

FEDERAL PROCUREMENT STANDARDS

§ 74.40 Purpose of procurement standards.

Sections 74.41 through 74.48 contain standards for use by recipients in establishing procedures for the procurement of supplies and other expendable property, equipment, real property, and other services with Federal funds. These standards are designed to ensure that these materials and services are obtained in an effective manner and in compliance with the provisions of applicable Federal statutes and executive orders. The Secretary does not impose additional procurement standards or requirements upon recipients, unless specifically required by Federal statute or executive order or as authorized in § 74.4 or § 74.14.

(Authority: 20 U.S.C. 1221e-3, 3474; OMB Circular A-110)

§ 74.41 Recipient responsibilities.

The standards contained in this section do not relieve the recipient of the contractual responsibilities arising under its contract(s). The recipient is the responsible authority, without recourse to the Secretary, regarding the settlement and satisfaction of all contractual and administrative issues arising out of procurements entered into in support of an award or other agreement.

This includes disputes, claims, protests of award, source evaluation, or other matters of a contractual nature.

Matters concerning violation of statute are to be referred to Federal, State or local authority that may have proper jurisdiction.

(Authority: 20 U.S.C. 1221e-3, 3474; OMB Circular A-110)

§ 74.42 Codes of conduct.

The recipient shall maintain written standards of conduct governing the performance of its employees engaged in the award and administration of contracts. No employee, officer, or agent shall participate in the selection, award, or administration of a contract supported by Federal funds if a real or apparent conflict of interest would be involved. A conflict would arise when the employee, officer, or agent, any member of his or her immediate family, his or her partner, or an organization which employs or is about to employ any of the parties indicated herein, has a financial or other interest in the firm selected for an award. The officers, employees, and agents of the recipient shall neither solicit nor accept gratuities, favors, or anything of monetary value from contractors, or parties to subagreements. However, recipients may set standards for situations in which the financial interest is not substantial or the gift is an unsolicited item of nominal value. The standards of conduct shall provide for disciplinary actions to be applied for violations of these standards by officers, employees, or agents of the recipient.

(Authority: 20 U.S.C. 1221e-3, 3474; OMB Circular A-110)

§ 74.43 Competition.

All procurement transactions shall be conducted in a manner to provide, to the maximum extent practical, open and free competition. The recipient shall be alert to organizational conflicts of interest as well as noncompetitive practices among contractors that may restrict or eliminate competition or otherwise restrain trade. In order to ensure objective contractor performance and eliminate unfair competitive advantage, contractors that develop or draft specifications, requirements, statements of work, invitations for bids, or requests for proposals shall be excluded from competing for procurements. Awards must be made to the bidder or offeror whose bid or offer is responsive to the solicitation and is most advantageous to the recipient, price, quality and other factors considered. Solicitations shall clearly establish all requirements that the bidder or offeror shall fulfill in order for the bid or offer to be evaluated by the recipient. Any and all bids or offers may be rejected when it is in the recipient's interest to do so.

(Authority: 20 U.S.C. 1221e-3, 3474; OMB Circular A-110)

§ 74.44 Procurement procedures.

(a) All recipients shall establish written procurement procedures. These procedures must provide for, at a minimum, that—

- (1) Recipients avoid purchasing unnecessary items;
- (2) Where appropriate, an analysis is made of lease and purchase alternatives to determine which would be the most economical and practical procurement for the Federal Government; or

(3) Solicitations for goods and services provide for all of the following:

(i) A clear and accurate description of the technical requirements for the material, product, or service to be procured.

In competitive procurements, a description shall not contain features which unduly restrict competition.

(ii) Requirements which the bidder/offeror must fulfill and all other factors to be used in evaluating bids or proposals.

(iii) A description, whenever practicable, of technical requirements in terms of functions to be performed or performance required, including the range of acceptable characteristics or minimum acceptable standards.

(iv) The specific features of brand name or equal descriptions that bidders are required to meet when these items are included in the solicitation.

(v) The acceptance, to the extent practicable and economically feasible, of products and services dimensioned in the metric system of measurement.

(vi) Preference, to the extent practicable and economically feasible, for products and services that conserve natural resources and protect the environment, and are energy efficient.

(b) Positive efforts shall be made by recipients to utilize small businesses, minority-owned firms, and women's business enterprises, whenever possible. Recipients of Federal awards shall take all of the following steps to further this goal:

- (1) Ensure that small businesses, minority-owned firms, and women's business enterprises are used to the fullest extent practicable.

(2) Make information on forthcoming opportunities available and arrange time frames for purchases and contracts to encourage and facilitate participation by small businesses, minority-owned firms, and women's business enterprises.

(3) Consider in the contract process whether firms competing for larger contracts intend to subcontract with small businesses, minority-owned firms, and women's business enterprises.

(4) Encourage contracting with consortiums of small businesses, minority-owned firms and women's business enterprises when a contract is too large for one of these firms to handle individually.

(5) Use the services and assistance, as appropriate, of organizations such as the Small Business Administration and the Department of Commerce's Minority Business Development Agency in the solicitation and utilization of small businesses, minority-owned firms and women's business enterprises.

(c) The type of procuring instruments used (e.g., fixed price contracts, cost reimbursable contracts, purchase orders, and incentive contracts) shall be determined by the recipient but must be appropriate for the particular procurement and for promoting the best interest of the program or project involved. The "cost-plus-a-percentage-of-cost" or "percentage of construction cost" methods of contracting must not be used.

(d) Contracts are made only with responsible contractors who possess the potential ability to perform successfully under the terms and conditions of the proposed procurement. Consideration is given to matters as contractor integrity, record of past performance, financial and technical resources or accessibility to other necessary resources. In certain circumstances, contracts with certain parties are restricted by E.O. 12549 (implemented by the Secretary in 34 CFR Part 85) and E.O. 12689—Debarment and Suspension.

(e) Recipients shall, on request, make available for the Secretary, pre-award review and procurement documents, such as request for proposals or invitations for bids, independent cost estimates, etc., when any of the following conditions apply:

(1) A recipient's procurement procedures or operation fails to comply with the procurement standards in this part.

(2) The procurement is expected to exceed the small purchase threshold fixed at 41 U.S.C. 403 (11) (currently \$25,000) and is to be awarded without competition or only one bid or offer is received in response to a solicitation.

(3) The procurement, which is expected to exceed the small purchase threshold, specifies a "brand name" product.

(4) The proposed award over the small purchase threshold is to be awarded to other than the apparent low bidder under a sealed bid procurement.

(5) A proposed contract modification changes the scope of a contract or increases the contract amount by more than the amount of the small purchase threshold.

(f)(1)(i) A faith-based organization is eligible to contract with recipients on the same basis as any other private organization, with respect to contracts for which such other organizations are eligible.

(ii) In the selection of goods and services providers, recipients shall not discriminate for or against a private organization on the basis of the organization's religious character or affiliation.

(2) The provisions of §§ 75.532 and 76.532 applicable to grantees and subgrantees apply to a faith-based organization that contracts with a recipient, unless the faith-

based organization is selected as a result of the genuine and independent private choices of individual beneficiaries of the program and provided the organization otherwise satisfies the requirements of the program.

(3) A private organization that engages in inherently religious activities, such as religious worship, instruction, or proselytization, must offer those services separately in time or location from any programs or services supported by a contract with a recipient, and participation in any such inherently religious activities by beneficiaries of the programs supported by the contract must be voluntary, unless the organization is selected as a result of the genuine and independent private choices of individual beneficiaries of the program and provided the organization otherwise satisfies the requirements of the program.

(4)(i) A faith-based organization that contracts with a recipient may retain its independence, autonomy, right of expression, religious character, and authority over its governance.

(ii) A faith-based organization may, among other things—

(A) Retain religious terms in its name;

(B) Continue to carry out its mission, including the definition, development, practice, and expression of its religious beliefs;

(C) Use its facilities to provide services without removing or altering religious art, icons, scriptures, or other symbols from these facilities;

(D) Select its board members and otherwise govern itself on a religious basis; and

(E) Include religious references in its mission statement and other chartering or governing documents.

(5) A private organization that contracts with a recipient shall not discriminate against a beneficiary or prospective beneficiary in the provision of program services on the basis of religion or religious belief.

(6) A religious organization's exemption from the Federal prohibition on employment discrimination on the basis of religion, in section 702(a) of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, 42 U.S.C. 2000e-1, is not forfeited when the organization contracts with a recipient.

(Approved by the Office of Management and Budget under control number 1880-0513)

(Authority: 20 U.S.C. 1221e-3, 3474; OMB Circular A-110)

[59 FR 34724, July 6, 1994, as amended at 60 FR 6660, Feb. 3, 1995; 69 FR 31710, June 4, 2004]

§ 74.45 Cost and price analysis.

Some form of cost or price analysis must be made and documented in the procurement files in connection with every procurement action. Price analysis may be accomplished in various ways, including the comparison of price quotations submitted, market prices and similar indicia, together with discounts. Cost analysis is the review and evaluation of each element of cost to determine reasonableness, allocability, and allowability.

(Approved by the Office of Management and Budget under control number 1880-0513)

(Authority: 20 U.S.C. 1221e-3, 3474; OMB Circular A-110)

[59 FR 34724, July 6, 1994, as amended at 60 FR 6660, Feb. 3, 1995]

§ 74.46 Procurement records.

Procurement records and files for purchases in excess of the small purchase threshold must include the following at a minimum—

- (a) Basis for contractor selection;
- (b) Justification for lack of competition when competitive bids or offers are not obtained;
- (c) Basis for award cost or price.

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(Authority: 20 U.S.C. 1221e–3, 3474; OMB Circular A–110)
[59 FR 34724, July 6, 1994, as amended at 60 FR 6660, Feb. 3, 1995]

§ 74.47 Contract administration.

A system for contract administration must be maintained to ensure contractor conformance with the terms, conditions and specifications of the contract, and to ensure adequate and timely follow up of all purchases. Recipients shall evaluate contractor performance and document, as appropriate, whether contractors have met the terms, conditions, and specifications of the contract.

(Approved by the Office of Management and Budget under control number 1880–0513)
(Authority: 20 U.S.C. 1221e–3, 3474; OMB Circular A–110)
[59 FR 34724, July 6, 1994, as amended at 60 FR 6660, Feb. 3, 1995]

§ 74.48 Contract provisions.

The recipient shall include, in addition to provisions to define a sound and complete agreement, the following provisions in all contracts. The following provisions must also be applied to subcontracts:

- (a) Contracts in excess of the small purchase threshold shall contain contractual provisions or conditions that allow for administrative, contractual, or legal remedies in instances in which contract terms, and provide for remedial actions as may be appropriate.
- (b) All contracts in excess of the small purchase threshold shall contain suitable provisions for termination by the recipient, including the manner by which termination shall be effected and the basis for settlement. In addition, contracts must describe conditions under which the contract may be terminated for default, as well as conditions where the contract may be terminated because of circumstances beyond the control of the contractor.
- (c) Except as otherwise required by statute, an award that requires the contracting (or subcontracting) for construction or facility improvements must provide for the recipient to follow its own requirements relating to bid guarantees, performance bonds, and payment bonds unless the construction contract or subcontract exceeds \$100,000. For those contracts or subcontracts exceeding \$100,000, the Secretary may accept the bonding policy and requirements of the recipient, provided the Secretary has made a determination that the Federal Government's interest is adequately protected.

If a determination has not been made, the minimum requirements are as follows:

(1) A bid guarantee from each bidder equivalent to five percent of the bid price. The “bid guarantee” must consist of a firm commitment such as a bid bond, certified check, or other negotiable instrument accompanying a bid as assurance that the bidder shall, upon acceptance of his bid, execute contractual documents as may be required within the time specified.

(2) A performance bond on the part of the contractor for 100 percent of the contract price. A “performance bond” is one executed in connection with a contract to secure fulfillment of all the contractor’s obligations under a contract.

(3) A payment bond on the part of the contractor for 100 percent of the contract price. A “payment bond” is one executed in connection with a contract to assure payment as required by statute of all persons supplying labor and material in the execution of the work provided for in the contract.

(4) Where bonds are required, the bonds must be obtained from companies holding certificates of authority as acceptable sureties pursuant to 31 CFR Part 223—Surety Companies Doing Business with the United States.

(d) All negotiated contracts (except those for less than the small purchase threshold) awarded by recipients must include a provision to the effect that the recipient, ED, the Comptroller General of the United States, or any of their duly authorized representatives, must have access to any books, documents, papers and records of the contractor which are directly pertinent to a specific program for the purpose of making audits, examinations, excerpts and transcriptions.

(e) All contracts, including small purchases, awarded by recipients and their contractors must contain the procurement provisions of appendix A to this part, as applicable.

(Authority: 20 U.S.C. 1221e-3, 3474; OMB Circular A-110)