

the scope of programs, functions, services, or activities covered under section 102(a)(1) of the Act because the proposal includes activities that cannot lawfully be carried out by the contractor.

**§ 900.23 Can the Secretary decline a proposal where the Secretary's objection can be overcome through the contract?**

No. The Secretary may not decline to enter into a contract with an Indian tribe or tribal organization based on any objection that will be overcome through the contract.

**§ 900.24 Can a contract proposal for an Indian tribe or tribal organization's share of administrative programs, functions, services, and activities be declined for any reason other than the five reasons specified in § 900.22?**

No. The Secretary may only decline a proposal based upon one or more of the five reasons listed above. If a contract affects the preexisting level of services to any other tribe, the Secretary shall address that effect in the Secretary's annual report to Congress under section 106(c)(6) of the Act.

**§ 900.25 What if only a portion of a proposal raises one of the five declination criteria?**

The Secretary must approve any severable portion of a proposal that does not support a declination finding described in § 900.20, subject to any alteration in the scope of the proposal that the Secretary and the Indian tribe or tribal organization approve.

**§ 900.26 What happens if the Secretary declines a part of a proposal on the ground that the proposal proposes in part to plan, conduct, or administer a program, function, service or activity that is beyond the scope of programs covered under section 102(a) of the Act, or proposes a level of funding that is in excess of the applicable level determined under section 106(a) of the Act?**

In those situations the Secretary is required, as appropriate, to approve the portion of the program, function, service, or activity that is authorized under section 102(a) of the Act, or approve a level of funding that is author-

ized under section 106(a) of the Act. As noted in § 900.25, the approval is subject to any alteration in the scope of the proposal that the Secretary and the Indian tribe or tribal organization approve.

**§ 900.27 If an Indian tribe or tribal organization elects to contract for a severable portion of a proposal, does the Indian tribe or tribal organization lose its appeal rights to challenge the portion of the proposal that was declined?**

No, but the hearing and appeal procedures contained in these regulations only apply to the portion of the proposal that was declined.

**§ 900.28 Is technical assistance available to an Indian tribe or tribal organization to avoid declination of a proposal?**

Yes. In accordance with section 103(d) of the Act, upon receiving a proposal, the Secretary shall provide any necessary requested technical assistance to an Indian tribe or tribal organization, and shall share all relevant information with the Indian tribe or tribal organization, in order to avoid declination of the proposal.

**§ 900.29 What is the Secretary required to do if the Secretary decides to decline all or a portion of a proposal?**

If the Secretary decides to decline all or a severable portion of a proposal, the Secretary is required:

(a) To advise the Indian tribe or tribal organization in writing of the Secretary's objections, including a specific finding that clearly demonstrates that (or that is supported by a controlling legal authority that) one of the conditions set forth in § 900.22 exists, together with a detailed explanation of the reason for the decision to decline the proposal and, within 20 days, any documents relied on in making the decision; and

(b) To advise the Indian tribe or tribal organization in writing of the rights described in § 900.31.