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shall be submitted to the State agency for approval.

(e) A food service management company may not subcontract for the total meal, with or without milk, or for the assembly of the meal.

[47 FR 36527, Aug. 20, 1982, as amended at 53 FR 52594, Dec. 28, 1988]

§ 226.22 Procurement standards.

(a) This section establishes standards and guidelines for the procurement of foods, supplies, equipment, and other goods and services. These standards are furnished to ensure that such materials and services are obtained efficiently and economically and in compliance with the provisions of applicable Federal law and Executive orders.

(b) These standards shall not relieve the institution of any contractual responsibilities under its contracts. The institution 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: source evaluation, protests of award, disputes, and claims. Violations of the law shall be referred to the local, State, or Federal authority having proper jurisdiction.

(c) Institutions may use their own procurement procedures which reflect applicable State or local laws and regulations, provided that procurements made with Program payments conform to the standards set forth in this section and in Attachment O of Office of Management and Budget Circulars A-102 and A-110, as well as to procurement requirements which may be established by the State agency, with the approval of FNS to prevent fraud, waste, and Program abuse.

(d) Institutions shall maintain a written code of standards of conduct which shall govern the performance of their officers, employees or agents engaged in the award and administration of contracts supported by Program payments. No employee, officer or agent of the grantee shall participate in selection, or in the award or administration of a contract supported by Federal funds if a conflict of interest,

real or apparent, would be involved. Such a conflict would arise when:

- (1) The employee, officer or agent;
- (2) Any member of his 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 institution'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. Institutions 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 institution's officers, employees, or agents, or by contractors or their agents.

(e) The institution shall establish procurement procedures which provide that proposed procurement actions shall be reviewed by institution officials to avoid the purchase of unnecessary or duplicative items. Where appropriate, an analysis shall be made of lease versus purchase alternatives, and any other appropriate analysis to determine which approach would be the most economical.

(f) Affirmative steps shall be taken to assure that small and minority businesses are utilized when possible. Affirmative steps shall include the following:

- (1) Including qualified small and minority businesses on solicitation lists;
- (2) Assuring that small and minority businesses are solicited whenever they are potential sources;
- (3) When economically feasible, dividing total requirements into smaller tasks or quantities so as to permit maximum small and minority business participation;
- (4) Where the requirement permits, establishing delivery schedules which will encourage participation by small and minority businesses;
- (5) Using the services and assistance of the Small Business Administration

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and the Minority Business Enterprise of the Department of Commerce as required;

(6) If any subcontracts are to be let, requiring the prime contractor to take the affirmative steps in paragraphs (b) (1) through (5) of this section; and

(7) Taking similar appropriate affirmative action in support of women's business enterprises.

(g) All procurement transactions, regardless of whether by sealed bids or by negotiation and without regard to dollar value, shall be conducted in a manner that provides maximum open and free competition consistent with this section. Procurement procedures shall not restrict or eliminate competition. Examples of what is considered to be restrictive of competition include, but are not limited to (1) placing unreasonable requirements on firms in order for them to qualify to do business, (2) non-competitive practices between firms, (3) organizational conflicts of interest, and (4) unnecessary experience and bonding requirements.

(h) The institution shall have written selection procedures which shall provide, as a minimum, the following procedural requirements:

(1) Solicitations of offers, whether by competitive sealed bids or competitive negotiation, shall:

(i) Incorporate a clear and accurate description of the technical requirements for the material, product, or service to be procured. Such description shall not, in competitive procurements, contain features which unduly restrict competition. The description may include a statement of the qualitative nature of the material, product or service to be procured, 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. Detailed product specifications should be avoided if at all possible. When it is impractical or uneconomical to make a clear and accurate description of the technical requirements, a "brand name or equal" description may be used as a means to define the performance or other salient requirements of a procurement. The specific features of the named brand which must be met by offerors shall be clearly stated; and

(ii) Clearly set forth all requirements which offerors must fulfill and all other factors to be used in evaluating bids or proposals.

(2) Awards shall be made 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.

(i) Program procurements shall be made by one of the following methods:

(1) Small purchase procedures are those relatively simple and informal procurement methods that are sound and appropriate for the procurement of services, supplies or other property, costing in the aggregate not more than \$10,000. Institutions 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 quotation shall be obtained from an adequate number of qualified sources; or

(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 formal advertising to be feasible, appropriate conditions must be present, including as a minimum, the following:

(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 institution'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 the Program, 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 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 grantee indicates that such discounts are generally taken.

(E) Any or all bids may be rejected 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 not appropriate for the use of formal advertising. If competitive negotiation is used for a 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 institution shall provide mechanisms for technical evaluation of the proposal received, determinations of responsible offerors for the purpose

of written or oral discussions, and selection for contract award; and

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

(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. Circumstances under which a contract may be awarded 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 solicitation;

(iii) FNS authorizes noncompetitive negotiation; or

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

(j) The cost plus a percentage of cost method of contracting shall not be used. Instructions 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 under the Program shall be allowed only to the extent that costs incurred or cost estimates included in negotiated prices are consistent with Federal cost principles.

(k) Institutions 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 following: rationale for the method of procurement, selection of contract type, contractor selection or rejection, and the basis for the cost or price.

(l) In addition to provisions defining a sound and complete procurement contract, institutions shall include the following contract provisions or conditions in all procurement contracts and

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subcontracts as required by the 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 institution 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 institutions and their contractors 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 (41 CFR part 60);

(4) Where applicable, all contracts awarded by institutions in excess of \$2,500 which involve the employment of mechanics or laborers shall include a provision for compliance with section 103 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 week is permissible provided that the worker is compensated at a rate of not less than 1½ times the basic rate of pay for all hours worked in excess of 8 hours in any calendar day or 40 hours in the work week. 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;

(5) The contract shall include notice of USDA requirements and regulations pertaining to reporting and patent 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 USDA requirements and regulations pertaining to copyrights and rights in data. These requirements are in §3015.175 of the USDA Uniform Federal Assistance Regulations 7 CFR part 3015. All negotiated contracts (except those awarded by small purchase procedures) awarded by institutions shall include a provision to the effect that the institution, 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. Institutions shall require contractors to maintain all required records for three years after institutions make final payment and all other pending matters are closed;

(6) Contracts and subcontracts 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 (42 U.S.C. 1837(h)), section 508 of the Clean Water Act (33 U.S.C. 1368), Executive Order 11738, and Environmental Protection Agency regulations (40 CFR part 15), which prohibit the use under non-exempt Federal contracts, grants or loans of facilities included on the EPA List of Violating Facilities. The provision shall require reporting of violations to FNS and to the U.S. EPA Assistant Administrator for Enforcement (EN-329); and

(7) Contracts shall recognize mandatory standards and policies relating to energy efficiency which are contained in the State energy efficiency conservation plan issued in compliance with the Energy Policy and Conservation Act (Pub. L. 94-163).

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

§ 226.23 Free and reduced-price meals.

(a) The State agency shall require each institution to submit, at the time the institution applies for Program participation, a written policy statement concerning free and reduced-price meals to be used uniformly in all child care and adult day care facilities under its jurisdiction as required in this section. Institutions shall not be approved for participation nor agreements renewed unless the free and reduced-price policy statement has been approved. Pending approval of a revision of a policy statement, the existing policy shall remain in effect.

(b) Sponsoring organizations of day care homes (which may not serve meals at a separate charge to children) and other institutions which elect to serve meals at no separate charge, shall develop a policy statement consisting of an assurance to the State agency that all participants are served the same meals at no separate charge, regardless of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or handicap and that there is no discrimination in the course of the food service. This statement shall also contain an assurance that there will be no identification of children in day care homes in which meals are reimbursed at both the tier I and tier II reimbursement rates, and that the sponsoring organization will not make any free and reduced price eligibility information concerning individual households available to day care homes and will otherwise limit the use of such information to persons directly connected with the administration and enforcement of the Program.

(c) Independent centers and sponsoring organizations of centers which charge separately for meals shall develop a policy statement for determining eligibility for free and reduced-price meals which shall include the following:

(1) The specific criteria to be used in determining eligibility for free and reduced-price meals. The institution's

standards of eligibility shall conform to the Secretary's income standards;

(2) A description of the method or methods to be used in accepting applications from families for free and reduced-price meals. Such methods will ensure that applications are accepted from households on behalf of children who are members of AFDC assistance units or food stamp or FDPIR households or, for adult participants, who are members of a food stamp or FDPIR household or SSI or Medicaid participants;

(3) A description of the method or methods to be used to collect payments from those participants paying the full or reduced price of the meal which will protect the anonymity of the participants receiving a free or reduced-price meal;

(4) An assurance which provides that the institution will establish a hearing procedure for use when benefits are denied or terminated as a result of verification:

(i) A simple, publicly announced method for a family to make an oral or written request for a hearing;

(ii) An opportunity for the family to be assisted or represented by an attorney or other person in presenting its appeal;

(iii) An opportunity to examine, prior to and during the hearing, the documents and records presented to support the decision under appeal;

(iv) That the hearing shall be held with reasonable promptness and convenience to the family and that adequate notice shall be given to the family as to the time and place of the hearing;

(v) An opportunity for the family to present oral or documentary evidence and arguments supporting its position;

(vi) An opportunity for the family to question or refute any testimony or other evidence and to confront and cross-examine any adverse witnesses;

(vii) That the hearing shall be conducted and the determination made by a hearing official who did not participate in making the initial decision;

(viii) The determination of the hearing official shall be based on the oral and documentary evidence presented at the hearing and made a part of that hearing record;