

Protest Procedures

A. Right to Protest

(i) Any actual Proposer who claims to be aggrieved in connection with a specific solicitation process may submit a protest in writing to the Chief Procurement Officer within seven (7) calendar days after he or she knows or should have known the facts giving rise to the protest.

All Proposers should know and shall be deemed responsible for knowing the facts documented in the Institution's procurement files on the day the Institution opens the bid files for public inspection.

Any issues raised by the protesting party after the seven (7) calendar day period shall not be considered as part of the protest.

(ii) *Signature on Protest Constitutes Certificate.* The signature of an attorney or protesting party on a request for consideration, protest, motion, or other document constitutes a certificate by the signer that the signer has read such document, that to the best of the signer's knowledge, information, and belief formed after reasonable inquiry, it is well grounded in fact and is warranted by existing law or a good faith argument for the extension, modification, or reversal of existing law, and that it is not interposed for any improper purpose, such as to harass, limit competition, or to cause unnecessary delay, or needless increase in the cost of the procurement or of the litigation. If a request for consideration, protest, pleading, motion, or other document is signed in violation of this subsection before or after appeal to the Chancellor, the Chancellor upon motion or upon his/her own initiative, may impose upon the person who signed it, a represented party, or both, an appropriate sanction, which may include an order to pay to the other party or parties, including the affected Institution, the amount of the reasonable expenses incurred because of the filing of the protest, a petition for a stay of award, pleading, motion, or other paper, including reasonable attorneys' fees.

(iii) Neither a protest nor a stay of award shall proceed under this section unless the protesting party posts a protest bond (See Attachment 6.11). The protesting party shall post, with the Chief Procurement Officer of the Institution, at the time of filing a notice of protest, a bond payable to the Institution in the amount of five percent (5%) of the lowest cost proposal evaluated or five percent (5%) of the highest revenue proposal evaluated. Such protest bond shall be in form and substance acceptable to the Institution and shall be immediately payable to the Institution conditioned upon a decision by the Chancellor that:

1. A request for consideration, protest, pleading, motion, or other document is signed, before or after appeal to the Chancellor, in violation of subsection A. (ii);
2. The protest has been brought or pursued in bad faith; or
3. The protest does not state on its face a valid basis for protest.

(iv) The Institution shall hold such protest bond for at least eleven (11) calendar days after the date of the final determination by the Institution. If the protesting party appeals the determination in accordance with subdivision B.(vii), the Institution shall hold such protest bond until instructed by the Chancellor to either keep the bond or return it to the protesting party.

(v) At the time of filing notice of a protest of a procurement in which the lowest evaluated cost proposal is less than one million dollars (\$1,000,000), or in which the highest evaluated revenue proposal is less than one hundred thousand dollars (\$100,000), a minority or small business protesting party may submit a written petition to the Chief Procurement Officer for exemption from the protest bond requirement of subsection A.(iii). Such a petition must include clear evidence of minority or small business status. On the day of receipt, the petition shall be given (may be faxed) to the Chancellor or designee. The Chancellor has five (5) business days in which to make a determination. If an exemption from the protest bond requirement is granted, the protest shall proceed as though the bond were posted. Should the Chancellor deny an exemption from the requirement, the protesting party shall post the bond with the Chief Procurement Officer

of the Institution as required in subsection A.(iii) within three (3) business days of the determination. For the purposes of this section, "minority business" is defined as solely owned or at least fifty-one percent (51%) owned by a person or persons who control the daily operation of such business and who is disabled (a person having a physical or mental impairment that in the written opinion of the person's licensed physician, substantially limits one (1) or more of the major life activities of such person, including caring for oneself, and performing manual tasks, which include writing, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, and breathing); African American (persons having origins in any of the Black racial groups of Africa); Asian American (persons having origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia and Asia, the subcontinent, or the Pacific Islands); Hispanic American (persons of Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, Central or South American, or other Spanish or Portuguese origin, culture, or descent, regardless of race,); or Native American (persons having origins in any of the original peoples of North America). For purposes of this section, "small business" is defined as one which is independently owned and operated, has total gross receipts of no more than two million dollars (\$2,000,000) for the most recently ended federal tax year, and employs no more than thirty (30) persons on a full-time basis.

B. Authority to Resolve Protest

(i) The Chief Procurement Officer of the Institution has the authority to resolve the protest. If deemed necessary, the Chief Procurement Officer may request a meeting with the protesting party to seek clarification of the protest issues.

(ii) The final determination of the Chief Procurement Officer shall be given in writing and submitted to the protesting party.

(iii) The protesting party may request that the final determination of the Chief Procurement Officer be considered by the Chief Business Officer of the Institution. The request for consideration shall be made in writing to the Chief Business Officer within seven (7) calendar days from the date of the final determination by the Chief Procurement Officer.

(iv) The Chief Business Officer has the authority to review and resolve the protest. If deemed necessary, the Chief Business Officer may request a meeting with the protesting party to seek clarification of the protest issues. The final determination of the Chief Business Officer shall be given in writing and submitted to the protesting party.

(v) The protesting party may request that the final determination of the Chief Business Officer be considered by the President or Director of the Institution. The request for consideration shall be made in writing to the President or Director within seven (7) calendar days from the date of the final determination by the Chief Business Officer.

(vi) The Institution shall have no longer than sixty (60) calendar days from receipt of the protest to resolve the protest.

(vii) The protesting party may request that the final determination of the President/Director be considered by the Chancellor. The request for consideration shall be made in writing to the Chancellor within seven (7) calendar days from the date of the final determination by the President/Director. The determination of the Chancellor or designee is final and shall be given in writing and submitted to the protestor.

(viii) In the event that the Institution fails to acknowledge receipt of a protest within fifteen (15) days of receipt of a protest or fails to resolve the protest within sixty (60) calendar days, the protesting party may request that the Chancellor consider the protest at a meeting.

C. Stay of Award

Prior to the award of a contract, a Proposer who has protested may submit to the Chief Business Officer a written petition for stay of award. Such stay shall become effective upon receipt by the Chief Business Officer. The Chief Procurement Officer shall not proceed further with the solicitation process or the award of the contract until the protest has been resolved in accordance with this section, unless the Chancellor makes a written determination that continuation of the solicitation process or the award of the contract without delay is necessary to protect substantial interests of the Institution. It shall be the responsibility of the Chief Business Officer to seek such determination by the Chancellor.

D. Protest Subsequent to Award

The Tennessee Claims Commission has exclusive jurisdiction to determine all monetary claims against the state for the negligent deprivation of statutory rights.

E. Protest Bond

A protest bond may be presented to the Institution in form and substance compliant with the Protest Bond format (Attachment A). Any protest bond presented to the Institution that represents a deviation from the attached format shall be considered for acceptability by the Institution on a case by case basis.

Protest Bond

The Surety Company issuing bond shall be licensed to transact business in the State of Tennessee by the Tennessee Department of Commerce and Insurance. The bond shall have certified and current Power-of Attorney for the Surety's Attorney-in-Fact attached.

KNOW ALL BY THESE PRESENTS:

That we,

(Name of Protestor)

(Address of Protestor)

as the Party filing a protest of the State of Tennessee's determination(s) regarding a Request for Proposal (RFP) process, hereinafter called the Protestor, and

(Name of Surety)

(Address of Surety)

as Surety, hereinafter call the Surety, do hereby acknowledge ourselves indebted and securely bound and held unto the State of Tennessee as Obligee, hereinafter called the Obligee, and in the penal sum of

\$

(Dollar Amount of Bond)

good and lawful money of the United States of America, for the use and benefit of those entitled thereto, for the payment of which, well and truly to be made, we bind ourselves, our heirs, our administrators, executors, successors, and assigns, jointly and severally, firmly by these presents.

BUT THE CONDITION OF THE FOREGOING OBLIGATION OR BOND IS THIS:

WHEREAS, the Obligee has issued a Request for Proposal bearing the RFP Number:

(RFP Number)

AND, the Protestor, as an actual proposer to the RFP, claims to be aggrieved in connection with said RFP process;

AND, the signature of an attorney or the Protestor on a request for consideration, protest, motion, or other document constitutes a certificate by the signer that the signer has read such document, that to the best of the signer's knowledge, information, and belief formed after reasonable inquiry, it is well grounded in fact and is warranted by existing law or a good faith argument for the extension, modification or reversal of existing law, and that it is not interposed for any improper purpose, such as to harass, limit competition, or to cause unnecessary delay or needless increase in the cost of the procurement or of the litigation;

AND, neither a protest nor a stay of award shall proceed under the laws of the State of Tennessee unless the Protestor posts a protest bond, the Protestor does file this protest bond payable to the Obligee with a notice of protest regarding the subject RFP process;

AND, the Obligee shall hold the protest bond for at least eleven (11) calendar days after the date of the final determination on the protest by the head of the affected agency;

AND, if the Protestor appeals the affected agency head's determination on the protest to the Chancellor, in accordance with subsection Tennessee Code Annotated, § 12-4-109(a)(1)(E)(vii), the head of the agency shall hold said protest bond until instructed by the Chancellor as to its disposition.

NOW, THEREFORE, this obligation or bond shall remain in full force and effect conditioned upon a decision by the Chancellor that:

A request for consideration, protest, pleading, motion, or other document is signed by an attorney or the Protestor, before or after appeal to the Chancellor, in violation of Tennessee Code Annotated, § 12-4-109(a)(1)(E)(ii);

the Protestor has brought or pursued the protest in bad faith; or

the Protestor's notice of protest does not state on its face a valid basis for protest.

In which case, this obligation or bond shall be immediately payable to the Obligee. Otherwise, this obligation or bond shall be null and void.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the Protestor has hereunto affixed its signature and Surety has hereunto caused to be affixed its corporate signature and seal, by its duly authorized officers,

On this _____ day of _____ in the year _____

WITNESS:

(Name of Protestor)

(Authorized Signature of Protestor)

(Name and Title of Signatory)

(Name of Surety)

(Signature of Attorney-in-Fact)

(Name of Attorney-in-Fact)

(Tennessee License Number of Surety)