

§ 2610.306 Settlement.

The applicant and agency counsel may agree on a proposed settlement of the award before final action on the application, either in connection with a settlement of the underlying proceeding, or after the underlying proceeding has been concluded, in accordance with the settlement procedure applicable to the underlying procedure. If an eligible prevailing party and agency counsel agree on a proposed settlement of an award before an application has been filed, the application shall be filed with the proposed settlement.

§ 2610.307 Further proceedings.

(a) Ordinarily, the determination of an award will be made on the basis of the written record. However, on request of either the applicant or agency counsel, or on his or her own initiative, the adjudicative officer may order further proceedings, such as an informal conference, oral argument, additional written submissions or, as to issues other than substantial justification (such as the applicant's eligibility or substantiation of fees and expenses), pertinent discovery or an evidentiary hearing. Such further proceedings shall be held only when necessary for full and fair resolution of the issues arising from the application, and shall be conducted as promptly as possible. Whether or not the position of the Office was substantially justified shall be determined on the basis of the administrative record, as a whole, which is made in the adversary adjudication for which fees and other expenses are sought.

(b) A request that the adjudicative officer order further proceedings under this section shall specifically identify the information sought or the disputed issues and shall explain why the additional proceedings are necessary to resolve the issues.

§ 2610.308 Decision.

The adjudicative officer shall issue an initial decision on the application within 30 days after completion of proceedings on the application. The decision shall include written findings and conclusions on the applicant's eligibility and status as a prevailing party, and an explanation of the reasons for any difference between the amount re-

quested and the amount awarded. The decision shall also include, if at issue, findings on whether the Office's position was substantially justified, whether the applicant unduly protracted the proceedings, or whether special circumstances make an award unjust. If the applicant has sought an award against more than one agency, the decision shall allocate responsibility for payment of any award made among the agencies, and shall explain the reasons for the allocation made.

§ 2610.309 Agency review.

Within 30 days after issuance of an initial decision under this part, either the applicant or agency counsel may seek review of the initial decision on the fee application, or the Director (or his or her designee) may decide to review the initial decision on his or her own initiative, in accordance with the Office's review or appeal procedures applicable to the underlying proceeding. If neither the applicant nor agency counsel seeks review and the Director (or designee) does not take review on his or her own initiative, the initial decision on the application shall become a final decision of the Office of Government Ethics 30 days after it is issued. Whether to review a decision is a matter within the discretion of the Director (or his or her designee, if any). If review is taken, the Office will issue a final decision on the application or remand the application to the adjudicative officer for further proceedings.

§ 2610.310 Judicial review.

Judicial review of final agency decisions on awards may be sought as provided in 5 U.S.C. 504(c)(2).

§ 2610.311 Payment of award.

An applicant seeking payment of an award shall submit a copy of the Office's final decision granting the award, accompanied by a certification that the applicant will not seek review of the decision in the United States courts, to the Associate Director for Administration, Office of Government Ethics, Suite 500, 1201 New York Avenue NW., Washington, DC 20005-3917. The Office will pay the amount awarded to the applicant within 60 days, unless judicial review of the award or of