

more expensive and time-consuming than a determination on the written record alone or with an informal conference. Generally, therefore, the Board will schedule a hearing only if the Board determines that there are complex issues or material facts in dispute, or that the Board's review would otherwise be significantly enhanced by a hearing. Where the amount in dispute is \$25,000 or less, there are special expedited procedures (see §16.12 of this part). In all cases, the Board has the flexibility to modify procedures to ensure fairness, to avoid delay, and to accommodate the peculiar needs of a given case. The Board makes maximum feasible use of preliminary informal steps to refine issues and to encourage resolution by the parties. The Board also has the capability to provide mediation services (see §16.18).

§ 16.5 How the Board operates.

(a) The Board's professional staff consists of a Chair (who is also a Board member) and full- and part-time Board members, all appointed by the Secretary; and a staff of employees and consultants who are attorneys or persons from other relevant disciplines, such as accounting.

(b) The Chair will assign a Board member to have lead responsibility for each case (the "presiding Board member"). The presiding Board member will conduct the conference or hearing, if one is held. Each decision of the Board is issued by the presiding Board member and two other Board members.

(c) The Board staff assists the presiding Board member, and may request information from the parties; conduct telephone conference calls to request information, to clarify issues, or to schedule events; and assist in developing decisions and other documents in a case.

(d) The Chair will assure that no Board or staff member will participate in a case where his or her impartiality could reasonably be questioned.

(e) The Board's powers and responsibilities are set forth in §16.13.

§ 16.6 Who represents the parties.

The appellant's notice of appeal, or the first subsequent submission to the Board, should specify the name, ad-

dress and telephone number of the appellant's representative. In its first submission to the Board and the appellant, the respondent (i.e., the federal party to the appeal) should specify the name, address and telephone number of the respondent's representative.

§ 16.7 The first steps in the appeal process: The notice of appeal and the Board's response.

(a) As explained in 45 CFR 74.304, a prospective appellant must submit a notice of appeal to the Board within 30 days after receiving the final decision. The notice of appeal must include a copy of the final decision, a statement of the amount in dispute in the appeal, and a brief statement of why the decision is wrong.

(b) Within ten days after receiving the notice of appeal, the Board will send an acknowledgment, enclose a copy of these procedures, and advise the appellant of the next steps. The Board will also send a copy of the notice of appeal, its attachments, and the Board's acknowledgment to the respondent. If the Board Chair has determined that the appeal does not meet the conditions of §16.3 or if further information is needed to make this determination, the Board will notify the parties at this point.

§ 16.8 The next step in the appeal process: Preparation of an appeal file and written argument.

Except in expedited cases (generally those of \$25,000 or less; see §16.12 for details), the appellant and the respondent each participate in developing an appeal file for the Board to review. Each also submits written argument in support of its position. The responsibilities of each are as follows:

(a) *The appellant's responsibility.* Within 30 days after receiving the acknowledgment of the appeal, the appellant shall submit the following to the Board (with a copy to the respondent):

(1) An appeal file containing the documents supporting the claim, tabbed and organized chronologically and accompanied by an indexed list identifying each document. The appellant should include only those documents which are important to the Board's decision on the issues in the case.

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(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