

Social Security Administration

§ 437.36

(a) The copyright in any work developed under a grant, subgrant, or contract under a grant or subgrant; and

(b) Any rights of copyright to which a grantee, subgrantee or a contractor purchases ownership with grant support.

§ 437.35 Subawards to debarred and suspended parties.

Grantees and subgrantees must not make any award or permit any award (subgrant or contract) at any tier to any party which is debarred or suspended or is otherwise excluded from or ineligible for participation in Federal assistance programs under Executive Order 12549, "Debarment and Suspension."

§ 437.36 Procurement.

(a) *States.* When procuring property and services under a grant, a State must follow the same policies and procedures it uses for procurements from its non-Federal funds. The State must ensure that every purchase order or other contract includes any clauses required by Federal statutes and executive orders and their implementing regulations. Other grantees and subgrantees must follow paragraphs (b) through (i) in this section.

(b) *Procurement standards.* (1) Grantees and subgrantees must use their own procurement procedures which reflect applicable State and local laws and regulations, provided that the procurements conform to applicable Federal law and the standards identified in this section.

(2) Grantees and subgrantees must maintain a contract administration system that ensures that contractors perform in accordance with the terms, conditions, and specifications of their contracts or purchase orders.

(3) Grantees and subgrantees must maintain a written code of standards of conduct governing the performance of their employees engaged in the award and administration of contracts. No employee, officer or agent of the grantee or subgrantee may 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:

(i) The employee, officer or agent,
(ii) Any member of his immediate family,

(iii) His or her partner, or

(iv) An organization which employs, or is about to employ, any such persons, has a financial or other interest in the firm selected for award. The grantee's or subgrantee's officers, employees or agents may neither solicit nor accept gratuities, favors or anything of monetary value from contractors, potential contractors, or parties to subagreements. Grantee and subgrantees 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 or conduct must provide for penalties, sanctions, or other disciplinary actions for violations of such standards by the grantee's and subgrantee's officers, employees, or agents, or by contractors or their agents. SSA may in regulation provide additional prohibitions relative to real, apparent, or potential conflicts of interest.

(4) Grantee and subgrantee procedures must provide for a review of proposed procurements to avoid purchase of unnecessary or duplicative items. Consideration should be given to consolidating or breaking out procurements to obtain a more economical purchase. Where appropriate, an analysis must be made of lease versus purchase alternatives, and any other appropriate analysis to determine the most economical approach.

(5) To foster greater economy and efficiency, grantees and subgrantees are encouraged to enter into State and local intergovernmental agreements for procurement or use of common goods and services.

(6) Grantees and subgrantees are encouraged to use Federal excess and surplus property in lieu of purchasing new equipment and property whenever such use is feasible and reduces project costs.

(7) Grantees and subgrantees are encouraged to use value engineering clauses in contracts for construction

projects of sufficient size to offer reasonable opportunities for cost reductions. Value engineering is a systematic and creative analysis of each contract item or task to ensure that its essential function is provided at the overall lower cost.

(8) Grantees and subgrantees will make awards only to responsible contractors possessing the ability to perform successfully under the terms and conditions of a proposed procurement. Consideration must be given to such matters as contractor integrity, compliance with public policy, record of past performance, and financial and technical resources.

(9) Grantees and subgrantees must maintain records sufficient to detail the significant history of a procurement. These records must include, but are not necessarily limited to the following: Rationale for the method of procurement, selection of contract type, contractor selection or rejection, and the basis for the contract price.

(10) Grantees and subgrantees must use time and materials type contracts only—

(i) After a determination that no other contract is suitable, and

(ii) If the contract includes a ceiling price that the contractor exceeds at its own risk.

(11) Grantees and subgrantees alone will be responsible, in accordance with good administrative practice and sound business judgment, for the settlement of all contractual and administrative issues arising out of procurements. These issues include, but are not limited to source evaluation, protests, disputes, and claims. These standards do not relieve the grantee or subgrantee of any contractual responsibilities under its contracts. SSA will not substitute its judgment for that of the grantee or subgrantee unless the matter is primarily a Federal concern. Violations of law will be referred to the local, State, or Federal authority having proper jurisdiction.

(12) Grantees and subgrantees must have protest procedures to handle and resolve disputes relating to their procurements and must in all instances disclose information regarding the protest to SSA. A protestor must exhaust all administrative remedies with the

grantee and subgrantee before pursuing a protest with SSA. Reviews of protests by SSA Federal agency are limited to:

(i) Violations of Federal law or regulations and the standards of this section (violations of State or local law will be under the jurisdiction of State or local authorities) and

(ii) Violations of the grantee's or subgrantee's protest procedures for failure to review a complaint or protest. Protests received by SSA other than those specified in this paragraph (b)(12) will be referred to the grantee or subgrantee.

(c) *Competition.* (1) All procurement transactions must be conducted in a manner providing full and open competition consistent with the standards of this section. Some of the situations considered to be restrictive of competition include but are not limited to:

(i) Placing unreasonable requirements on firms in order for them to qualify to do business,

(ii) Requiring unnecessary experience and excessive bonding,

(iii) Noncompetitive pricing practices between firms or between affiliated companies,

(iv) Noncompetitive awards to consultants that are on retainer contracts,

(v) Organizational conflicts of interest,

(vi) Specifying only a "brand name" product instead of allowing "an equal" product to be offered and describing the performance of other relevant requirements of the procurement, and

(vii) Any arbitrary action in the procurement process.

(2) Grantees and subgrantees must conduct procurements in a manner that prohibits the use of statutorily or administratively imposed in-State or local geographical preferences in the evaluation of bids or proposals, except in those cases where applicable Federal statutes expressly mandate or encourage geographic preference. Nothing in this section preempts State licensing laws. When contracting for architectural and engineering (A/E) services, geographic location may be a selection criteria provided its application leaves an appropriate number of qualified firms, given the nature and size of the project, to compete for the contract.

(3) Grantees must have written selection procedures for procurement transactions. These procedures must ensure that all solicitations:

(i) Incorporate a clear and accurate description of the technical requirements for the material, product, or service to be procured. Such description may not, in competitive procurements, contain features that 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, must 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 must be clearly stated; and

(ii) Identify all requirements that the offerors must fulfill and all other factors to be used in evaluating bids or proposals.

(4) Grantees and subgrantees must ensure that all prequalified lists of persons, firms, or products which are used in acquiring goods and services are current and include enough qualified sources to ensure maximum open and free competition. Also, grantees and subgrantees may not preclude potential bidders from qualifying during the solicitation period.

(d) *Methods of procurement to be followed*—(1) *Procurement by small purchase procedures*. Small purchase procedures are those relatively simple and informal procurement methods for securing services, supplies, or other property that do not cost more than the simplified acquisition threshold fixed at 41 U.S.C. 403(11) (currently set at \$100,000). If small purchase procedures are used, price or rate quotations must be obtained from an adequate number of qualified sources.

(2) *Procurement by sealed bids (formal advertising)*. 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 the lowest in price. The sealed bid method is the preferred method for procuring construction, if the conditions in paragraph (d)(2)(i) of this section apply.

(i) In order for sealed bidding to be feasible, the following conditions should be present:

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

(B) Two or more responsible bidders are willing and able to compete effectively and for the business; and

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

(ii) If sealed bids are used, the following requirements apply:

(A) The invitation for bids must be publicly advertised and bids must be solicited from an adequate number of known suppliers, providing them sufficient time prior to the date set for opening the bids;

(B) The invitation for bids, which will include any specifications and pertinent attachments, must define the items or services in order for the bidder to properly respond;

(C) All bids must be publicly opened at the time and place prescribed in the invitation for bids;

(D) A firm fixed-price contract award must be made in writing to the lowest responsive and responsible bidder. Where specified in bidding documents, factors such as discounts, transportation cost, and life cycle costs must be considered in determining which bid is lowest. Payment discounts will only be used to determine the low bid when prior experience indicates that such discounts are usually taken advantage of; and

(E) Any or all bids may be rejected if there is a sound documented reason.

(3) *Procurement by competitive proposals*. The technique of competitive proposals is normally conducted with more than one source submitting an offer, and either a fixed-price or cost-reimbursement type contract is awarded. It is generally used when conditions are not appropriate for the use of

sealed bids. If this method is used, the following requirements apply:

(i) Requests for proposals must be publicized and identify all evaluation factors and their relative importance. Any response to publicized requests for proposals must be honored to the maximum extent practical;

(ii) Proposals must be solicited from an adequate number of qualified sources;

(iii) Grantees and subgrantees must have a method for conducting technical evaluations of the proposals received and for selecting awardees;

(iv) Awards must be made to the responsible firm whose proposal is most advantageous to the program, with price and other factors considered; and

(v) Grantees and subgrantees may use competitive proposal procedures for qualifications-based procurement of architectural/engineering (A/E) professional services whereby competitors' qualifications are evaluated and the most qualified competitor is selected, subject to negotiation of fair and reasonable compensation. The method, where price is not used as a selection factor, can only be used in procurement of A/E professional services. It cannot be used to purchase other types of services though A/E firms are a potential source to perform the proposed effort.

(4) *Procurement by noncompetitive proposals* is procurement through solicitation of a proposal from only one source, or after solicitation of a number of sources, competition is determined inadequate.

(i) Procurement by noncompetitive proposals may be used only when the award of a contract is not feasible under small purchase procedures, sealed bids or competitive proposals and one of the following circumstances applies:

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

(B) The public exigency or emergency for the requirement will not permit a delay resulting from competitive solicitation.

(C) SSA authorizes noncompetitive proposals; or

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

(ii) Cost analysis, *i.e.*, verifying the proposed cost data, the projections of the data, and the evaluation of the specific elements of costs and profits, is required.

(iii) Grantees and subgrantees may be required to submit the proposed procurement to SSA for pre-award review in accordance with paragraph (g) of this section.

(e) *Contracting with small and minority firms, women's business enterprise and labor surplus area firms.* (1) The grantee and subgrantee must take all necessary affirmative steps to assure that minority firms, women's business enterprises, and labor surplus area firms are used when possible.

(2) Affirmative steps include:

(i) Placing qualified small and minority businesses and women's business enterprises on solicitation lists;

(ii) Assuring that small and minority businesses, and women's business enterprises are solicited whenever they are potential sources;

(iii) Dividing total requirements, when economically feasible, into smaller tasks or quantities to permit maximum participation by small and minority business, and women's business enterprises;

(iv) Establishing delivery schedules, where the requirement permits, which encourage participation by small and minority business, and women's business enterprises;

(v) Using the services and assistance of the Small Business Administration, and the Minority Business Development Agency of the Department of Commerce; and

(vi) Requiring the prime contractor, if subcontracts are to be let, to take the affirmative steps listed in paragraphs (e)(2)(i) through (v) of this section.

(f) *Contract cost and price.* (1) Grantees and subgrantees must perform a cost or price analysis in connection with every procurement action including contract modifications. The method and degree of analysis is dependent on the facts surrounding the particular procurement situation, but as a starting point, grantees must make independent estimates before receiving bids or proposals. A cost analysis must be performed when the offeror is required

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to submit the elements of his estimated cost, e.g., under professional, consulting, and architectural engineering services contracts. A cost analysis is necessary when adequate price competition is lacking, and for sole source procurements, including contract modifications or change orders, unless price reasonableness can be established on the basis of a catalog or market price of a commercial product sold in substantial quantities to the general public or based on prices set by law or regulation. A price analysis must be used in all other instances to determine the reasonableness of the proposed contract price.

(2) Grantees and subgrantees must negotiate profit as a separate element of the price for each contract in which there is no price competition and in all cases where cost analysis is performed. To establish a fair and reasonable profit, consideration must be given to the complexity of the work to be performed, the risk borne by the contractor, the contractor's investment, the amount of subcontracting, the quality of its record of past performance, and industry profit rates in the surrounding geographical area for similar work.

(3) Costs or prices based on estimated costs for contracts under grants are allowable only to the extent that costs incurred or cost estimates included in negotiated prices are consistent with Federal cost principles (see § 437.22). Grantees may reference their own cost principles that comply with the applicable Federal cost principles.

(4) The cost plus a percentage of cost and percentage of construction cost methods of contracting may not be used.

(g) *SSA review.* (1) Grantees and subgrantees must make available, upon request of SSA, technical specifications on proposed procurements where SSA believes such review is needed to ensure that the item and/or service specified is the one being proposed for purchase. This review generally must take place prior to the time the specification is incorporated into a solicitation document. However, if the grantee or subgrantee desires to have the review accomplished after a solicitation has been developed, SSA may still review

the specifications, with such review usually limited to the technical aspects of the proposed purchase.

(2) Grantees and subgrantees must on request make available for SSA pre-award review procurement documents, such as requests for proposals or invitations for bids, independent cost estimates, etc., when:

(i) A grantee's or subgrantee's procurement procedures or operation fails to comply with the procurement standards in this section; or

(ii) The procurement is expected to exceed the simplified acquisition threshold and is to be awarded without competition or only one bid or offer is received in response to a solicitation; or

(iii) The procurement, which is expected to exceed the simplified acquisition threshold, specifies a "brand name" product; or

(iv) The proposed award is more than the simplified acquisition threshold and is to be awarded to other than the apparent low bidder under a sealed bid procurement; or

(v) A proposed contract modification changes the scope of a contract or increases the contract amount by more than the simplified acquisition threshold.

(3) A grantee or subgrantee is exempt from the pre-award review in paragraph (g)(2) of this section if SSA determines that its procurement systems comply with the standards of this section.

(i) A grantee or subgrantee may request that its procurement system be reviewed by SSA to determine whether its system meets these standards in order for its system to be certified. Generally, these reviews will occur where there is a continuous high-dollar funding, and third-party contracts are awarded on a regular basis;

(ii) A grantee or subgrantee may self-certify its procurement system. Such self-certification does not limit SSA's right to survey the system. Under a self-certification procedure, SSA may wish to rely on written assurances from the grantee or subgrantee that it is complying with these standards. A grantee or subgrantee must cite specific procedures, regulations, standards, etc., as being in compliance with

these requirements and have its system available for review.

(h) *Bonding requirements.* For construction or facility improvement contracts or subcontracts exceeding the simplified acquisition threshold, SSA may accept the bonding policy and requirements of the grantee or subgrantee provided SSA has made a determination that the SSA's interest is adequately protected. If such 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" will consist of a firm commitment such as a bid bond, certified check, or other negotiable instrument accompanying a bid as assurance that the bidder will, upon acceptance of his bid, execute such 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 such 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 law of all persons supplying labor and material in the execution of the work provided for in the contract.

(i) *Contract provisions.* A grantee's and subgrantee's contracts must contain provisions in paragraph (i) of this section. SSA is permitted to require changes, remedies, changed conditions, access and records retention, suspension of work, and other clauses approved by the Office of Federal Procurement Policy.

(1) 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 (Contracts more than the simplified acquisition threshold).

(2) Termination for cause and for convenience by the grantee or subgrantee including the manner by which it will be effected and the basis for set-

tlement (All contracts in excess of \$10,000).

(3) Compliance with Executive Order 11246 of September 24, 1965 entitled "Equal Employment Opportunity," as amended by Executive Order 11375 of October 13, 1967 and as supplemented in Department of Labor regulations (41 CFR chapter 60) (All construction contracts awarded in excess of \$10,000 by grantees and their contractors or subgrantees).

(4) Compliance with the Copeland "Anti-Kickback" Act (18 U.S.C. 874) as supplemented in Department of Labor regulations (29 CFR part 3) (All contracts and subgrants for construction or repair).

(5) Compliance with the Davis-Bacon Act (40 U.S.C. 276a to 276a-7) as supplemented by Department of Labor regulations (29 CFR part 5). (Construction contracts in excess of \$2,000 awarded by grantees and subgrantees when required by Federal grant program legislation).

(6) Compliance with sections 103 and 107 of the Contract Work Hours and Safety Standards Act (40 U.S.C. 327-330) as supplemented by Department of Labor regulations (29 CFR part 5). (Construction contracts awarded by grantees and subgrantees in excess of \$2,000, and in excess of \$2,500 for other contracts which involve the employment of mechanics or laborers).

(7) Notice of SSA requirements and regulations pertaining to reporting.

(8) Notice of SSA requirements and regulations pertaining to patent rights with respect to any discovery or invention that arises or is developed in the course of or under such contract.

(9) SSA requirements and regulations pertaining to copyrights and rights in data.

(10) Access by the grantee, the subgrantee, SSA, the Comptroller General of the United States, or any of their duly authorized representatives 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.

(11) Retention of all required records for three years after grantees or subgrantees make final payments and all other pending matters are closed.

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(12) Compliance with all applicable standards, orders, or requirements issued under section 306 of the Clear Air Act (42 U.S.C. 1857(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) (Contracts, subcontracts, and subgrants of amounts in excess of \$100,000).

(13) 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. 94-163, 89 Stat. 871).

§ 437.37 Subgrants.

(a) *States.* States must follow state law and procedures when awarding and administering subgrants (whether on a cost reimbursement or fixed amount basis) of financial assistance to local and Indian tribal governments. States must:

(1) Ensure that every subgrant includes any clauses required by Federal statute and executive orders and their implementing regulations;

(2) Ensure that subgrantees are aware of requirements imposed upon them by Federal statute and regulation;

(3) Ensure that a provision for compliance with § 437.42 is placed in every cost reimbursement subgrant; and

(4) Conform any advances of grant funds to subgrantees substantially to the same standards of timing and amount that apply to cash advances by SSA.

(b) *All other grantees.* All other grantees must follow the provisions of this part which are applicable to awarding agencies when awarding and administering subgrants (whether on a cost reimbursement or fixed amount basis) of financial assistance to local and Indian tribal governments. Grantees must:

(1) Ensure that every subgrant includes a provision for compliance with this part;

(2) Ensure that every subgrant includes any clauses required by Federal statute and executive orders and their implementing regulations; and

(3) Ensure that subgrantees are aware of requirements imposed upon

them by Federal statutes and regulations.

(c) *Exceptions.* By their own terms, certain provisions of this part do not apply to the award and administration of subgrants:

(1) Section 437.10;

(2) Section 437.11;

(3) The letter-of-credit procedures specified in Treasury Regulations at 31 CFR part 205, cited in § 437.21; and

(4) Section 437.50.

REPORTS, RECORDS, RETENTION, AND ENFORCEMENT

§ 437.40 Monitoring and reporting program performance.

(a) *Monitoring by grantees.* Grantees are responsible for managing the day-to-day operations of grant and subgrant supported activities. Grantees must monitor grant and subgrant supported activities to assure compliance with applicable Federal requirements and that performance goals are being achieved. Grantee monitoring must cover each program, function or activity.

(b) *Nonconstruction performance reports.* SSA may, if it decides that performance information available from subsequent applications contains sufficient information to meet its programmatic needs, require the grantee to submit a performance report only upon expiration or termination of grant support. Unless waived by SSA, this report is due on the same date as the final Financial Status Report.

(1) Grantees must submit annual performance reports unless SSA requires quarterly or semi-annual reports. However, performance reports are not required more frequently than quarterly. Annual reports are due 90 days after the grant year, quarterly or semi-annual reports are due 30 days after the reporting period. The final performance report is due 90 days after the expiration or termination of grant support. If a justified request is submitted by a grantee, SSA may extend the due date for any performance report. Additionally, requirements for unnecessary performance reports may be waived by SSA.