**Section 310.180 Hearing Officers**

a) In any contested case, the Comptroller may employ any attorney licensed to practice in Illinois to serve as hearing officer. The hearing officer may be empowered to conduct the hearing, administer oaths, question witnesses, make rulings on motions and objections, or submit suggested Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law to the Comptroller at the conclusion of the case. The hearing officer shall provide the Comptroller such legal counsel as the Comptroller may require in evaluating the Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law and the recommendations for decision.

b) It shall not be a bar to assignment as a hearing officer that the attorney is also an employee of the Comptroller.

c) Any hearing officer shall not have direct involvement with the case or have an interest in the decision to be reached. Mere familiarity with the facts shall not disqualify a hearing officer. A hearing officer may be disqualified for bias or conflict of interest. An adverse ruling, in and of itself, shall not constitute bias or conflict of interest.

(Source: Amended at 42 Ill. Reg. 16010, effective August 1, 2018)