

together with any stipulations, exhibits, briefs, or memoranda of law filed with them is filed with the Department. Transcripts of testimony in hearings may be obtained from the official reporter by the parties and the public at rates not to exceed the maximum rates fixed by the contract between the Department and the reporter. Upon notice to all parties, the presiding officer may authorize corrections to the transcript which involve matters of substance. Transcripts must be taken by stenotype machine and not be voice recording devices, unless otherwise agreed by all of the parties and the presiding officer.

§ 1326.109 Record for decision.

The transcript of testimony, exhibits, and all papers and requests filed in the proceedings, except the correspondence section of the docket, including rulings and any recommended or initial decision, constitute the exclusive record for decision.

POST-HEARING PROCEDURES, DECISIONS

§ 1326.110 Post-hearing briefs.

The presiding officer must fix the time for filing post-hearing briefs. This time may not exceed 30 days after termination of the hearing and receipt of the transcript. Briefs may contain proposed findings of fact and conclusions of law. If permitted, reply briefs may be filed no later than 15 days after filing of the post-hearing briefs.

§ 1326.111 Decisions following hearing.

(a) If the Secretary, or his or her designee, is the presiding officer, he or she must issue a decision within 60 days after the time for submission of post-hearing briefs has expired.

(b)(1) If the presiding officer is another person designated for a particular hearing or hearings, he or she must, within 30 days after the time for submission of post-hearing briefs has expired, certify the entire record to the Secretary (or his or her designee) including the recommended findings and proposed decision.

(2) The Secretary, or his or her designee, must serve a copy of the rec-

ommended findings and proposed decision upon all parties and amici.

(3) Any party may, within 20 days, file exceptions to the recommended findings and proposed decision and supporting brief or statement with the Secretary, or his or her designee.

(4) The Secretary, or his or her designee, must review the recommended decision and, within 60 days of its issuance, issue his or her own decision.

(c) If the Secretary, or his or her designee, concludes:

(1) In the case of a hearing pursuant to sections 124, 127, or 143 of the Act, that a State plan or the activities of the State's Protection and Advocacy System does not comply with Federal requirements, he or she shall also specify whether the State's payment or allotment for the fiscal year will not be authorized for the State or whether, in the exercise of his or her discretion, the payment or allotment will be limited to the parts of the State plan or the activities of the State's Protection and Advocacy System not affected by the noncompliance.

(2) In the case of a hearing pursuant to section 127 of the Act that the State is not complying with the requirements of the State plan, he or she also must specify whether the State's payment or allotment will be made available to the State or whether, in the exercise of his or her discretion, the payment or allotment will be limited to the parts of the State plan not affected by such noncompliance. The Secretary, or his or her designee, may ask the parties for recommendations or briefs or may hold conferences of the parties on these questions.

(d) The decision of the Secretary, or his or her designee, under this section is the final decision of the Secretary and constitutes "final agency action" within the meaning of 5 U.S.C. 704 and the "Secretary's action" within the meaning of section 128 of the Act (42 U.S.C. 15028). The Secretary's, or his or her designee's, decision must be promptly served on all parties and amici.