

consideration, further collection on the debt may be suspended until a final administrative decision is made on the waiver request. During the period of any suspension, interest, penalties and administrative charges may be held in abeyance. GSA will not duplicate, for purposes of salary offset, any of the notices/procedures already provided the debtor prior to a request for waiver.

(c) *Reconsideration.* (1) An employee may seek a reconsideration of GSA's determination regarding the existence and/or amount of the debt. The request must be submitted to the appropriate program official indicated in the pre-offset notice, within 7 days of receipt of notice under § 105-56.004 of this subpart. Within 20 days of receipt of this notice, the employee must submit a detailed statement of reasons for reconsideration that must be accompanied by supporting documentation.

(2) An employee may request a reconsideration of the proposed offset schedule. The request must be submitted to the appropriate program official indicated in the pre-offset notice, within 7 days of receipt of notice under § 105-56.004 of this subpart. Within 20 days of receipt of this notice, the employee must submit an alternative repayment schedule accompanied by a detailed statement, supported by documentation, evidencing financial hardship resulting from GSA's proposed schedule. Acceptance of the request is at GSA's discretion. GSA will notify the employee in writing of its decision concerning the request to reduce the rate of an involuntary deduction.

§ 105-56.006 Petition for pre-offset hearing.

(a) The employee may request a pre-offset hearing by filing a written petition with the appropriate program official indicated in the pre-offset notice, within 15 days of receipt of the written notice. The petition must state why the employee believes GSA's determination concerning the existence and/or amount of the debt is in error, set forth any objections to the involuntary repayment schedule, and, if the employee is seeking an oral hearing, set forth reasons for an oral hearing. The timely filing of a petition will suspend the commencement of collection proceedings.

(b) The employee's petition or statement must be signed and dated by the employee.

(c) Petitions for hearing made after the expiration of the 15-day period may be accepted if the employee can show that the delay was because of circumstances

beyond his or her control or because of failure to receive notice of the time limit.

(d) If the employee timely requests a pre-offset hearing or the timeliness is waived, the appropriate program official must—

(1) Promptly notify the GSBCA and arrange for a hearing official (*see* § 105-56.003(m) of this subpart). The hearing official will notify the employee whether he or she may have an oral or a "paper hearing," *i.e.*, a review on the written record (*see* 31 CFR 901.3(e)); and

(2) Provide the hearing official with a copy of all records on which the determination of the debt and any involuntary repayment schedule are based.

(e) If an oral hearing is to be held, the hearing official will notify the appropriate program official and the employee of the date, time, and location of the hearing. The debtor may choose to have the hearing conducted in the hearing official's office located at GSA Central Office, 1800 F St., NW., Washington, DC 20405, at another location designated by the hearing official, or by telephone. The debtor and any witnesses are responsible for any personal expenses incurred to arrive at a hearing official's office or other designated location (*see* § 105-56.007(c)). All telephonic charges incurred during a hearing will be the responsibility of GSA.

(f) If the employee later elects to have the hearing based only on the written submissions, notification must be given to the hearing official and the appropriate program official at least 3 days before the date of the oral hearing. The hearing official may waive the 3-day requirement for good cause.

(g) If either party, without good cause as determined by the hearing official, does not appear at a scheduled oral hearing, the hearing official will make a determination on the claim which takes into account that party's position as presented in writing only.

§ 105-56.007 Pre-offset oral hearing.

(a) The Agency, represented by the appropriate program official or a representative of the Office of General Counsel, and the employee, and/or his or her representative, will explain their case in the form of an oral presentation with reference to the documentation submitted. The employee may testify on his or her own behalf, subject to cross-examination. Other witnesses may be called to testify when the hearing official determines the testimony to be relevant and not redundant. All witnesses will testify under oath, with

the oath having been administered by the hearing official. A written transcript of the hearing will be kept and made available to either party in the event of an appeal under the Administrative Procedure Act, 5 U.S.C. 701-706. Arrangements for the taking of the transcript will be made by the hearing official, and all charges associated with the taking of the transcript will be the responsibility of GSA.

(b) The hearing official will—

(1) Conduct a fair and impartial hearing; and

(2) Preside over the course of the hearing, maintain decorum, and avoid delay in the disposition of the hearing.

(c) The employee may represent himself or herself or may be represented by another person of his or her choice at the hearing. GSA will not compensate the employee for representation expenses, including hourly fees for attorneys, travel expenses, and costs for reproducing documents.

(d) Oral hearings are open to the public. However, the hearing official may close all or any portion of the hearing when doing so is in the best interests of the employee or the Agency.

(e) Oral hearings may be conducted by telephone at the request of the employee. All telephonic charges incurred during a hearing will be the responsibility of GSA.

(f) The hearing official may request written submissions and documentation from the employee and the Agency, in addition to considering evidence offered at the hearing.

§ 105-56.008 Pre-offset paper hearing.

If a hearing is to be held only upon written submissions, the hearing official will issue a decision based upon the record and responses submitted by both the Agency and the employee. *See* § 105-56.006 of this subpart. If either party, without good cause as determined by the hearing official, does not provide written submissions and documentation requested by the hearing official, the hearing official will make a determination on the claim without reference to such submissions and documentation.

§ 105-56.009 Written decision.

(a) Within 60 days of the employee's filing of a petition for a pre-offset hearing, the hearing official will issue a written decision setting forth—

(1) The facts supporting the nature and origin of the debt;

(2) The hearing official's analysis, findings and conclusions as to the employee's or Agency's grounds;

(3) The amount and validity of the debt; and