepare a written statement of the agreement and have the complainant and recipient sign it. The mediator shall send a copy of the agreement to the agency. The agency shall take no further action on the complaint unless the complainant or the recipient fails to comply with the agreement.

(d) The mediator shall protect the confidentiality of all information obtained in the course of the mediation process. No mediator shall testify in any adjudicative proceeding, produce any document, or otherwise disclose any information obtained in the course of the mediation process without prior approval of the head of the mediation agency.

(e) The agency will use the mediation process for a maximum of 60 days after receiving a complaint. Mediation ends if:

(1) Sixty days elapse from the time the agency receives the complaints; *or*

(2) Prior to the end of that 60-day period, an agreement is reached; *or*

(3) Prior to the end of that 60-day period, the mediator determines that an agreement cannot be reached.

(f) The mediator shall return unresolved complaints to the agency.

§ 218.34 Investigation.

(a) *Informal investigation.* (1) The agency will investigate complaints that are unresolved after mediation or are reopened because of a violation of a mediation agreement.

(2) As part of the initial investigation, the agency will use informal fact finding methods, including joint or separate discussions with the complainant and recipient to establish the facts,

Department of State

§ 218.36

and, if possible, settle the complaint on terms that are mutually agreeable. The agency may seek the assistance of any involved State program agency.

(3) The agency will put any agreement in writing and have it signed by the parties and an authorized official of the agency.

(4) The settlement shall not affect the operation of any other enforcement efforts of the agency, including compliance reviews and other individual complaints which may involve the recipient.

(5) The settlement is not a finding of discrimination against a recipient.

(b) *Formal investigation.* If the agency cannot resolve the complaint through informal investigation, it will begin to develop formal findings through further investigation of the complaint. If the investigation indicates a violation of these regulations, the agency will attempt to obtain voluntary compliance. If the agency cannot obtain voluntary compliance, it will begin enforcement as described in § 218.36.

§ 218.35 Prohibition against intimidation or retaliation.

A recipient may not engage in acts of intimidation or retaliation against any person who:

(a) Attempts to assert a right protected by these regulations; or

(b) Cooperates in any mediation, investigation, hearing, or other part of the agency's investigation, conciliation, and enforcement process.

§ 218.36 Compliance procedure.

(a) An agency may enforce the Act and these regulations through:

(1) Termination of a recipient's Federal financial assistance from the agency under the program or activity involved where the recipient has violated the Act and these regulations. The determination of the recipient's violation may be made only after a recipient has had an opportunity for a hearing on the record before an administrative law judge. Therefore, cases which are settled in mediation or prior to a hearing, will not involve termination of a recipient's Federal financial assistance from the agency.

(2) Any other means authorized by law including but not limited to:

(i) Referral to the Department of Justice for proceedings to enforce any rights of the United States or obligations by the Act and these regulations.

(ii) Use of any requirement of or referral to any Federal, state, or local government agency which will have the effect of correcting a violation of the Act or these regulations.

(b) The agency will limit any termination under paragraph (a)(1) of this section to the particular recipient and particular program or activity the agency finds in violation of these regulations. The agency will not base any part of a termination on a finding with respect to any program or activity of the recipient which does not receive Federal financial assistance from the agency.

(c) The agency will take no action under paragraph (a) of this section until:

(1) The agency head has advised the recipient of its failure to comply with these regulations and has determined that voluntary compliance cannot be obtained.

(2) Thirty days have lapsed after the agency head has sent a written report of the circumstances and grounds of the action to the committees of the Congress having legislative jurisdiction over the Federal program or activity involved. The agency head shall file a report whenever any action is taken under paragraph (a) of this section.

(d) The agency head also may defer granting new Federal financial assistance from the agency to a recipient when a hearing under paragraph (a)(1) of this section is initiated.

(1) New Federal financial assistance from the agency includes all assistance for which the agency requires an application or approval, including renewal of continuation of existing activities, or authorization of the new activities, during the deferral period. New Federal financial assistance from the agency does not include increases in funding as a result of changed computation of formula awards or assistance approved prior to the beginning of a hearing under paragraph (a)(1) of this section.

(2) The agency will not begin a deferral until the recipient has received a notice of opportunity for a hearing under paragraph (a)(1) of this section.