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Reserve System Labor Relations Panel, 20th Street and Constitution Avenue NW., Washington, DC 20551. Within 5 days after receipt of a properly filed charge that meets the formal requirements set forth in §269b.112, the Secretary will cause a copy of such charge to be served on each party against whom the charge is made and upon all other potential parties in interest.

§ 269b.112 Contents of the charge.

A charge shall contain the following:

(a) The full name, address, and telephone number of the person, bank, or labor organization making the charge (hereinafter referred to as the charging party) and of the person signing the charge who shall state also his relation to or his capacity with the complainant. Where discrimination is alleged, all known discriminatees shall be named;

(b) The name, address, and telephone number of the bank or labor organization against whom the charge is made (hereinafter referred to as the respondent) and of any parties in interest;

(c) A clear and concise statement of the facts constituting the alleged unfair labor practice, including the time and place of occurrence of the particular acts, and a statement of the portion or portions of the policy alleged to have been violated. A charge shall not incorporate by reference affidavits or other documents submitted in support of the charge;

(d) A statement of the relief sought;

(e) A statement of any other remedies invoked for the redress of the alleged violations of the policy and the results, if any, of their invocation. If the issue in such charge is subject to an established grievance procedure, the complainant must irrevocably elect, prior to the completion of the first applicable step of the grievance procedure, whether he will invoke the grievance procedure or whether he will invoke the unfair labor practice procedures of the panel. A charge which is withdrawn or rejected by the panel as defective prior to the institution of any formal proceedings by the panel shall not prejudice the filing of a grievance on the same matter, unless the parties otherwise so provide;

(f) A declaration by the person signing the charge, that its contents are true and correct to the best of his knowledge and belief, such declaration to be subject to applicable provisions of the Federal Criminal Code (18 U.S.C. 1001).

§ 269b.113 Withdrawal or settlement.

A charge may be withdrawn or settlement of the matter may be reached without consent of the panel at any time. In connection with any such settlement the parties in interest shall prepare and sign a settlement agreement which shall record that the settlement is mutually satisfactory, shall stipulate any occurrences which constituted unfair labor practices and shall set forth the terms of the settlement.

§ 269b.120 Answer to a charge.

The respondent shall file an answer to the charge with the Secretary of the panel within 15 days after service of the charge. Upon application and for good cause shown, the panel may extend the time within which the answer shall be filed. One copy of the answer shall be served on each party with proof of service furnished to the Secretary, and the original, which shall be signed, and four copies shall be filed with the Secretary.

§ 269b.121 Contents of answer.

The answer shall contain:

(a) A specific admission or denial, and where appropriate, explanation thereof; or if the respondent is without knowledge of the allegation, he shall so state and such statement shall operate as a denial. Admissions or denials may be to all or part of an allegation but shall be responsive to the substance of the allegation;

(b) A specified, detailed statement of any affirmative defense;

(c) A clear and concise statement of the facts and matters of law relied upon constituting the grounds of defense.

Any allegation of the charge not denied in the answer may be deemed admitted and may be so found by the panel.

PRELIMINARY INVESTIGATION

§ 269b.210 Referral to National Center for Dispute Settlement.

(a) Within 5 days after the answer to the charge has been or should have been filed, the panel may refer the matter, accompanied by a general or particularized request, to the National Center for Dispute Settlement of the American Arbitration Association (hereinafter referred to as the Center) to make an investigation and to determine whether the charging party has established a prima facie case.

(b) For the purposes of this part, a *prima facie case* means a case where allegations of an unfair labor practice that have been presented give reasonable cause to believe that such practice may have occurred, but where evidentiary proceedings are necessary for determination of whether the allegations are substantiated.

(c) The Center may use its own personnel or may hire individuals on a contract basis to conduct such investigations. The panel may consolidate or sever proceedings conducted pursuant to this part.

(d) Any party may request the Center or other appointing authority to withdraw appointment of the investigator within 3 days after designation on the basis of previously demonstrated personal bias, conflict of interest, or prejudice. Such a request shall set forth in detail the matter alleged to constitute grounds for disqualification. Denial of a request by the Center or other appointing authority shall be substantiated in writing and transmitted to the requesting party, and shall be submitted to the panel together with the complete report of the investigator required in § 269b.240(b).

§ 269b.220 Priority; acceleration of proceedings.

(a) A charge of ''refusal to bargain'' or a charge that, if sustained, would require the setting aside of an election or the conduct of a new election shall be given priority.

(b) The parties, individually or jointly, may petition the panel at any time to invoke immediately the formal hearing procedures set forth in § 269b.410. They may also petition the panel to entertain the matter itself without prior investigation and/or without the formal hearing procedure set forth in § 269b.410. The panel is empowered also on its own motion to so accelerate disposition of the case.

(c) Before accelerating a case the panel may utilize whatever proceedings it may deem appropriate and timely to allow parties in interest to comment on the proposed course of action.

§ 269b.230 Assessment of costs; posting of bond.

(a) The panel shall normally bear the costs of an investigation conducted pursuant to § 269b.210, but the panel may require that the charging party, the respondent, and/or other parties in interest or intervenors, or several of them, shall bear a portion or all of the costs therefor. With respect to each case where an investigation is directed by the panel, the charging party may, in the discretion of the panel, be required to file a cost bond, or equivalent security, of $500, unless the panel fixes a different amount.

(b) Among the circumstances that may be the basis for payment of costs by other than the panel are cases where a clearly spurious charge has been filed or where the filing of a charge was necessary to redress the respondent's flagrant misconduct.

(c) The bond or equivalent security shall be to secure the payment of the costs of the investigation as may be assessed by the panel. In those cases where the panel does not assess such costs, the bond posted and the cost thereof shall be reimbursed to the charging party. The panel may require also the posting of a cost bond by the respondent or other party to the proceeding, who shall be entitled to reimbursement of the cost of the bond in the event that no costs of investigation are assessed upon such party by the panel.

(d) Notification of the panel's decision that a bond shall be required shall be effected by registered mail, such notice to advise of the amount of the bond required and the period by which it shall be posted.

(e) Absent good cause shown, failure of a party to file timely such cost bond or equivalent security may be ground