



## CITY OF WATERTOWN, NEW YORK PROCUREMENT POLICY

### **PURPOSE:**

To ensure the prudent and economical use of the public money for the purchase of goods and services of maximum quality at the most economical cost, and to guard against favoritism, improvidence, extravagance, fraud, and corruption, the City of Watertown, N.Y. is adopting internal policies and procedures governing all procurements which are not required to be made pursuant to the competitive bidding requirements of General Municipal Law, Section 103, or of any other general, special or local law.

### **PURCHASING ETHICS:**

To maintain a high standard of conduct and to protect the reputation of the local government, the following rules of conduct will apply:

1. To consider first the interests of the local government and the betterment of its government.
2. To obtain the greatest value for every dollar spent.
3. To be receptive to advice and suggestions from department heads, insofar as such advice and suggestions are not in conflict with legal or moral restrictions in purchasing procedures.
4. To strive for knowledge of equipment and supplies in order to recommend items that may reduce cost and/or increase efficiency.
5. To insist on and expect honesty in sales representation whether offered verbally or in writing, through the advertising or in a sample of a product submitted.
6. To give all responsible bidders equal consideration and the assurance of unbiased judgment in determining whether their product meets specifications.
7. To discourage the offer of, and to decline, gifts which might influence the purchase of municipal equipment and supplies.
8. To accord a prompt and courteous reception, insofar as conditions permit, to all who call on legitimate business missions.
9. To counsel and assist other purchasing agents in the performance of their duties wherever occasion permits.
10. To cooperate with governmental and trade associations in the promotion and development of sound business methods in the purchasing of equipment and supplies.
11. To seek or dispense no personal favors. No official or employee shall be interested

financially or personally in any contract entered into by the City. All officials and employees shall comply with the City's Code of Ethics (Employee Handbook Section 300-9) to ensure there is no procurement conflict of interest.

## **COMPETITIVE BIDDING:**

- 1) Every purchase to be made must be initially reviewed by each department to determine whether it is a purchase contract or a public works contract. Once that determination is made, a good faith effort will be made to determine whether it is known or can be reasonably expected that the aggregate amount to be spent on the item of supply or service is not subject to competitive bidding, taking into account past purchases and the aggregate amount to be spent in a year. It is unlawful to artificially split or divide a contract or enter into a series of transactions, to avoid a competitive bidding threshold. The source of funds to be spent does not alter the requirements of competitive bidding i.e. Public Grants. No purchase can be made without the appropriate funding to support the purchase in place.

**The following items are not subject to competitive bidding pursuant to Section 103 of the General Municipal Law:** Purchase contracts under \$20,000. and public works contracts under \$35,000.; emergency purchases; goods purchased from agencies for the blind or severely handicapped; goods purchased from correctional institutions, purchases under State and County contracts; surplus and second-hand purchases from another governmental entity, and Sole Source purchases. Sole Source purchases are done when a product or service is available from one source only, the product/service is uniquely required in public interest, or if there is no substantial equivalent.

The decision that a purchase is not subject to competitive bidding will be documented in writing by the department making the purchase. This documentation may include written or verbal quotes from vendors, price lists, catalogs, a memo from the requisitioner indicating how the decision was arrived at, a copy of the contract indicating the source which makes the item or service exempt, a memo from the department detailing the circumstances which led to an emergency purchase, or any other written documentation that is appropriate.

- 2) All goods and services will be secured by use of written requests for proposals, written quotations, verbal quotations, or any other method that assures that goods will be purchased at the lowest price and that favoritism will be avoided, except in the following circumstances: purchase contracts over \$20,000 and public works contracts over \$35,000; goods purchased from agencies for the blind or severely handicapped pursuant to Section 175-b of the State Finance Law, goods purchased from correctional institutions pursuant to Section 186 of the Correction Law; purchases under State contracts pursuant to Section 104 of the General Municipal law; purchases under county Contracts pursuant to Section 103(3) of the General Municipal Law; or purchases pursuant to subdivision 6 of this policy.
- 3) All procurement and rental/lease of equipment, materials, supplies and nonpersonal services shall be requisitioned through the Purchasing Department, regardless of dollar amount, with the signed approval of the requisitioning department's supervisor prior to ordering. Use of departmental generated requisition numbers, in lieu of a City Purchasing Department purchase order number is prohibited.

- 4) The Purchasing Manager shall have the authority to accept, reject, or modify any request for purchase except for those items authorized by the City Council. The Purchasing Manager shall confirm all changes with the requisitioning department prior to taking any action. The requisitioning department has the right to appeal the Purchasing Manager's action to the City Manager for final ruling.
- 5) Purchasing Manager Tina Bartlett-Bearup shall be responsible for all procurement activities on behalf of the City of Watertown, N.Y. that are in accordance with the rules and guidelines as set forth in this policy.

The following method of purchase will be used when required by this policy in order to achieve the highest savings:

**Estimated Amount of Purchase**

\$ 1 - \$ 1,500  
 \$ 1,501 - \$ 5,000  
 \$ 5,001 - \$20,000  
 \$20,001 – over

**Method Required**

No quotations required  
 Two (2) written quotations required  
 Three (3) written quotations required  
 Sealed bid required

**Estimated Amount of  
Public Works Contract**

\$ 1 - \$ 2,500  
 \$2,501 - \$10,000  
 \$10,001 - \$25,000  
 \$25,001 - \$35,000  
 \$35,001 – over

**Method Required**

No quotation required  
 Two (2) written quotations required  
 Three (3) written quotations required  
 Four (4) written quotations required  
 Sealed bid required

**Estimated Amount of  
Rental/Lease Equipment**

\$1 - \$5,000  
 \$5,001 and above

**Method Required**

No quotation required  
 Two (2) written quotations required

A good faith effort shall be made to obtain the required number of proposals or quotations. If the department is unable to obtain the required number of proposals or quotations, the department will document the attempt made at obtaining the proposals. In no event shall the failure to obtain the proposals be a bar to the procurement. All documentation shall be maintained by the requisitioning department for review by the Purchasing Department.

- 1) Documentation is required of each action taken in connection with each purchase.
- 2) Documentation and written explanation is required whenever a contract is awarded to other than the lowest responsible bidder. This documentation will include an explanation of how the award will achieve savings or how the bidder was not responsible. A determination that the bidder is not responsible shall be made by the purchasing department and may not be challenged under any circumstances.
- 3) Pursuant to General Municipal Law Section 104-b(2)(f), the procurement policy may contain circumstances when, or types of procurements which, in the sole discretion of the governing body, the solicitation of alternative proposals or quotation will not be in the best interest of the municipality. In the following circumstances it may not be in the best interests of the City of Watertown, to solicit quotations or document the basis for not accepting the lowest bid:

- a. Professional services or services requiring special or technical skill, training, or expertise. The individual or company must be taken based on accountability, reliability, responsibility, skill, education and training, judgment, integrity, and moral worth. The qualifications are not necessarily found in the individual or company that offers the lowest price and the nature of these services are such that they do not readily lend themselves to competitive procurement procedures.
  - i. In determining whether a service fits into this category the City shall take into consideration the following guideline: (a) whether the services are subject to State licensing or testing requirements; (b) whether formal education or training is a necessary prerequisite to the performance of the services; and (c) whether the services require a personal relationship between the individual and municipal officials Professional or technical services shall include but not be limited to the following: services of an attorney; services of a physician; technical services of an engineer engaged to prepare plans, maps and estimates; securing insurance coverage and/ or services of an insurance broker; services of a certified public accountant; investment management services; services of an actuary; printing services involving extensive writing, editing or art work; management of a municipally owned property; and computer software or programming services for customized programs, or services involved in substantial modification and customizing of pre-packaged software.
- b. Emergency purchases pursuant to Section 103(4) of the General Municipal Law. Due to the nature of this exception, these goods or services must be purchased immediately and a delay in order to seek alternate proposals may threaten the life, health, safety or welfare of the residents. This section does not preclude alternate proposals if time permits.
- c. Sole source purchases are appropriate when it is clearly determined that there is only one vendor capable of providing a particular material or service. Justification for sole source purchases include purchase order is made to the original manufacturer or provider; there are no regional distributors, or parts/equipment are not interchangeable with similar parts of another manufacturer, or it is the only know item that will meet the specialized needs of the department or perform the intended function; purchases required by contractual obligations; or standardization approved by City Council. Sole source documentation must be attached to the requisition.
- d. Control involves not only compliance with required purchasing policy, but also affect the paperwork necessary. There are certain expenditures for which the processing of a purchase order may be unnecessary. The following expenses may be approved without purchase orders (*unless being paid for using the City's credit card*):
  - 1. Employee Expenses
  - 2. Legal Notices
  - 3. Postage
  - 4. Medical Examinations & Fees
  - 5. Intergovernmental Charges

6. Other expenses determined by the City Manager, City Comptroller, and Purchasing Director on an individual basis.
  - e. Goods and services under \$1,500. The time and documentation required to purchase through this policy may be more costly than the item itself and would therefore not be in the best interest of the taxpayer. In addition, it is not likely that such minimal contracts would be based on favoritism.
- 4) Positive efforts shall be made by the City to use small, minority owned and women-owned businesses as sources for supplies and services. Such efforts should include developing a bidder's mailing list for these sources and encouraging these businesses to compete for contracts to be awarded.
- 5) General Municipal Law 103(16) allows procurement of certain goods (including apparatus, materials, equipment, and supplies) and services through contracts let by the United States or any agency thereof, any state or any other political subdivisions or district therein, if such contract was let in a manner consistent with competitive bidding, and has been made available for use by other governmental agencies. The City shall take advantage of such contracts when doing so ensures that the City is buying goods at the lowest price. In addition, the City of Watertown will allow other municipalities within New York State to "piggyback" on the contracts of the City of Watertown in accordance with GML 103.
- 6) Pursuant to Subsection 1-b of Section 103 of the GML, the City shall have the option of purchasing information technology and telecommunications hardware, software, and professional services through cooperative purchasing permissible pursuant to Federal General Services Administration Information Schedule 70 and any successor schedule, provided the City complies with federal schedule ordering procedures as provided in the applicable federal acquisition regulation(s).
- 7) Purchases may be made through available state contracts of the NYS Office of General Services, GSA, or in accordance with Sub.3 of GML 103 which allows the purchase of materials, equipment or supplies, or the contract for services, other than services subject to Article 9 of the Labor Law, through any municipality with New York State, whenever such purchases are in the best interest of the City, as follows:
  - a. In lieu of obtaining quotations or issuing formal bids for the purchase of commodities or service not subject to Article 9 of the New York State Labor Law, the Purchasing Manager is authorized to make such purchases using established national and regional cooperative contracts.
  - b. Purchases of surplus and second-hand goods from any source. If alternate proposals are required, the City is precluded from purchasing surplus and second-hand goods at auctions or through specific advertised sources where the best prices are usually obtained. It is also difficult to try to compare prices of used goods and a lower price may indicate an older product.
  - c. Although a department may request a purchase be made using a particular contract source, the decision as to the appropriate contract source to be used will be that of the Purchasing Manager, in consultation with the City Manager and Attorney. Detailed and appropriate documentation of the reason(s) for the determination shall be retained by the Purchasing Department.

- 8) Unintentional failure to fully comply with the provisions of Section 104-b or the governing boards policies and procedures shall not be grounds to void action taken or give rise to a cause of action against the political subdivision or district or any officer or employee thereof.
- 9) This policy shall go into effect upon approval by the City Council and will be reviewed annually by staff to determine if updates or changes should be made.

### **RETURN OF GOODS:**

Whenever the City receives a parcel that is either a duplicate shipment or an item that is to be returned for credit, the City (the department holding the goods) should request from the vendor a "Return Goods Authorization Number" or a letter of authorization to return the goods. This provides the City with the appropriate documentation to obtain the proper credit as well as to inform the vendor of the nature of its return. If no authorization is required then a letter should accompany the shipment advising the vendor as to why it is being returned with the follow information: City Purchase Order #, vendor invoice number, and or name of contact at vendor's facility authorizing the return.

### **PURCHASE REQUISITION:**

A purchase requisition is a request to the purchasing department for the purchase of goods or services. These requests are submitted in written and/or electronic format. ***All requisitions shall be authorized by the department head prior to submission to the purchasing department*** in order to maintain internal control. In the absence of the Department head, a listing of authorized to approve requisitions on their behalf shall be submitted to the Purchasing Department annually.

Each requisition shall include a brief description of the product or service being ordered, and the appropriate product or part number.

### **PURCHASE ORDER:**

A purchase order is an official document that binds the City to procure goods or services as specified on the document. Purchase orders must provide sufficient description of the product being ordered or service to be performed. It should detail order quantity, item description, part number (if available), unit cost, and departmental charge code to ensure billing to the correct department's general ledger.

**Blanket Purchase Order** – This is a single purchase order that is issued to cover a specified period of time for repetitive purchases of the same goods or redundant services to be utilized. If a blanket purchase order is to be issued, indicate such on the requisition by typing "BLANKET ORDER".

### **REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP):**

A Request for Proposal (RFP) is a competitive procurement with an award based on price and other criteria which may include negotiation. An RFP is not an alternative to competitive bidding, except when expressly authorized by the State Legislature. An RFP may be used if procurement is within exception to competitive bidding and permitted under the City's procurement policies. They are most commonly used for professional service, true leases and licenses/concessions. Procedures include:

1. Establishment of evaluation criteria (i.e. price; experience; creditworthiness; approach to performance; staff availability; ability to perform; and time estimates).
2. Comprehensive, fair solicitation process.
3. Fair and equitable negotiation process.
4. Fair review/evaluation or rating process.

### **CREDIT CARD USE:**

The use of the City's credit card shall be limited to travel expenses, tuitions, educational expenses, professional memberships, subscriptions, and **limited purchases whereas a purchase order is not accepted**. Use of the credit card for all other expenses is prohibited, except with the expressed written approval of the City Manager.

### **PROTEST PROCEDURE:**

A protest concerning the specifications, or the bid procedure must be made in writing. This written protest must be received by the Purchasing Manager, City of Watertown, 245 Washington Street, Room 205, Watertown, New York 13601, no later than 72 hours prior to bid opening. If a protest is received that cannot be resolved by the designated time for bid opening, the City of Watertown Purchasing Department will delay the bid opening until the protest is resolved. The City's decision in connection with the protest will be issued in writing no more than 30 days from the date that the written protest was received.

If protest is made in connection with issues other than specifications or bid procedure, or in connection with an issue concerning bid procedure which only becomes evident after the bid opening, the protest must be in writing and received by the City of Watertown Purchasing Department no later than 10 working days after notification to all bidders of the contract award. The City will issue its written decision no more than 30 working days from the date the written protest was received.

Any protest to the effect that the City of Watertown Purchasing Department has not followed these protest procedures must be made in writing no later than 10 working days after the alleged infraction. The City will issue its written decision within 30 working days of its receipt of such a protest.

Any questions concerning these protest procedures shall be directed to the City's Purchasing Manager.

## **Federal Addenda/Federally Funded Procurement Supplemental Guidelines**

In addition to the City's Purchasing Policies and Procedures, the following guidelines shall apply to all procurements utilizing funds from the Federal Government including the Federal Transit Administration in conformance with applicable Federal law including Title 49 CFR Part 18, Section 18.36 and Circular 4220.1F.

### **A. Written Record of Procurement History**

1. The Purchasing Department shall maintain records detailing the history of each FTA associated procurement.
2. These records are placed in a procurement master file and include:
  - a. Purchase request with:
    - i. Independent Cost Estimate
    - ii. Project Justification
    - iii. Descriptions of work/scopes of services
    - iv. Acquisition planning information
    - v. Other pre-solicitation documents
    - vi. Purchase Requisition indicating availability of funding
  - b. The rationale for the method of procurement:
    - i. Full and open competition under IFB (one or two step)
    - ii. RFP
    - iii. Small or micro purchases
    - iv. Sole negotiations
  - c. List of sources solicited
  - d. Copies of published noticed of proposed contract action
  - e. Copies of the solicitation, all addenda and all amendments
  - f. Selection of contract type
    - i. Firm fixed price
    - ii. Cost reimbursement
    - iii. Incentive
    - iv. Multi-year
    - v. Time and materials
    - vi. Labor Hour
    - vii. Task Order
    - viii. Basic Ordering agreement
  - g. Reasons for contractor selection or rejection:
    - i. An abstract of each offer or rejection
    - ii. Source Selection documentation if applicable
    - iii. Contracting Officer's determination of contractor responsiveness and responsibility
  - h. The basis for the contract price

- i. Cost or price data
  - ii. Determination that price is fair and reasonable including a tabulation and evaluation of the cost and price data.
  - iii. Extent of competition
- i. Required internal approvals for award
- j. Liquidated damages:
  - i. The assessment for damages shall be at a specific rate per day for each day of overrun in contract time
  - ii. The rate must be specified in the solicitation and contract documents.
  - iii. Any liquidated damages recovered shall be credited to the project account involved unless FTA permits otherwise.
- k. Contractor's certifications and representations if applicable
- l. Notice of Award
- m. Record of any protest
- n. Piggybacking Checklist (Best Practices Procurement Manual – Appendix B.16 Piggybacking Worksheet) and all related documents, if applicable.
- o. Third party FTA Requirements Checklist and all related documents- including Buy America and Disadvantaged Business Enterprises
- p. Bond and Insurance documents
- q. Executed contract, all signed amendments and notice of award
- r. Options included in contract- An option may not be exercised unless the town has determined that the option price is better than prices available in the market or that an option is the more advantageous offer at the time the options is exercised.
- s. Post-award correspondence with contractor
- t. Notice to proceed
- u. Approvals or disapprovals of contract deliveries
- v. Requests for waivers or deviations and the associated responses
- w. Documentation of settlement of claims and disputes
- x. Documentation regarding stop work or suspension of work orders
- y. Approvals or disapprovals of waivers and deviations
- z. Contract closeout documentation

#### B. Debarment

The Purchasing Department shall document to the best of its knowledge and belief that none of its FTA assisted purchases involve contractors debarred, suspended, ineligible, or voluntarily excluded from participation in federally assisted transactions or procurements as indicated on the epls.gov website.

#### C. Geographic Preferences

The Purchasing Department shall conduct procurements in a manner that prohibits the use of statutory 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. This does not preempt State licensing laws. However, geographic location may be a selection criterion in procurements for architectural and engineering (A&E) services, provided its application leaves an appropriate number of qualified firms, given the nature and size of the project, to compete for the contract.

D. Procurement.

All purchases of goods and services shall be made in accordance with the requirements of FTA Circular 4220.1F and in accordance with General Municipal Law and the City's Purchasing Policy.

E. Protest Procedures

Filing of Protests: All Protests must be filed and resolved in a manner consistent with the requirements of FTACircular 4220.1F Third Party Contracting Guidelines must be clearly stated in the bid documents.

Attachments:

Best Practices Procurement Manual – Appendix B.16 Piggybacking Worksheet, Title 49 CFR Part 18, Section 18.36  
NYSDOT Checklist of Required Federal Clauses, Certifications & Other Recommended Federal & Contract Requirements  
Link to FTA Circular 4220.1F: [http://www.fta.dot.gov/laws/circulars/leg\\_reg\\_8641.html](http://www.fta.dot.gov/laws/circulars/leg_reg_8641.html)

END OF POLICY

## PIGGYBACKING WORKSHEET

Definition: *Piggybacking is the post-award use of a contractual document/process that allows someone who was not contemplated in the original procurement to purchase the same supplies/equipment through that original document/process.* ("FTA Dear Colleague" letter, October 1, 1998).

**In order to assist in the performance of your review, to determine if a situation exists where you may be able to participate in the piggybacking (assignment) of an existing agreement, the following considerations are provided. Ensure that your final file includes documentation substantiating your determination.**

WORKSHEET		YES	NO
1.	Have you obtained a copy of the contract and the solicitation document, including the specifications and any Buy America Pre-award or Post- Delivery audits?		
2.	Does the solicitation and contract contain an express "assignability" clause that provides for the assignment of all or part of the specified deliverables?		
3.	Did the Contractor submit the "certifications" required by Federal regulations? See BPPM Section 4.3.3.2.		
4.	Does the contract contain the clauses required by Federal regulations? See BPPM Appendix A1.		
5.	Were the piggybacking quantities included in the original solicitation; i.e., were they in the original bid and were they evaluated as part of the contract award decision?		
6.	If this is an indefinite quantity contract, did the original solicitation and resultant contract contain both a minimum and maximum quantity, and did these represent the reasonably foreseeable needs of the parties to the contract?		
7.	If this piggybacking action represents the exercise of an option in the contract, is the option provision still valid or has it expired?		
8.	Does your State law allow for the procedures used by the original contracting agency: e.g., negotiations vs. sealed bids?		
9.	Was a cost or price analysis performed by the original contracting agency documenting the reasonableness of the price? Obtain a copy for your files.		
10.	If the contract is for rolling stock or replacement parts, does the contract term comply with the five-year term limit established by FTA? See FTA Circular 4220.1F, Chapter IV, 2 (14) (i).		
11.	Was there a proper evaluation of the bids or proposals? Include a copy of the analysis in your files.		
12.	If you will require changes to the vehicles (deliverables), are they "within the scope" of the contract or are they "cardinal changes"? See BPPM Section 9.2.1.		

**Note:** This worksheet is based upon the policies and guidance expressed in (a) the FTA Administrator's "Dear Colleague" letter of October 1, 1998, (b) the *Best Practices Procurement Manual*, Section 6.3.3—*Joint Procurements of Rolling Stock and "Piggybacking,"* and (c) FTA Circular 4220.1F.

**Title 49 CFR Part 18, Section 18.36**

(a) States. When procuring property and services under a grant, a State will follow the same policies and procedures it uses for procurements from its non-Federal funds. The State will 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 will follow paragraphs (b) through (i) in this section.

(b) Procurement standards.

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

(3) Grantees and subgrantees will 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 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:

(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 of the above, has a financial or other interest in the firm selected for award. The grantee's or subgrantee's officers, employees or agents will 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 will 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. The awarding agency may in regulation provide additional prohibitions relative to real, apparent, or potential conflicts of interest.

(4) Grantee and subgrantee procedures will 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 will 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 will 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 will maintain records sufficient to detail the significant history of a procurement. These records will 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 will use time and material 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. Federal agencies will not substitute their 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 will have protest procedures to handle and resolve disputes relating to their procurements and shall in all instances disclose information regarding the protest to the awarding agency. A protestor must exhaust all administrative remedies with the grantee and subgrantee before pursuing a protest with the Federal agency. Reviews of protests by the Federal agency will be 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 the Federal agency other than those specified above will be referred to the grantee or subgrantee.

(c) Competition.

(1) All procurement transactions will be conducted in a manner providing full and open competition consistent with the standards of Sec. 18.36. 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 will 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 will have written selection procedures for procurement transactions. These procedures will 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 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) Identify all requirements which the offerors must fulfill and all other factors to be used in evaluating bids or proposals.

(4) Grantees and subgrantees will ensure that all pre-qualified 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 will 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). If small purchase procedures are used, price or rate quotations shall 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 Sec. 18.36(d)(2)(i) 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 will be publicly advertised and bids shall 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, shall define the items or services in order for the bidder to properly respond;

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

(D) A firm fixed-price contract award will 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 shall 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 will be publicized and identify all evaluation factors and their relative importance. Any response to publicized requests for proposals shall be honored to the maximum extent practical;

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

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

(iv) Awards will 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 infeasible 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) The awarding agency 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 the awarding agency 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 will 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 shall 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 to submit the elements of his estimated cost, e.g., under professional, consulting, and architectural engineering services contracts. A cost analysis will be 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 will be used in all other instances to determine the reasonableness of the proposed contract price.

(2) Grantees and subgrantees will 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 will 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 will be allowable only to the extent that costs incurred or cost estimates included in negotiated prices are consistent with Federal cost principles (see Sec. 18.22). 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 shall not be used.

(g) Awarding agency review. (1) Grantees and subgrantees must make available, upon request of the awarding agency, technical specifications on proposed procurements where the awarding agency believes such review is needed to ensure that the item and/or service specified is the one being proposed for purchase. This review generally will 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, the awarding agency 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 awarding agency 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 will be exempt from the pre-award review in paragraph (g)(2) of this section if the awarding agency 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 the awarding agency to determine whether its system meets these standards in order for its system to be certified. Generally, these reviews shall 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 shall not limit the awarding agency's right to survey the system. Under a self-certification procedure, awarding agencies may wish to rely on written assurances from the grantee or subgrantee that it is complying with these standards. A grantee or subgrantee will 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, the awarding agency may accept the bonding policy and requirements of the grantee or subgrantee provided the awarding agency has made a determination that the awarding agency's interest is adequately protected. If such a determination has not been made, the minimum requirements shall be as follows:

(1) A bid guarantee from each bidder equivalent to five percent of the bid price. The "bid guarantee" shall 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. Federal agencies are 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 settlement. (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 \$2000 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 \$2000, and in excess of \$2500 for other contracts which involve the employment of mechanics or laborers)

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

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

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

(10) Access by the grantee, the subgrantee, the Federal grantor agency, 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.

(12) Compliance with all applicable standards, orders, or requirements issued under section 306 of the Clean 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).

(j) 23 U.S.C. 112(a) directs the Secretary to require recipients of highway construction grants to use bidding methods that are "effective in securing competition." Detailed construction contracting procedures are contained in 23 CFR part 635, subpart A.

(k) Section 3(a)(2)(C) of the UMT Act of 1964, as amended, prohibits the use of grant or loan funds to support procurement utilizing exclusionary or discriminatory specifications.

(l) 46 U.S.C. 1241(b)(1) and 46 CFR part 381 impose cargo preference requirements on the shipment of foreign made goods.

(m) Section 165 of the Surface Transportation Assistance Act of 1982, 49 U.S.C. 1601, section 337 of the Surface Transportation and Uniform Relocation Assistance Act of 1987, and 49 CFR parts 660 and 661 impose Buy America provisions on the procurement of foreign products and materials.

(n) Section 105(f) of the Surface Transportation Assistance Act of 1982, section 106(c) of the Surface Transportation and Uniform Relocation Assistance Act of 1987, and 49 CFR part 23 impose requirements for the participation of disadvantaged business enterprises.

(o) Section 308 of the Surface Transportation Assistance Act of 1982, 49 U.S.C. 1068(b)(2), authorizes the use of competitive negotiation for the purchase of rolling stock as appropriate.

(p) 23 U.S.C. 112(b) provides for an exemption to competitive bidding requirements for highway construction contracts in emergency situations.

(q) 23 U.S.C. 112 requires concurrence by the Secretary before highway construction contracts can be awarded, except for projects authorized under the provisions of 23 U.S.C. 171.

(r) 23 U.S.C. 112(e) requires standardized contract clauses concerning site conditions, suspension or work, and material changes in the scope of the work for highway construction contracts.

(s) 23 U.S.C. 140(b) authorizes the preferential employment of Indians on Indian Reservation road projects and contracts.

(t) FHWA, UMTA, and Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) grantees and subgrantees shall extend the use of qualifications-based (e.g., architectural and engineering services) contract selection procedures to certain other related areas and shall award such contracts in the same manner as Federal contracts for architectural and engineering services are negotiated under Title IX of the Federal Property and Administrative Services Act of 1949, or equivalent State (or airport sponsor for FAA) qualifications-based requirements.

For FHWA and UMTA programs, this provision applies except to the extent that a State adopts or has adopted by statute a formal procedure for the procurement of such services.

[53 FR 8086 and 8087, Mar. 11, 1988, as amended at 53 FR 8087, Mar. 11, 1988; 60 FR 19639, 19647, Apr. 19, 1995]

