

SECTION 5
PROTEST POLICY

A. Protest Policy Review Process

1. Under Board Policy No. 5.055 (Services Contract Solicitation Protest), any prospective Proposer may request a review of the requirements under a solicitation for a Board-approved services Contract, as described in paragraph C, Solicitation Requirements Review, below. Any Proposer may request a review of a disqualification or of a proposed Contract award under such a solicitation, as described respectively in Sections below. Additionally, any Proposer may obtain copies of Proposals and Public Works evaluation documents as provided in Part I, Section 3, paragraph H. Under any such review, it is the responsibility of the Proposer challenging the decision of Public Works to demonstrate that Public Works committed a sufficiently material error in the solicitation process to justify invalidation of a solicitation or a proposed Contract award as the case may be.
2. Throughout the review process, the County has no obligation to delay or otherwise postpone an award of Contract based on a Proposer protest. In all cases, the County reserves the right to make an award when it is determined to be in the best interest of the County of Los Angeles to do so.

B. Department Level Reviews

Unless State or Federal statutes or regulations otherwise provide, the level of review as provided under the protest policy are as follows:

- Solicitation Requirements
- Disqualification Review
- Proposed Contractor Selection Review

C. Solicitation Requirements Review

Any person or entity may seek a Solicitation Requirements Review by submitting a written request for review to Public Works conducting the solicitation as described in this paragraph. A Request for a Solicitation Requirements Review may be denied, in Public Works' sole discretion, if the request does not satisfy all of the following criteria:

1. The request is made within the time frame identified in the solicitation document (generally within ten business days of issuance of the solicitation document).

2. The request includes documentation (e.g., letterhead, business card, etc.), which identifies the underlying authority of the person or entity to submit a Proposal.
3. The request itemizes in appropriate detail, each matter contested, and factual reasons for the requested review.
4. The request asserts either that:
 - a. Application of the minimum requirements, evaluation criteria, and/or business requirements unfairly disadvantages the person or entity; or,
 - b. Due to unclear instructions, the process may result in the County not receiving the best possible responses from prospective Proposers.
5. Requests for a Disqualification Review not satisfying all of these criteria may, in the department's sole discretion, be denied.
6. The Solicitation Requirements Review will be completed and Public Works' determination shall be provided to the requesting person or entity, in writing, within a reasonable time prior to the bid/Proposal due date.

D. Place to Submit Requests for Review

All Requests for Review shall be submitted to the Contract Analyst.

E. Disqualification Review

1. A bid/Proposal may be disqualified from consideration because Public Works determined it was nonresponsive at any time during the review/evaluation process. If Public Works determines that a bid/Proposal is disqualified due to nonresponsiveness, Public Works shall notify the Proposer in writing.
2. Upon receipt of the written determination of nonresponsiveness, the Proposer may submit a Transmittal Form to Request a Disqualification Review within the timeframe specified in the disqualification document.
3. A request for a Disqualification Review may, in Public Works' sole discretion, be denied if the request does not satisfy all of the following criteria:
 - a. The request for a Disqualification Review is submitted within the timeframe specified in the disqualification review.
 - b. The request for a Disqualification Review asserts that the determination of disqualification due to bid/Proposal nonresponsiveness was erroneous (e.g., factual errors, etc.) and provides factual support on each ground asserted as well as

copies of all documents and other material that support the assertions.

4. The Disqualification Review shall be completed and the determination shall be provided to the requesting Proposer, in writing, prior to the conclusion of the evaluation process.

F. Debriefing Process

For solicitations where Proposals are evaluated and scored in accordance to Section 4, Evaluation of Proposals, the following provisions shall apply:

1. Upon completion of the evaluation, Public Works will notify the remaining Proposers in writing that Public Works is entering negotiations with another Proposer. Upon receipt of the letter, any nonselected Proposer may submit a written request for a Debriefing within the time frame specified in the letter. A request for a Debriefing may, in Public Works' sole discretion, be denied if the request is not received within the specified time frame.
2. The purpose of the Debriefing is to compare the requesting Proposer's response to the solicitation document with the evaluation document. The requesting Proposer shall be debriefed only on its response. Because Contract negotiations are not yet complete, responses from other Proposers shall not be discussed, although Public Works may inform the requesting Proposer of its relative ranking.
3. During or following the debriefing, Public Works will instruct the requesting Proposer of the manner and time frame in which the requesting Proposer must notify Public Works of its intent to request a Proposed Contractor Selection Review, below, if the requesting Proposer is not satisfied with the results of the Debriefing.

G. Proposed Contractor Selection Review Process

Any Proposer that has timely submitted a notice of its intent to request a Proposed Contractor Selection Review as described in paragraph F, above, may submit a written request for a Proposed Contractor Selection Review in the manner and time frame as specified by Public Works. For low-bid solicitations, where applicable, upon selection of the lowest-cost, responsive, and responsible bidder, Public Works will notify the remaining bidders in writing that Public Works is entering negotiations with another bidder. Public Works will instruct the remaining bidders of the manner and time frame in which each remaining bidder must notify Public Works of its intent to request a Proposed Contractor Selection Review, should such remaining bidder desire to have such a review performed.

A request for a Proposed Contractor Selection Review may, in Public Works' sole discretion, be denied if the request does not satisfy all of the following criteria:

1. The request for a Proposed Contractor Selection Review is submitted timely (i.e., by the date and time specified by Public Works).
2. The person or entity requesting a Proposed Contractor Selection Review asserts in appropriate detail with factual reasons one or more of the following grounds for review:
 - a. Public Works materially failed to follow procedures specified in its solicitation document. This includes:
 - i. Failure to correctly apply the standards for reviewing the Proposal format requirements.
 - ii. Failure to correctly apply the standards, and/or follow the prescribed methods, for evaluating the Proposals as specified in the solicitation document.
 - iii. Use of evaluation criteria that were different from the evaluation criteria disclosed in the solicitation document.
 - b. Public Works made identifiable mathematical or other errors in evaluating bids/Proposals, resulting in the Proposer receiving an incorrect score, and not being selected as the recommended Contractor.
 - c. For applicable solicitations where responses are evaluated and scored, a member of the Evaluation Committee demonstrated bias in the conduct of the evaluation.
 - d. Another basis for review as provided by State or Federal law.
3. The request for a Proposed Contractor Selection Review sets forth sufficient detail to demonstrate that, but for Public Works' alleged failure, the Proposer would have been the lowest-cost, responsive, and responsible bid or the highest-scored Proposal, as the case may be.

Upon completing the Proposed Contractor Selection Review, Public Works representative shall issue a written decision to the Proposer within a reasonable time following receipt of the request for a Proposed Contractor Selection Review, and always before the date the Contract award recommendation is to be heard by the Board. The written decision shall additionally instruct the Proposer of the manner and time frame for requesting a review by a County Independent Review, paragraph H, below.

H. County Independent Review

1. Any Proposer that is not satisfied with the results of the Proposed Contractor Selection Review may submit a written request for a County

Independent Review in the manner and time frame specified by Public Works in Public Works' written decision regarding the Proposed Contractor Selection Review.

2. A request for a County Independent Review may, in the County's sole discretion, be denied if the request does not satisfy all of the following criteria:
 - a. The request for a review by a County Independent Review is submitted timely (i.e., by the date and time specified by Public Works).
 - b. The person or entity requesting review by a County Independent Review has limited the request to items raised in the Proposed Contractor Selection Review as listed in paragraph G above.
3. Proposer that request a County Independent Review may not add new assertions or documentation to the assertions presented in their Proposed Contractor Selection Review. Proposers may remove assertions presented in their Proposed Contractor Selection Review if they feel that the department response has resolved their assertion.
4. Upon completion of the County Independent Review's, Internal Services Department will forward its report to Public Works, which will provide a copy to the Proposer.