

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
EXECUTIVE OFFICE FOR IMMIGRATION REVIEW
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE HEARING OFFICER

NATASHA WILLIAMS,)	
Complainant,)	
)	
v.)	8 U.S.C. § 1324b Proceeding
)	OCAHO Case No. 2025B00002
)	
CISCO SYSTEMS, INC.,)	
Respondent.)	
)	

Appearances: Natasha Williams, pro se Complainant
K. Edward Raleigh, Esq., and Anna Perina, Esq., for Respondent

ORDER SUMMARIZING FEBRUARY 24, 2025
PREHEARING CONFERENCE AND STAYING PROCEEDINGS

This case arises under the antidiscrimination provisions of the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA), as amended, 8 U.S.C. § 1324b. On October 1, 2024, Complainant Natasha Williams filed a complaint with the Office of the Chief Administrative Hearing Officer (OCAHO) against Respondent Cisco Systems, Inc. Complainant alleges that Respondent retaliated against her in violation of 8 U.S.C. § 1324b(a)(5). On November 29, 2024, Respondent filed an answer denying Complainant's allegations, setting forth affirmative defenses, and providing exhibits.

On February 24, 2025, the Court held a prehearing conference in this case, pursuant to 28 C.F.R. § 68.5(a). Complainant attended on her own behalf. K. Edward Raleigh and Anna Perina attending on behalf of Respondent.

The Court and parties discussed the following topics:

Settlement:

The Court explained that OCAHO's Settlement Officer Program is a voluntary alternative dispute resolution program in which the case is referred to a Settlement Officer for a period of 60 days, with the option for an additional 30 days at the parties' request. The Settlement Officer can discuss the strengths and weaknesses of each party's case, shuttle demands, and otherwise facilitate discussions. Both parties must consent in writing before the Court will grant a referral.

The parties stated that global settlement discussions are ongoing, pertaining to both this matter and a related matter that is not before this Court.

Respondent's counsel stated that due to the ongoing settlement discussions, Respondent does not consent to a referral to the Settlement Officer Program.

If the parties find that a referral would be useful in the future, they should confer and may request a referral at that time.

Pending Motion to Dismiss and Stay:

Respondent submitted its motion to dismiss, which is currently pending before this Court. The Court proposed a stay of proceedings to allow the parties' settlement negotiations to proceed and potentially for Respondent's motion to be adjudicated.

The parties indicated that they were not opposed to a stay.

Complainant stated that she had previously spoken with Court staff concerning the timeliness of her complaint. The Court advised that it had not received any written filings responsive to the motion to dismiss, and that all arguments concerning any motion should be made to the Court—not to court staff—through a written submission. Respondent's counsel also stated that it had not received any written responses to its motion.

The Court stayed proceedings for 45 days, with the expiration of the stay occurring on April 10, 2025. On that date, the parties shall file a status report regarding the progress of settlement discussions.

OCAHO Resources:

Complainant inquired into resources about OCAHO's procedures. In response, the Court directed Complainant to OCAHO's Rules of Practice and Procedure, 28 C.F.R. pt. 68 (2024),¹ and the OCAHO Practice Manual.² OCAHO also publishes its precedent decision on the Department of Justice website.³

Complainant further inquired about other resources which may be available if she has questions. The Court advised that if Complainant has a substantive request, she should submit a

¹ A link to OCAHO's Rules of Practice and Procedure may found here on the Department of Justice's website: <https://www.justice.gov/eoir/office-of-the-chief-administrative-hearing-officer-regulations>.

² The OCAHO Practice Manual may be found online at the Department of Justice's website: <https://www.justice.gov/eoir/reference-materials/ocaho>.

³ OCAHO's published cases along with a topical index may be found online at the Department of Justice's website: <https://www.justice.gov/eoir/office-of-the-chief-administrative-hearing-officer-decisions>.

motion with the Court. If Complainant has a procedural request, such as a request for an extension to a deadline, she may speak with Respondent's counsel to inquire as to whether Respondent will join or oppose her in the motion, and (regardless of whether Respondent consents or not) may file her request with the Court.

Electronic Filing:

Finally, although the Court did not discuss this during the prehearing conference, the undersigned encourages the parties to consider submitting their electronic filing registration forms.⁴ When both parties have submitted their forms, the case may be converted to electronic filing, allowing the parties to submit filings by email and the Court to issue orders by email.

SO ORDERED

Dated and entered March 6, 2025.

Honorable John A. Henderson
Administrative Law Judge

⁴ The parties previously received electronic filing forms from the Court. A link to the form may also be found online on the Department of Justice's website, labeled Registration and Certification Form at: <https://www.justice.gov/eoir/ocaho-filing>.