there is a need for such property to accomplish the purpose of the program.

(3) *Disposition*. When there is no longer a need for the property in the program and there is a residual inventory exceeding $1,000 the State agency shall:

(i) Use the property in other federally sponsored projects or programs;

(ii) Retain the property for use on non-federally sponsored activities; or,

(iii) Sell it.

(4) *Compensation*. FNS must be compensated for its share if the alternative in paragraph (e)(3)(i) of this section is not followed. The amount of compensation shall be computed in the same manner as for nonexpendable personal property.

(f) *Patents and inventions*. If any program activity produced patents, patent rights, processes or inventions in the course of work aided by FNS, such fact shall be promptly and fully reported to FNS. Unless there is prior agreement between the State agency and FNS on disposition of such items, FNS shall determine whether protection on such invention or discovery shall be sought and how the rights in the invention or discovery—including rights under any patent issued thereon—shall be disposed of and administered in order to protect the public interest consistent with ''Government Patent Policy'' (President's Memorandum for Heads of Excecutive Departments and Agencies, August 23, 1971), and State of Government Patent Policy as printed in title 37 CFR, chapters I and II.

(g) *Copyrights*. When a program activity results in a book or other copyrightable materials, the author or State agency is free to copyright the work, but FNS reserves a royalty-free, nonexclusive and irrevocable right to reproduce, publish or otherwise use and to authorize others to use the work for government purposes. This includes copyrights on ADP software as specified in appendix A.

§ 277.14 Procurement standards.

(a) *General*. This section establishes standards and guidelines for the procurement of supplies, equipment, construction and other services whose cost is borne in whole or in part by FNS program funds. These standards ensure that such materials are obtained in an effective and economical manner and in compliance with the provisions of applicable Federal law and Executive orders. No additional procurement standards will be imposed by FNS upon State agencies unless specifically required by Federal law, or Executive orders, or authorized by the Administrator for Federal Procurement Policy, Office of Management and Budget.

(1) These standards do not relieve the State agency of any contractual responsibilities under its contracts. The State agency is responsible, in accordance with good administrative practice and sound business judgment, for the settlement of all contractual and administrative issues arising out of procurements entered into in support of the program. These include but are not limited to sources evaluations, protests, disputes and claims. FNS shall not substitute its judgment for that of the State agency unless the matter is primarily a Federal concern. Violations of laws shall be referred to the local, State or Federal authority having jurisdiction.

(2) State agencies shall use their own procurement procedures provided that procurements paid in whole or in part with FNS program funds meet the standards set forth in this part.

(b) *Review of proposed contracts*. State agencies shall submit proposed contracts and related procurement documents to FNS for preaward review and approval when:

(1) The procurement is expected to exceed $10,000 and is to be awarded without competition or only one bid or offer is received in response to solicitation;

(2) The procurement expected to exceed $10,000 specifies a ''brand name'' product; or

(3) FNS has determined that the State agency's procurement procedures or operation fails to comply with one or more significant aspects of this section.

(c) *Code of conduct*. The State agency shall maintain a written code or standards of conduct which shall govern the performance of its officers, employees, or agents engaged in the award and administration of contracts borne in whole or in part with FNS program

funds. No employee, officer, or agent of the State agency shall participate in the selection, or in the award or administration of a contract supported in whole or in part by FNS program funds if a conflict of interest, real or apparent, would be involved. Such conflict would arise when:

(1) The employee, officer, or agent;

(2) Any member of his/her immediate family;

(3) His or her partner; or

(4) An organization which employs, or is about to employ, any of the above, has a financial or other interest in the firm selected for award. The State agency's officers, employees, or agents shall neither solicit nor accept gratuities, favors, or anything of monetary value from contractors, potential contractors, or parties to subagreements. State agencies may set minimum rules where the financial interest is not substantial or the gift is an unsolicited item of nominal intrinsic value. To the extent permitted by State or local law or regulations, such standards of conduct shall provide for penalties, sanctions, or other disciplinary actions for violations of such standards by the State agency's officers, employees, or agents, or by contractors or their agents.

(d) *Procurement procedures.* The State agency shall establish procurement procedures which provide that proposed procurement actions shall be reviewed by State agency officials to avoid the purchase of unnecessary or duplicative items. Consideration should be given to consolidation or dividing the purchase into smaller units, to obtain a more economical purchase. Where appropriate, an analysis shall be made of lease versus purchase alternatives, and any other appropriate analyses, to determine which approach would be the most economical. To foster greater economy and efficiency, State agencies are encouraged to enter into State and local intergovernmental agreements for procurement or use of common goods and services.

(e) *Contracting with small and minority firms, women's business enterprises and labor surplus area firms.* (1) It is FNS policy to award a fair share of contracts to small and minority business firms. State agencies must take affirmative steps to assure that small and minority businesses are utilized when possible as sources of supplies, equipment, construction and services. State agency affirmative steps shall include the following:

(i) Including qualified small and minority businesses on solicitation lists.

(ii) Assuring that small and minority businesses are solicited whenever they are potential sources.

(iii) When economically feasible, dividing total requirements into smaller tasks or quantities so as to permit maximum small and minority business participation.

(iv) Where the requirement permits, establishing delivery schedules which will encourage participation by small and minority business.

(v) Using the services and assistance of the Small Business Administration, the Office of Minority Business Enterprise of the Department of Commerce and the Community Services Administration, as appropriate.

(vi) If any subcontracts are to be let, requiring the prime contractor to take the affirmative steps in paragraphs (e)(1) (i) through (v) of this section.

(2) State agencies shall take similar appropriate affirmative action in support of women's business enterprises.

(3) State agencies are encouraged to procure goods and services from labor surplus areas, as defined by the Department of Labor.

(4) FNS shall impose no additional regulations or requirements in the foregoing areas unless specifically mandated by law or Executive order.

(f) *Selection procedures.* All State agency procurement transactions shall be conducted in a manner that provides maximum open and free competition with this section. Procurement procedures shall not contain features which restrict or eliminate competition. The State agency shall have written selection procedures which shall provide, as a minimum, the following procedural requirements:

(1) Solicitation of offers, whether by competitive sealed bid or competitive negotiation, shall contain a clear and accurate description of the technical requirements for the material, product, or service desired. Descriptions shall

not, in competitive procurements, contain features which unduly restrict competition. Descriptions may include a statement of the qualitative nature of the material, product or service desired and, when necessary, shall set forth those minimum essential characteristics and standards to which it must conform if it is to satisfy its intended use. When it is impractical or uneconomical to describe clearly and accurately the technical requirements, a ''brand name or equal'' description may be used to define the performance or requirements of the material, product or service desired. The specific features of the named brand which must be met by offerors shall be clearly stated. State agencies shall clearly set forth all requirements which offerors must fulfill and all other factors to be used in evaluating bids or proposals.

(2) State agencies shall make awards only to responsible contractors that possess the potential ability to perform successfully under the terms and conditions of a proposed procurement. Consideration shall be given to such matters as contractor integrity, compliance with public policy, record of past performance, and financial and technical resources.

(g) *Procurement methods.* State agency procurements made in whole or in part with program funds shall be by one of the following methods:

(1) *Small purchase procedures* are those relatively simple and informal procurement methods that are sound and appropriate for a procurement of services, supplies, or other property, costing in the aggregate not more than $10,000. State agencies shall comply with State or local small purchase dollar limits under $10,000. If small purchase procedures are used for a procurement under the program, price or rate quotations shall be obtained from an adequate number of qualified sources.

(2) In *competitive sealed bids* (formal advertising), sealed bids are publicly solicited and a firm-fixed-price contract (lump sum or unit price) is awarded to the responsible bidder whose bid, conforming with all the material terms and conditions of the invitation for bids, is lowest in price.

(i) In order for the State agency to use this method of procurement the following conditions, as a minimum, must prevail:

(A) A complete, adequate, and realistic specification or purchase description is available.

(B) Two or more responsible suppliers are willing and able to compete effectively for the State agency's business.

(C) The procurement lends itself to a firm-fixed-price contract, and selection of the successful bidder can appropriately be made principally on the basis of price.

(ii) If formal advertising is used for a procurement under a grant, the following requirements shall apply:

(A) A sufficient time prior to the date set for opening of bids, bids shall be solicited from an adequate number of known suppliers. In addition, the invitation shall be publicly advertised.

(B) The invitation for bids, including specifications and pertinent attachments, shall clearly define the items or services needed in order for the bidders to properly respond to the invitation.

(C) All bids shall be opened publicly at the time and place stated in the invitation for bids.

(D) A firm-fixed-price contract award shall be made by written notice by the State agency to that responsible bidder whose bid, conforming to the invitation for bids, is lowest. Where specified in the bidding documents, factors such as discounts, transportation costs and life cycle costs shall be considered in determining which bid is lowest. Payment discounts may only be used to determine low bid when prior experience of the State agency indicates that such discounts are generally taken.

(E) Any or all bids may be rejected by the State agency when there are sound documented business reasons in the best interest of the program.

(3) In *competitive negotiation,* proposals are requested from a number of sources and the Request for Proposal is publicized, negotiations are normally conducted with more than one of the sources submitting offers, and either a fixed-price or cost-reimbursable type contract is awarded, as appropriate. Competitive negotiation may be used if conditions are appropriate for the use of formal advertising. If competitive negotiation is used for procurement

under a grant, the following requirements shall apply:

(i) Proposals shall be solicited from an adequate number of qualified sources to permit reasonable competition consistent with the nature and requirements of the procurement. The Request for Proposals shall be publicized and reasonable requests by other sources to compete shall be honored to the maximum extent practicable.

(ii) The Request for Proposal shall identify all significant evaluation factors, including price or cost where required and their relative importance.

(iii) The State agency shall provide procedures for technical evaluation of the proposals received, determinations of responsible offerors for the purpose of written or oral discussions, and selection for contract award.

(iv) Award may be made to the responsible offeror whose proposal will be most advantageous to the State agency, price and other factors considered. Unsuccessful offerors should be notified promptly.

(v) State agencies may utilize competitive negotiation procedures for procurement of architectural/engineering professional services whereby competitors' qualifications are evaluated and the most qualified competitor is selected subject to negotiation of fair and reasonable compensation.

(4) *Noncompetitive negotiation* is procurement through solicitation of a proposal from only one source, or after solicitation of a number of sources, competition is determined inadequate. Noncompetitive negotiation may be used when the award of a contract is infeasible under small purchase, competitive bidding (formal advertising) or competitive negotiation procedures. Awards of contracts by noncompetitive negotiation are limited to the following:

(i) The item is available only from a single source;

(ii) Public exigency or emergency when the urgency for the requirement will not permit a delay incident to competitive procurement;

(iii) FNS authorizes noncompetitive procurement; or

(iv) After solicitation of a number of sources, competition is determined inadequate.

(h) *Contract pricing.* The cost plus a percentage of cost and percentage of construction cost method(s) of contracting may not be used by a State agency. State agencies shall perform some form of cost or price analysis in connection with every procurement action including contract modifications. Costs or prices based on estimated costs for contracts, paid in whole or in part by FNS program funds, shall be allowed only to the extent that costs incurred or cost estimates included in negotiated prices are consistent with Federal cost principles.

(i) *State agency procurement records.* State agencies shall maintain records sufficient to detail the significant history of a procurement. These records shall include, but are not necessarily limited to, information pertinent to the rationale for the method of procurement, the selection of contract type, the contract selection or rejection, and the basis for the cost or price.

(j) *Contract provisions.* In addition to provisions defining a sound and complete procurement contract, State agencies shall include the following contract provisions or conditions in all procurement contracts and subcontracts as required by this provision, Federal law, or FNS:

(1) Contracts other than small purchases shall contain provisions or conditions which will allow for administrative, contractual, or legal remedies in instances where contractors violate or breach contract terms, and provide for such sanctions and penalties as may be appropriate.

(2) All contracts in excess of $10,000 shall contain suitable provisions for termination by the State agency including the manner by which it will be effected and the basis for settlement. In addition, such contracts shall 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.

(3) All contracts awarded in excess of $10,000 by State agencies and their contractors or subagencies shall contain a

provision requiring compliance with Executive Order 11246, entitled ''Equal Employment Opportunity,'' as amended by Executive Order 11375, and as supplemented in Department of Labor regulations (29 CFR part 60).

(4) All contracts and subcontracts for construction or repair shall include a provision for compliance with the Copeland ''Anti-Kickback'' Act (18 U.S.C. 874) as supplemented in Department of Labor regulations (29 CFR part 3). This Act provides that each contractor or subagency shall be prohibited from inducing, by any means, any person employed in the construction, completion, or repair of public work, to give up any part of the compensation to which he is otherwise entitled. The State agency shall report all suspected or reported violations to FNS.

(5) Where applicable, all contracts awarded by State agencies and subagencies in excess of $2,000 for construction contracts in excess of $2,500 for other contracts which involve the employment of mechanics or laborers shall include a provision for compliance with sections 103 and 107 of the Contract Work Hours and Safety Standards Act (40 U.S.C. 327 through 330) as supplemented by Department of Labor regulations (29 CFR part 5). Under section 103 of the Act, each contractor shall be required to compute the wages of every mechanic and laborer on the basis of a standard work day of 8 hours and a standard work week of 40 hours. Work in excess of the standard work day or work week is permissible provided that the work is compensated at a rate of not less than 1½ times the basic rate for all hours worked in excess of 8 hours in any calendar day or 40 hours in the work week. Section 107 of the Act is applicable to construction work and provides that no laborer or mechanic shall be required to work in surroundings or under working conditions which are unsanitary, hazardous, or dangerous to his health and safety as determined under construction, safety, and health standards promulated by the Secretary of Labor. These requirements do not apply to the purchases of supplies or materials or articles ordinarily available on the open market, or contracts for transportation or transmission of intelligence.

(6) The contract shall include notice of FNS requirements and regulations pertaining to reporting and print rights under any contract involving research, developmental, experimental, or demonstration work with respect to any discovery or invention which arises or is developed in the course of or under such contract, and of FNS requirements and regulations pertaining to copyrights and rights to data so derived.

(7) All negotiated contracts (except those awarded by small purchases procedures) awarded by State agencies shall include a provision to the effect that the State agency, FNS, the Comptroller General of the United States, or any of their duly authorized representatives, shall have access to any books, documents, papers, and records of the contractor which are directly pertinent to that specific contract, for the purpose of making audit, examination, excerpts, and transcriptions. State agencies shall require contracts to maintain all required records for three years after the State agency makes final payments or all other pending matters are closed, whichever is last.

(8) Contracts, subcontracts, and subgrants of amounts in excess of $100,000 shall contain a provision which requires compliance with all applicable standards, orders, or requirements issued under section 306 of the Clean Air Act, section 508 of the Clean Water Act, Executive Order 11738, and Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) regulations, which prohibit the use under nonexempt Federal contract, grants, or loans of facilities included on the EPA List of Violating Facilities. The provision shall require reporting of violations to the FNS and to the USEPA Assistant Administrator for Enforcement.

(9) Contracts shall recognize mandatory standards and policies relating to energy efficiency which are contained in the State energy conservation plan issued in compliance with the Energy Policy and Conservation Act (Pub. L. 94–165).

(k) *Contract administration.* State agencies shall maintain a contract administration system insuring that contractors perform in accordance with the terms, conditions, and specifications of their contracts or purchase orders.

§ 277.15 [Reserved]

§ 277.16 Suspension, disallowance and program closeout.

(a) *Suspension.* When a State agency has materially failed to comply with any of the provisions contained in the Act, regulations, or FNS-approved State Plan of Operation, FNS may, after written notification to the State agency, temporarily withhold some or all Federal reimbursements for costs of administration of the Food Stamp Program in accordance with § 276.4. Adjustments will be made either by adjusting the Letter of Credit authorization or by not allowing the State agency to withdraw funds.

(b) *Disallowance.* (1) FNS may disallow costs in accordance with part 276 and effect nonpayment for some or all costs incurred by a State agency which are normally allowable but are determined by FNS to be nonreimbursable because the State agency has failed to comply with any of the provisions contained in the Act, regulations, or FNS-approved State Plan of Operation.

(2) FNS may also disallow costs and institute recovery of Federal funds when a State agency fails to adhere to the cost principles of this part and appendix A.

(c) *Offsets to the Letter of Credit.* (1) FNS may recover funds when owed by the State agency to FNS through offsets to the Letter of Credit. Offsets shall include:

(i) Costs determined by FNS to be disallowed under the provisions of this part;

(ii) Unallowable costs resulting from audit or investigation findings;

(iii) Amounts owed which have been billed to the State agency and which the State agency has failed to pay without cause acceptable to FNS; or

(iv) Amounts owed to FNS for title IV reimbursements and recipient claims collections which were reported on the FNS–209 and which the State agency has failed to pay.

(2) The amounts recovered through the offset procedure should be in one lump sum. If recovery of funds through the offset procedure is not possible in one lump sum, FNS shall make appropriate adjustments to recover the funds in not more than three fiscal years.

(d) *Program transfer or termination.* (1) When termination or transfer of a State program has been agreed upon by FNS, the following closeout procedure shall be observed:

(i) Upon request, FNS shall make or arrange for prompt payment to the State agency for allowable costs not covered by previous payments.

(ii) The State agency shall immediately refund to FNS any unobligated balance of cash withdrawn by the State agency for the administration of the program in the affected State or Indian reservation.

(iii) The State agency shall submit to FNS within 90 days after the date of termination of the program, all required financial, performance, and other reports. FNS may grant extensions when requested by the State agency.

(iv) FNS shall adjust the amount authorized by the Letter of Credit in order to effect payment of any amounts due the State agency, and if appropriate, shall bill the State agency for any amounts due to FNS. The amounts of such billings shall be promptly remitted to FNS.

(v) In the event a final audit has not been performed prior to the closeout of the program, FNS shall retain the right to disallow costs or recover funds resulting from the final audit findings.

(2) Provisions of § 277.13 apply for any property acquired with program funds or received from the Federal Government in connection with the program and which was in use in the affected project area or areas.

[Amdt. 188, 45 FR 85702, Dec. 30, 1980, as amended by Amdt. 342, 59 FR 2733, Jan. 19, 1994]

§ 277.17 Audit requirements.

(a) *General.* This section sets forth the audit requirements for State agencies that receive FNS program funds.