

## Rural Utilities Service, USDA

## § 1780.72

other factors to be used in evaluating bids or proposals.

(e) Affirmative steps should be taken to assure that small, minority, and women businesses are utilized when possible as sources of supplies, equipment, construction and services.

(f) *Contract pricing.* Cost plus a percentage of cost method of contracting shall not be used.

(g) *Unacceptable bidders.* The following will not be allowed to bid on, or negotiate for, a contract or sub-contract related to the construction of the project:

(1) An engineer as an individual or firm who has prepared plans and specifications or who will be responsible for monitoring the construction;

(2) Any firm or corporation in which the owner's engineer is an officer, employee, or holds or controls a substantial interest;

(3) The governing body's officers, employees, or agents;

(4) Any member of the immediate family or partners in the entities referred to in paragraphs (g)(1), (g)(2) or (g)(3) of this section; or

(5) An organization which employs, or is about to employ, any person in the entities referred to in paragraphs (g)(1), (g)(2), (g)(3) or (g)(4) of this section.

(h) *Contract award.* Contracts shall be made only with responsible parties possessing the potential ability to perform successfully under the terms and conditions of a proposed procurement. Consideration shall include but not be limited to matters such as integrity, record of past performance, financial and technical resources, and accessibility to other necessary resources. Contracts shall not be made with parties who are suspended or debarred by any Agency of the United States Government.

### § 1780.71 [Reserved]

### § 1780.72 Procurement methods.

Procurement shall be made by one of the following methods: Small purchase procedures; competitive sealed bids (formal advertising); competitive negotiation; or noncompetitive negotiation. Competitive sealed bids (formal adver-

tising) is the preferred procurement method for construction contracts.

(a) *Small purchase procedures.* 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 \$100,000. If small purchase procedures are used for a procurement, written price or rate quotations shall be requested from at least three qualified sources.

(b) *Competitive sealed bids.* In competitive sealed bids (formal advertising), an invitation for sealed bids is publicly advertised 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, price and other factors considered. When using this method the following shall apply:

(1) The invitation for bids shall be publicly advertised at a sufficient time prior to the date set for opening of bids. The invitation shall comply with the requirements in §1780.70(d). Bids shall be solicited from an adequate number of qualified sources;

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

(3) 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. When specified in the bidding documents, factors such as discounts and transportation costs shall be considered in determining which bid is lowest; and

(4) Any or all bids may be rejected by the owner when it is in its best interest.

(c) *Competitive negotiation.* In competitive negotiations, 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. Competitive negotiation may be used if conditions are not appropriate for the use of formal advertising and where discussions and bargaining with a view to reaching agreement on the technical quality, price, other terms of the proposed contract

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and specifications may be necessary. If competitive negotiation is used for a procurement, the following requirements shall apply:

(1) 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 Proposal shall be publicized and reasonable requests by other sources to compete shall be honored to the maximum extent practicable;

(2) The Request for Proposal shall identify all significant evaluation factors and their relative importance;

(3) The owner shall provide mechanisms for technical evaluation of the proposals received, determination of responsible offerors for the purpose of written or oral discussions, and selection for contract award; and

(4) Award may be made to the responsible offeror whose proposal will be most advantageous to the owner. Unsuccessful offerors should be promptly notified.

(d) *Noncompetitive negotiation.* 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 not feasible under small purchase or competitive sealed bids. Circumstances under which a contract may be awarded by noncompetitive negotiations are limited to the following:

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

(2) There exists a public exigency or emergency and the urgency for the requirement will not permit a delay incident to competitive solicitation; or

(3) After solicitation of a number of sources, competition is determined inadequate; or

(4) No acceptable bids have been received after formal advertising; or

(5) The procurement is for professional services; or

(6) The aggregate amount does not exceed \$100,000.

**7 CFR Ch. XVII (1-1-05 Edition)**

**§ 1780.73 [Reserved]**

**§ 1780.74 Contracts awarded prior to applications.**

Owners awarding construction or other procurement contracts prior to filing an application, must provide evidence that is satisfactory to the Agency that the contract was entered into without intent to circumvent the requirements of Agency regulations.

(a) *Modifications.* The contract shall be modified to conform with the provisions of this part. Where this is not possible, modifications will be made to the extent practicable and, as a minimum, the contract must comply with all State and local laws and regulations as well as statutory requirements and executive orders related to the Agency financing. When all construction is complete and it is impracticable to modify the contracts, the owner must provide the certification required by paragraph (c) of this section.

(b) *Consultant's certification.* Provide a certification by an engineer, licensed in the State where the facility is constructed, that any construction performed complies fully with the plans and specifications.

(c) *Owner's certification.* Provide a certification by the owner that the contractor has complied with applicable statutory and executive requirements related to Agency financing for construction already performed.

**§ 1780.75 Contract provisions.**

In addition to provisions required for a valid and legally binding contract, any recipient of Agency funds shall include the following contract provisions in all contracts.

(a) *Remedies.* 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. A realistic liquidated damage provision should be included in all contracts for construction.

(b) *Termination.* All contracts exceeding \$10,000, shall contain suitable provisions for termination by the owner including the manner by which it will be