

§ 21.8

4 CFR Ch. I (1–1–04 Edition)

disclosure of protected information at the hearing, GAO's hearing official may restrict attendance during all or part of the proceeding.

(e) Hearings shall normally be recorded and/or transcribed. If a recording and/or transcript is made, any party may obtain copies at its own expense.

(f) If a witness whose attendance has been requested by GAO fails to attend the hearing or fails to answer a relevant question, GAO may draw an inference unfavorable to the party for whom the witness would have testified.

(g) If a hearing is held, each party shall file comments with GAO within 5 days after the hearing was held or as specified by GAO. If the protester has not filed comments by the due date, GAO shall dismiss the protest.

(h) In post-hearing comments, the parties should reference all testimony and admissions in the hearing record that they consider relevant, providing specific citations to the testimony and admissions referenced.

[61 FR 39042, July 26, 1996, as amended at 67 FR 79836, Dec. 31, 2002]

§ 21.8 Remedies.

(a) If GAO determines that a solicitation, cancellation of a solicitation, termination of a contract, proposed award, or award does not comply with statute or regulation, it shall recommend that the contracting agency implement any combination of the following remedies:

- (1) Refrain from exercising options under the contract;
- (2) Terminate the contract;
- (3) Recompete the contract;
- (4) Issue a new solicitation;
- (5) Award a contract consistent with statute and regulation; or

(6) Such other recommendation(s) as GAO determines necessary to promote compliance.

(b) In determining the appropriate recommendation(s), GAO shall, except as specified in paragraph (c) of this section, consider all circumstances surrounding the procurement or proposed procurement including the seriousness of the procurement deficiency, the degree of prejudice to other parties or to the integrity of the competitive procurement system, the good faith of the

parties, the extent of performance, the cost to the government, the urgency of the procurement, and the impact of the recommendation(s) on the contracting agency's mission.

(c) If the head of the procuring activity determines that performance of the contract notwithstanding a pending protest is in the government's best interest, GAO shall make its recommendation(s) under paragraph (a) of this section without regard to any cost or disruption from terminating, recompeting, or reawarding the contract.

(d) If GAO determines that a solicitation, proposed award, or award does not comply with statute or regulation, it may recommend that the contracting agency pay the protester the costs of:

(1) Filing and pursuing the protest, including attorneys' fees and consultant and expert witness fees; and

(2) Bid and proposal preparation.

(e) If the contracting agency decides to take corrective action in response to a protest, GAO may recommend that the agency pay the protester the reasonable costs of filing and pursuing the protest, including attorneys' fees and consultant and expert witness fees. The protester shall file any request that GAO recommend that costs be paid within 15 days of the date on which the protester learned (or should have learned, if that is earlier) that GAO had closed the protest based on the agency's decision to take corrective action. The protester shall furnish a copy of its request to the contracting agency, which may file a response within 15 days after receipt of the request, with a copy furnished to the protester.

(f)(1) If GAO recommends that the contracting agency pay the protester the costs of filing and pursuing the protest and/or of bid or proposal preparation, the protester and the agency shall attempt to reach agreement on the amount of costs. The protester shall file its claim for costs, detailing and certifying the time expended and costs incurred, with the contracting agency within 60 days after receipt of GAO's recommendation that the agency pay the protester its costs. Failure to file the claim within that time may result in forfeiture of the protester's right to recover its costs.

General Accounting Office

§21.11

(2) The contracting agency shall issue a decision on the claim for costs as soon as practicable after the claim is filed. If the protester and the contracting agency cannot reach agreement within a reasonable time, GAO may, upon request of the protester, recommend the amount of costs the agency should pay in accordance with 31 U.S.C. 3554(c). In such cases, GAO may also recommend that the contracting agency pay the protester the costs of pursuing the claim for costs before GAO.

(3) The contracting agency shall notify GAO within 60 days after GAO recommends the amount of costs the agency should pay the protester of the action taken by the agency in response to the recommendation.

[61 FR 39042, July 26, 1996, as amended at 67 FR 79836, Dec. 31, 2002]

§21.9 Time for decision by GAO.

(a) GAO shall issue a decision on a protest within 100 days after it is filed.

(b) In protests where GAO uses the express option procedures in §21.10, GAO shall issue a decision on a protest within 65 days after it is filed.

(c) GAO, to the maximum extent practicable, shall resolve a timely supplemental protest adding one or more new grounds to an existing protest, or a timely amended protest, within the time limit established in paragraph (a) of this section for decision on the initial protest. If a supplemental or an amended protest cannot be resolved within that time limit, GAO may resolve the supplemental or amended protest using the express option procedures in §21.10.

§21.10 Express options, flexible alternative procedures, accelerated schedules, summary decisions, and status and other conferences.

(a) At the request of a party or on its own initiative, GAO may decide a protest using an express option.

(b) The express option will be adopted at the discretion of GAO and only in those cases suitable for resolution within 65 days.

(c) Requests for the express option shall be in writing and received in GAO not later than 5 days after the protest or supplemental/amended protest is

filed. GAO will promptly notify the parties whether the case will be handled using the express option.

(d) When the express option is used, the following schedule applies instead of those deadlines in §21.3 and §21.7:

(1) The contracting agency shall file a complete report with GAO and the parties within 20 days after it receives notice from GAO that the express option will be used.

(2) Comments on the agency report shall be filed with GAO and the other parties within 5 days after receipt of the report.

(3) Where circumstances demonstrate that a case is no longer suitable for resolution using the express option, GAO shall establish a new schedule for submissions by the parties.

(e) GAO, on its own initiative or upon request by the parties, may use flexible alternative procedures to promptly and fairly resolve a protest, including alternative dispute resolution, establishing an accelerated schedule, and/or issuing a summary decision.

(f) GAO may conduct status and other conferences by telephone or in person with all parties participating in a protest to promote the expeditious development and resolution of the protest.

[61 FR 39042, July 26, 1996, as amended at 67 FR 79836, Dec. 31, 2002]

§21.11 Effect of judicial proceedings.

(a) A protester must immediately advise GAO of any court proceeding which involves the subject matter of a pending protest and must file with GAO copies of all relevant court documents.

(b) GAO will dismiss any case where the matter involved is the subject of litigation before, or has been decided on the merits by, a court of competent jurisdiction. GAO may, at the request of a court, issue an advisory opinion on a bid protest issue that is before the court. In these cases, unless a different schedule is established, the times provided in this part for filing the agency report (§21.3(c)), filing comments on the report (§21.3(i)), holding a hearing