

pursuant to part 145 to copy or inspect the transcripts, recordings or sets of minutes described in this part; or

(2) Authorizing the Commission to withhold from any person any record, including transcripts, recordings or sets of minutes required by this part, which is otherwise accessible to such individual under part 146 of this title (implementing the provisions of the Privacy Act, 5 U.S.C. 552a).

(b) The requirements of chapter 33 of title 44, U.S. Code (with respect to the disposal of records), shall not apply to the transcripts, recordings and minutes described in this part.

## **PART 148—IMPLEMENTATION OF THE EQUAL ACCESS TO JUSTICE ACT IN COVERED ADJUDICATORY PROCEEDINGS BEFORE THE COMMISSION**

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**AUTHORITY:** Equal Access to Justice Act, 5 U.S.C. 504(c)(1) and secs. 2(a)(11) and 8a(5) of the Commodity Exchange Act, 7 U.S.C. 4a(j) and 12a(5), unless otherwise noted.

**SOURCE:** 46 FR 57671, Nov. 25, 1981, unless otherwise noted.

### **Subpart A—General Provisions**

#### **§ 148.1 Purpose of these rules.**

The Equal Access to Justice Act, 5 U.S.C. 504 (called “the Act” in this part), provides for the award of attorney fees and other expenses to eligible individuals and entities who are prevailing private parties in adjudicatory proceedings before the Commission. An eligible party may receive an award when it prevails over the Commission, unless the Commission’s position was substantially justified or special circumstances make an award unjust. The rules in this part describe the parties eligible for awards and the proceedings that are covered. They also explain how to apply for awards, and the procedures and standards that the Commission will use to make them.

[51 FR 18880, May 23, 1986]

#### **§ 148.2 When the Act applies.**

The Act applies to any covered adjudicatory proceeding pending before the Commission on or after October 1, 1981. This includes proceedings begun before October 1, 1981, if final Commission action has not been taken before that date. Awards may be sought for fees and other expenses incurred before October 1, 1981, in any such covered proceeding.

[51 FR 18880, May 23, 1986]

#### **§ 148.3 Proceedings covered.**

(a) The Act applies to adjudicatory proceedings conducted by the Commission. These are adjudications under 5 U.S.C. 554 in which the position of the Commission or any other agency of the United States, or any component of an agency, is presented by an attorney or other representative who enters an appearance and participates in the proceeding. Reparation proceedings under section 14 of the Commodity Exchange Act, 7 U.S.C. 18, Commission review of exchange disciplinary and access denial actions under section 8c of the Commodity Exchange Act, 7 U.S.C. 12c, and registered futures association disciplinary and membership denial actions under section 17 of the Commodity Exchange Act, 7 U.S.C. 21, are not covered by the Act. Proceedings brought to determine whether or not to grant or

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renew registrations pursuant to sections 8a or 17(o), of the Commodity Exchange Act, 7 U.S.C. 8, 12a and 21(o), or contract market designations pursuant to section 6(a) of the Commodity Exchange Act, 7 U.S.C. 8 (a), are excluded, but proceedings brought to suspend or revoke registrations or contract market designations are covered if they are otherwise adjudicatory proceedings. For the Commission, the types of proceedings generally covered are adjudicatory proceedings as defined in §10.2(b) of this chapter; part 14 proceedings, if they involve a hearing, are also covered.

(b) The Commission's decision not to identify a type of proceeding as an adversary adjudication shall not preclude the filing of an application by a party who believes the proceeding is covered by the Act; whether the proceeding is covered will then be an issue for resolution in the proceedings on the application.

(c) If a proceeding includes both matters covered by the Act and matters specifically excluded from coverage, any award made will include only fees and expenses related to covered issues.

[46 FR 57671, Nov. 25, 1981, as amended at 51 FR 18880, May 23, 1986; 59 FR 5528, Feb. 7, 1994]

### § 148.4 Eligibility of applicants.

(a) To be eligible for an award of attorney fees and other expenses under the Act, the applicant must be a party to the adjudicatory proceeding for which it seeks an award. The term "party" is defined in 5 U.S.C. 551(3). The applicant must show that it meets all conditions of eligibility set out in this subpart and in subpart B.

(b) The types of eligible applicants are as follows:

(1) An individual with a net worth of not more than \$2 million;

(2) The sole owner of an unincorporated business who has a net worth of not more than \$7 million, including both personal and business interests, and not more than 500 employees;

(3) A charitable or other tax-exempt organization described in section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code (26 U.S.C. 501(c)(3)) with not more than 500 employees;

(4) A cooperative association as defined in section 15(a) of the Agricultural Marketing Act (12 U.S.C. 1141j(a)) with not more than 500 employees; and

(5) Any other partnership, corporation, association, unit of local government, or public or private organization with a net worth of not more than \$7 million and not more than 500 employees.

(c) For the purpose of eligibility, the net worth and number of employees of an applicant shall be determined as of the date the adjudicatory proceeding was initiated.

(d) An applicant who owns an unincorporated business will be considered as an "individual" rather than a "sole owner of an unincorporated business" if the issues on which the applicant prevails are related primarily to personal interests rather than to business interests.

(e) The employees of an applicant include all persons who regularly perform services for compensation for the applicant, under the applicant's direction and control. The term "employee" also embraces all the agents of an applicant, by whatever title or label they may be known, for whose acts or omissions the applicant may be held liable under the Commodity Exchange Act. See 7 U.S.C. 4. Part-time employees shall be included on a proportional basis.

(f) The net worth and number of employees of the applicant and all of its affiliates shall be aggregated to determine eligibility. Any individual, corporation or other entity that directly or indirectly controls or owns a majority of the voting shares or other interest of the applicant, or any corporation or other entity of which the applicant directly or indirectly owns or controls a majority of the voting shares or other interest, will be considered an affiliate for purposes of this part, unless the Presiding Officer determines that such treatment would be unjust and contrary to the purposes of the Act in light of the actual relationship between the affiliated entities. In addition, the Presiding Officer may determine that financial relationships of the applicant other than those described in

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this paragraph constitute special circumstances that would make an award unjust.

(g) An applicant that participates in a proceeding on behalf of one or more other persons or entitles that would be ineligible is not itself eligible for an award.

[46 FR 57671, Nov. 25, 1981, as amended at 51 FR 18880, May 23, 1986]

### § 148.5 Standards for awards.

(a) A prevailing applicant may receive an award for fees and expenses incurred in connection with an adjudicatory proceeding, or in a significant and discrete substantive portion of the proceeding, unless the position of the Commission was substantially justified. The position of the Commission includes, in addition to the position taken by the Commission in the adversary adjudication, the action or failure to act by the Commission upon which the adversary adjudication is based. The burden of proof that an award should not be made to an eligible prevailing applicant is on the Commission.

(b) An award will be reduced or denied if the applicant has unduly or unreasonably protracted the adjudicatory proceeding or if special circumstances make the award sought unjust.

[46 FR 57671, Nov. 25, 1981, as amended at 51 FR 18880, May 23, 1986]

### § 148.6 Allowable fees and expenses.

(a) Awards will be based on rates customarily charged by persons engaged in the business of acting as attorneys, agents and expert witnesses, even if the services were made available without charge or at a reduced rate to the applicant.

(b) No award for the fee of an attorney or agent under these rules may exceed \$75 per hour. No award to compensate an expert witness may exceed the maximum daily rate prescribed for GS-18 under section 5332 of title 5 of the U.S. Code. However, an award may also include the reasonable expenses of the attorney, agent, or witness as a separate item, if the attorney, agent or witness ordinarily charges clients separately for such expenses.

(c) In determining the reasonableness of the fee sought for an attorney, agent or expert witness, the Presiding Officer shall consider the following:

(1) If the attorney, agent or witness is in private practice, his or her customary fee for similar services, or, if an employee of the applicant, the fully allocated cost of the services;

(2) The prevailing rate for similar services in the community in which the attorney, agent or witness ordinarily performs services;

(3) The time actually spent in the representation of the applicant;

(4) The time reasonably spent in light of the difficulty or complexity of the issues in the adjudicatory proceeding; and

(5) Such other factors as may bear on the value of the services provided.

(d) The reasonable cost of any study, analysis, test, project or similar matter prepared on behalf of a party may be awarded, to the extent that the charge for the service does not exceed the prevailing rate for similar services, and the study or other matter was necessary for preparation of the applicant's case.

### § 148.7 Rulemaking on maximum rates for attorney fees.

(a) If warranted by an increase in the cost of living or by special circumstances (such as limited availability of attorneys qualified to handle certain types of proceedings), the Commission may adopt regulations providing that attorney fees may be awarded at a rate higher than \$75 per hour in some or all of the types of proceedings covered by this part. The Commission will conduct any rulemaking proceedings for this purpose under the informal rulemaking procedures of the Administrative Procedure Act, 5 U.S.C. 553.

(b) Any person may file with the Commission a petition for rulemaking to increase the maximum rate for attorney fees, in accordance with §13.2 of this chapter.

### § 148.8 Awards against other agencies.

If an applicant is entitled to an award because it prevails over another agency of the United States that participates in an adjudicatory proceeding

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before the Commission and takes a position that is not substantially justified, the award or an appropriate portion of the award shall be made against that agency.

### Subpart B—Information Required from Applicants

#### § 148.11 Contents of application.

(a) An application for an award of fees and expenses under the Act shall identify the applicant and the adjudicatory proceeding for which an award is sought. The application shall show that the applicant has prevailed and identify the position of the Commission or other agency that the applicant alleges was not substantially justified. Unless the applicant is an individual, the application shall also state the number of employees of the applicant and describe briefly the type and purpose of its organization or business.

(b) The application shall also include a statement that the applicant's net worth does not exceed \$2 million (if an individual) or \$7 million (for all other applicants, including their affiliates). However, an applicant may omit this statement if:

(1) It attaches a copy of a ruling by the Internal Revenue Service that it qualifies as an organization described in section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code (26 U.S.C. 501(c)(3)) or, in the case of a tax-exempt organization not required to obtain a ruling from the Internal Revenue Service on its exempt status, a statement that describes the basis for the applicant's belief that it qualifies under such section; or

(2) It states that it is a cooperative association as defined in section 15(a) of the Agricultural Marketing Act (12 U.S.C. 1141j(a)).

(c) The application shall state the amount of fees and expenses for which an award is sought.

(d) The application may also include any other matters that the applicant wishes the Commission to consider in determining whether and in what amount an award should be made.

(e) The application shall be signed by the applicant or an authorized officer or attorney of the applicant. It shall also contain or be accompanied by a written verification under oath or

under penalty of perjury that the information provided in the application is true and correct.

[46 FR 57671, Nov. 25, 1981, as amended at 51 FR 18880, May 23, 1986]

#### § 148.12 Net worth exhibit.

(a) Each applicant except a qualified tax-exempt organization or cooperative association must provide with its application a detailed exhibit showing the net worth of the applicant and any affiliates (as defined in § 148.4(f) of this part) when the adjudicatory proceeding was initiated. The exhibit may be in any form convenient to the applicant that provides full disclosure of the applicant's and its affiliates' assets and liabilities and is sufficient to determine whether the applicant qualifies under the standards in this part. The Presiding Officer may require an applicant to file additional information to determine its eligibility for an award.

(b) Ordinarily, the net worth exhibit will be included in the public record of the adjudicatory proceeding. However, an applicant that objects to public disclosure of information in any portion of the exhibit and believes there are legal grounds for withholding it from disclosure may submit that portion of the exhibit directly to the Presiding Officer in a sealed envelope labeled "Confidential Financial Information," accompanied by a motion to withhold the information from public disclosure. The motion shall describe the information sought to be withheld and explain, in detail, why it falls within one or more of the specific exemptions from mandatory disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act, 5 U.S.C. 552(b)(1)–(9), why public disclosure of the information would adversely affect the applicant, and why disclosure is not required in the public interest. The material in question shall be served on counsel representing the Commission or other agency against which the applicant seeks an award, but need not be served on any other party to the adjudicatory proceeding. If the Presiding Officer finds that the information should not be withheld from disclosure, it shall be placed in the public record of the adjudicatory proceeding. Otherwise, any request to inspect or copy

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the exhibit shall be disposed of in accordance with the Commission's established procedures under the Freedom of Information Act as provided in part 145 of this chapter. For that purpose, the applicant shall file a copy of its motion with the Commission's Freedom of Information Act Compliance Staff in the Office of the Secretariat, Washington, DC.

### § 148.13 Documentation of fees and expenses.

The application shall be accompanied by full documentation of the fees and expenses, including the cost of any study, analysis, test, project or similar matter, for which an award is sought. A separate itemized statement shall be submitted for each professional firm or individual whose services are covered by the application, showing the hours spent in connection with the proceeding by each individual, a description of the specific services performed, the rate at which each fee has been computed, any expenses for which reimbursement is sought, the total amount claimed, and the total amount paid or payable by the applicant or by any other person or entity for the services provided. The Presiding Officer may require the applicant to provide vouchers, receipts, or other substantiation for any expenses claimed.

### § 148.14 When an application may be filed.

(a) An application may be filed whenever the applicant has prevailed in the adjudicatory proceeding or in a significant and discrete substantive portion of the proceeding, subject to the separate hearing procedure pursuant to § 10.63(b) of this chapter, but in no case later than 30 days after the Commission's final disposition of the adjudicatory proceeding.

(b) If review or reconsideration is sought or taken of a decision as to which an applicant believes it has prevailed, proceedings for the award of fees shall be stayed pending final disposition of the underlying controversy.

(c) For purposes of this rule, final disposition means the later of

(1) The date on which an initial decision by the Presiding Officer becomes final pursuant to § 10.84 of this chapter;

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(2) Issuance of an order disposing of any petitions for reconsideration of the Commission's final order in the proceeding pursuant to § 10.106 of the Rules of Practice;

(3) If no petition for reconsideration is filed, the last date on which such a petition could have been filed pursuant to § 10.106 of the Rules of Practice; or

(4) Issuance of a final Commission order or any other final resolution of a proceeding, such as a settlement or voluntary dismissal, which is not subject to a petition for reconsideration.

## Subpart C—Procedures for Considering Applications

### § 148.21 Filing and service of documents.

Any application for an award or other pleading or document related to an application shall be filed and served on all parties to the adjudicatory proceeding, except as provided in § 148.12(b) for confidential financial information.

### § 148.22 Answer to application.

(a) Within 30 days after service of an application, counsel representing the Commission or other agency against which an award is sought may file an answer to the application. Unless counsel for the Commission or for another relevant agency requests an extension of time for filing or files a statement of intent to negotiate under paragraph (b) of this section, failure to file an answer within the 30-day period may be treated as a consent to the award requested.

(b) If counsel for the Commission or for another relevant agency and the applicant believe that the issues in the fee application can be settled, they may jointly file a statement of their intent to negotiate a settlement. The filing of this statement shall extend the time for filing an answer for an additional 30 days, and further extensions may be granted by the Presiding Officer upon request by counsel for the Commission or for another relevant agency and the applicant.

(c) Any answer shall explain in detail any objections to the award requested and identify the facts relied on in support of the position of counsel for the Commission or for another relevant agency. If the answer is based on any

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alleged facts not already in the record of the adjudicatory proceeding, counsel for the Commission or for another relevant agency shall include with the answer either supporting affidavits or a request for further proceedings under §148.26 of this part.

### **§ 148.23 Reply.**

Within 15 days after service of an answer, the applicant may file a reply. If the reply is based on any alleged facts not already in the record of the adjudicatory proceeding, the applicant shall include with the reply either supporting affidavits or a request for further proceedings under §148.26 of this part.

### **§ 148.24 Comments by other parties.**

Any party to an adjudicatory proceeding other than the applicant and counsel for the Commission or for another relevant agency may file comments on an application within 30 days after it is served or on an answer within 15 days after it is served. A commenting party may not participate further in proceedings on the application unless the Presiding Officer determines that the public interest requires such participation in order to permit full exploration of matters raised in the comments.

### **§ 148.25 Settlement.**

The applicant may propose settlement of the award to the Commission before final action on the application, either in connection with a settlement of the adjudicatory proceeding, or after the adjudicatory proceeding has been concluded, in either case in accordance with §10.108 of this chapter. If a prevailing party offers a proposed settlement of an award before an application has been filed, the application shall be filed with the proposed settlement.

### **§ 148.26 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 counsel for the Commission or for another relevant agency, or on his or her own initiative, the Presiding Officer may order further proceedings, such as an informal conference, oral argument,

additional written submissions 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 Commission 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. No discovery and/or evidentiary proceedings shall be permitted into the question of whether the agency's position was substantially justified.

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

[46 FR 57671, Nov. 25, 1981, as amended at 51 FR 18881, May 23, 1986]

### **§ 148.27 Decision.**

The Presiding Officer shall issue an initial decision on the application in accordance with the provisions of §10.84 of this chapter. 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 requested and the amount awarded. The decision shall also include, if at issue, findings on whether the Commission's position was substantially justified, whether the applicant unduly or unreasonably protracted the adjudicatory 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.

### **§ 148.28 Appeal to the Commission.**

(a) Either the applicant or counsel for the Commission or for another relevant agency may appeal the initial decision on the fee application by complying with the requirements of this section. An appealing party shall serve

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upon opposing parties and shall file with the Proceedings Clerk a notice of appeal within fifteen (15) days after service of the initial decision. The notice need consist only of a brief statement indicating the filing party's intent to appeal the initial decision, and shall include the date upon which the initial decision was rendered, the name of the proceeding, and the docket number of the proceeding. The failure of a party timely to file and serve a notice of appeal in accordance with this paragraph, or to perfect the appeal in accordance with paragraph (b) of this section, shall constitute a voluntary waiver of any objection to the initial decision, and of all further administrative or judicial review under these rules and the Equal Access to Justice Act.

(b) An appeal shall be perfected by the appealing party by timely filing with the Proceedings Clerk an appeal brief which meets the requirements of paragraphs (b) and (d) of this section. An original and one copy of the appeal brief shall be filed within thirty (30) days after filing of the notice of appeal. By motion of the appealing party, the Commission may, for good cause shown, extend the time for filing the appeal brief. If the appeal brief is not filed within the time prescribed in this subparagraph, the Commission may, upon its own motion or upon motion by a party, dismiss the appeal, in which event the initial decision shall become the final decision and order of the Commission, effective upon service of the order of dismissal.

(c) The opposing party may, within thirty (30) days after service of the appeal brief, file an original and one copy of an answering brief, and serve one copy thereof, unless the time limit is extended by the Commission upon motion of the party and for good cause shown.

(d) Parties filing an appeal brief or answering brief shall meet the requirements of §10.12 of this chapter as to form. The content of briefs shall satisfy the requirements of §10.102(d) of this chapter, except that any party, with leave of the Commission, may file an informal document in lieu of a brief. No brief shall exceed thirty-five (35) pages in length without advance leave of the Commission.

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(e) On review, the Commission may, in its discretion, consider *sua sponte* any issues arising from the record and may base its determination thereon, or limit the issues to those presented in the statement of issues in the briefs, treating those issues not raised as waived.

[51 FR 18881, May 23, 1986]

### § 148.29 Judicial review.

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

### § 148.30 Payment of award.

An applicant seeking payment of an award from the Commission shall submit to the Executive Director at the Commission's Washington, DC headquarters, a copy of the Commission's final decision granting the award, accompanied by a statement that the applicant will not seek review of the decision in the United States courts. At the same time, the applicant shall provide a copy of his submissions to counsel for the Commission. The Commission will, within 60 days of receipt of the applicant's submissions, forward to the United States Department of the Treasury a Standard Form 1166, "Voucher and Schedule of Payments," so as to have the Treasury Department issue a check in the amount awarded in the Commission's decision, unless judicial review of the award or of the underlying decision in the adjudicatory proceeding has been sought by the applicant or any other party to the adjudicatory proceeding.

[46 FR 57671, Nov. 25, 1981, as amended at 60 FR 49336, Sept. 25, 1995; 89 FR 71819, Sept. 4, 2024]

## PART 149—ENFORCEMENT OF NONDISCRIMINATION ON THE BASIS OF HANDICAP IN PROGRAMS OR ACTIVITIES CONDUCTED BY THE COMMODITY FUTURES TRADING COMMISSION

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