

PROCUREMENT, CONTRACT AND GRANT ADMINISTRATION

7.1 PROCUREMENT POLICY

(a) ARTICLE I. GENERAL PROVISIONS

(1) Authority

(A) Judicial Branch Procurement Authority. As an independent branch of State Government, the Maryland Judiciary establishes a Procurement Policy under the authority of the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Maryland pursuant to the Maryland Constitution, Article IV, Section 18. This Policy does not supplant any constitutional or statutory rights possessed by the Judiciary.

(B) Delegated Authority.

- (i) The Chief Justice, or designee, shall approve all Judiciary Contracts with a total value exceeding \$2,000,000, including all renewal Options.
- (ii) The State Court Administrator (the SCA), or designee, is delegated approval authority for all Contracts with a total value exceeding \$1,000,000, but not exceeding \$2,000,000, including all renewal Options.
- (iii) The Assistant State Court Administrator-Operations (ASCA-O), or designee, is delegated approval authority for all Contracts with a total value exceeding \$200,000, but not exceeding \$1,000,000, including all renewal Options.
- (iv) The Director of Procurement, Contract and Grant Administration (the Director), or designee, is delegated approval authority for all Contracts with a total value of \$200,000 or less, including all renewal Options.
- (v) The Managing Legal Counsel, or designee, shall approve Contracts with a total value exceeding \$100,000 for legal form and sufficiency before the Contract may be executed.
- (vi) Approval Process for Contract Modifications
 - (I) The Director, or designee, shall approve all Contract Modifications.
 - (II) The ASCA-O, or designee, shall approve all Contract Modifications

where the total Contract value will exceed \$200,000, and shall approve all Contract Modifications for each additional \$200,000 increment. Contract Modifications that do not raise the Not-to-Exceed (NTE) value do not require ASCA-O approval, regardless of the Contract's current value.

(III) The SCA, or designee, shall approve all Contract Modifications where the total Contract value will exceed \$1,000,000, and shall approve all Contract Modifications for each additional \$1,000,000 increment. Contract Modifications that do not raise the NTE value do not require SCA approval, regardless of the Contract's current value.

(IV) The Chief Justice, or designee, shall approve all Contract Modifications where the total Contract value exceeds \$2,000,000, and shall approve all Contract Modifications for each additional \$2,000,000 increment. Contract Modifications that do not raise the NTE value do not require the Chief Justice's approval, regardless of the Contract's current value.

(V) The Managing Legal Counsel, or designee, shall approve all Contract Modifications for legal form and sufficiency before the Contract Modification may be executed.

(vii) Renewals: As long as the total amount of the Contract remains within the delegated dollar value ranges, including any modifications, the Procurement Officer, after obtaining all appropriate approvals, may exercise Contract renewals.

(viii) Sole Source Determinations: Determinations for Contract amounts up to \$100,000 must be approved by the Director or designee. Determinations for Contract amounts over \$100,000 require additional approval by the ASCA-O or designee.

(C) Cancellation and Rejection of Invitation for Bids (IFBs) and Requests for Proposals (RFPs). The Director, or designee, must approve the cancellation of a Solicitation or rejection of all Bids or Proposals.

(2) **Scope**

(A) **Applicability**.

(i) The Judicial Branch Procurement Policy applies to the Supreme Court of Maryland, the Appellate Court of Maryland, the District Court of Maryland, Offices of the Clerks of the Circuit Courts, the Administrative

Office of the Courts, and Judicial Units to the extent required by Rule 16-801, except as stated in (ii).

- (ii) This Policy does not apply to the Attorney Grievance Commission and the Client Protection Fund but, pursuant to Maryland Rule 16-801(b), those two entities shall use this Policy as a guideline for their own procurement practices.

(B) Exclusions.

- (i) This policy does not apply to:
 - (I) Memoranda of Understanding, Memoranda of Agreements, or like business agreements between two or more governmental bodies that define the deliverables, payments, and roles and responsibilities of the parties in the conduct of efforts of mutual interest;
 - (II) Grant agreements;
 - (III) The sale, transfer, and disposal of surplus property;
 - (IV) Agreements with entities that have legally recognized monopolies with whom the Judiciary must do business;
 - (V) The lease, sale, purchase, transfer, disposal, or any other action involving Real Property or an interest in Real Property;
 - (VI) Purchases for the purposes of resale;
 - (VII) Purchase and maintenance of cultural or historical artifacts;
 - (VIII) The purchase, delivery, transmission, use, or development of library materials in any format (e.g., databases, books, periodicals, etc.);
 - (IX) Lodging, food, and related supply and/or service contracts for conferences or events hosted by the Judiciary;
 - (X) Revenue generating contracts;
 - (XI) The purchase, delivery, or provision of interpreter services, including but not limited to in-person, telephonic, or virtual interpretations; and
 - (XII) Utility charges (e.g., electricity, natural gas, sewer, water, etc.).
- (ii) The Determination as to whether a transaction shall be

excluded from this Policy shall be made in writing by the Procurement Officer, with the approval as follows:

- (I) For transactions up to \$100,000, approval must be granted by the Director or designee.
- (II) For transactions exceeding \$100,000, additional approval by the ASCA-O or designee is required.
- (III) Further actions to certify the price to be fair and reasonable shall be conducted, as applicable, in accordance with the Procurement Procedures Manual.

(C) Exceptions. The Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Maryland shall have sole authority to permit exceptions or to waive any provision to this Policy.

(D) Procurement Procedures Manual. The Director shall maintain a Procurement Procedures Manual. The Manual may include details, procedures, or processes that support the policies stated in this document. The Manual may be periodically updated as the Director deems necessary.

(3) **Definitions**

(A) “Appeals Board” means the three-member panel that hears all Contract appeals within the Judicial Branch chaired by the Deputy State Court Administrator, or designee, a representative of the Clerks of the Circuit Courts, and a representative of the Office of the Chief Clerk of the District Court.

(B) “Bid” means the response by a Bidder to an Invitation for Bids issued by the Judiciary to obtain goods or services.

(C) “Bidder” means an entity that submits a bid in response to a Solicitation.

(D) “Business” means any corporation, partnership, individual, sole proprietorship, joint venture, or any other legal entity through which commercial activity is conducted.

(E) “Contract” means a formal, written agreement exceeding \$100,000 entered into by the Judiciary for the provision of materials, supplies, and/or services.

(F) “Contract Modification” means any written alteration in the Specifications

within the general scope of work or other provision of an existing Contract, but does not apply to the Judiciary's exercise of its Option to extend the term.

- (G) "Contractor" means any Person having received a Contract award by the Judiciary but does not include an employee with an employment contract or an employee organization with a collective bargaining agreement.
- (H) "Day" means calendar Day, unless otherwise defined.
- (I) "Determination" means a written decision made by a Procurement Officer related to the Procurement process.
- (J) "Diversity & Outreach Program" means the Judiciary Program established to encourage and increase participation in Judiciary procurements by underrepresented or disadvantaged groups. The Program includes Minority Business Enterprises (MBE) and Veteran-owned Small Business Enterprises (VSBE).
- (K) "Emergency" means a sudden and unexpected occurrence or condition which requires an action to avoid or to mitigate serious damage to health, property, safety, or welfare to persons, facilities, or assets.
- (L) "Equipment" means property of a durable nature that retains its identity throughout its useful life, but does not include software, commodities, or motor vehicles.
- (M) "Equivalent Item" means any Item of which the quality, design, or performance characteristics are functionally equal or superior to an Item specified in a Solicitation.
- (N) "Grant" means a defined amount of money that is awarded by or to a court, Judicial Unit, state or local government agency, institutions of higher education, community organization, or non-profit organization.
- (O) "Item" means Equipment, supplies, commodities, services, and maintenance.
- (P) "Lease" means a Contract under which the Judiciary uses real or personal property to which the Judiciary does not possess title. Lease does not include Lease-purchase or similar financing transactions.
- (Q) "Memorandum of Agreement" or "MOA" has the same meaning as "Memorandum of Understanding."
- (R) "Memorandum of Understanding" or "MOU" means a written agreement

between two or more governmental bodies that defines the deliverables, payments, and roles and responsibilities of the parties in the conduct of efforts of mutual interest.

- (S) “Minority Business Enterprise (MBE)” means any legal entity, other than a joint venture, organized to engage in commercial transactions, that is at least 51 percent owned and controlled by one or more individuals who are in a minority group (African American, Native American, Asian, Hispanic, women, or the physically or mentally disabled) that is socially and economically disadvantaged, and managed and operated by one or more of the socially and economically disadvantaged individuals who own it, and is so certified by the Maryland Department of Transportation.
- (T) “Non-Disclosure Agreement” or “NDA” means a formal, written agreement containing a person’s promise not to disclose any information shared by or discovered from the Judiciary, including all information about trade secrets, procedures, or other internal or proprietary matters.
- (U) “Offeror” means an entity that submits a Proposal in response to a Solicitation.
- (V) “Option” means the unilateral right of the Judiciary under a Contract to extend the Contract for an additional period of time, or to purchase limited additional goods or labor, or to purchase materials or facilities that have been Leased.
- (W) “Person” means any individual, or a corporation, partnership, sole proprietorship, joint stock company, joint venture, unincorporated association, union, committee, club, or other organization or legal entity.
- (X) “Procurement” includes all functions that pertain to the process of buying, leasing, purchasing, or otherwise obtaining any Equipment, materials, supplies, and services, including description of requirements, selection, and Solicitation of sources, preparation and Award of Contracts, as well as written Determinations and findings pertaining to the Procurement process.
- (Y) “Procurement Officer” means a Person authorized by the Judiciary to conduct and oversee Procurement activities.
- (Z) “Proposal” means the response by an Offeror to a Request for Proposals issued by the Judiciary to obtain goods or services. The response may include, but is not limited to, an Offeror's price and terms for the proposed Contract, a description of technical expertise, work experience, and other information as requested in the Solicitation.

- (AA) “Purchase Order” means the written document issued to a Supplier formalizing the terms and conditions of a proposed transaction, such as a description of the requested items, delivery schedule, and terms of payment.
- (BB) “Responsible” means a Person who has been determined to have the capability to perform fully the Contract requirements and possesses the reliability that assures good faith performance.
- (CC) “Responsive” means a Bid that conforms in all material aspects to the requirements contained in the Invitation for Bids.
- (DD) “Small Procurement” means the use of the procedures set forth in the Procurement Procedures Manual to obtain Items reasonably expected by the Procurement Officer to cost \$100,000 or less.
- (EE) “Sole Source” means that the Procurement Officer has determined that a competitive source selection method cannot be used.
- (FF) “Solicitation” means Invitation for Bids, Request for Proposals, or any other method or instrument used to communicate the Judiciary’s Procurement needs to potential Bidders or Offerors.
- (GG) “Specification” means a clear and accurate description of the functional characteristics or the nature of an Item to be procured. It may include a statement of any of the Judiciary’s Procurement requirements and may provide for submission of samples, inspection, or testing of an Item before Procurement.
- (HH) “Supplier” means a Person who desires to enter, or enters, into a Contract with the Judiciary.
- (II) “Using Unit” means any Judiciary Unit that uses any goods or labor procured under this policy.
- (JJ) “Veteran” means an individual who has served on active duty in the armed forces of the United States, other than for training, and was discharged or released from service under conditions other than dishonorable.
- (KK) “Veteran-owned Small Business Enterprise (VSBE)” means any legal entity that meets the requirements set by the United States Small Business Administration, that is organized to engage in commercial transactions, and is at least 51 percent owned and controlled by one or more individuals who are Veterans, and who manage the operations of the business, and is so designated in eMaryland Marketplace Advantage (eMMA).

(4) **Principal Policies and Purposes**

These policies and purposes are intended to be considered by the assigned Procurement Officer in every Solicitation the Judiciary initiates. The principal policies and purposes of Judiciary Procurements are to:

- (A) Provide for increased public confidence in the procedures followed in Judiciary Procurements and to ensure the fair and equitable treatment of all Persons who deal with the Procurement system of the Judiciary;
- (B) Simplify, clarify, and modernize the regulations governing Procurements by the Judiciary;
- (C) Permit the continued development of Procurement regulations, policies, and practices;
- (D) Provide increased economy in Judiciary Procurement activities and to maximize to the fullest extent the purchasing power of the Judiciary;
- (E) Provide safeguards for the maintenance of a Procurement system of quality and integrity;
- (F) Foster effective broad-based competition through support of the free enterprise system; and,
- (G) Promote the development of uniform Procurement procedures.

(5) **Mandatory Written Solicitation Requirements**

- (A) Judicial Records Request. A notice regarding the Access to Judicial Records Title of the Maryland Rules is a mandatory provision in all Solicitations.
- (B) Diversity & Outreach Program - Minority Business Enterprises (MBE) and Veteran-owned Small Business Enterprises (VSBE). All Using Units of the Judiciary shall abide by the Judiciary's Diversity & Outreach Program. The Program can be found on the Judiciary's Department of Procurement, Contract and Grant Administration website. The following Program notification is a mandatory provision in all Solicitations:

"Minority Business Enterprises and Veteran-owned Small Business

Enterprises are encouraged to respond to this solicitation notice."

- (C) Arrearages. An arrearages clause is a mandatory provision in all Solicitations, as follows:

"By submitting a response to this Solicitation, a Supplier shall be deemed to represent that it is not in arrears in the payment of any obligation due and owing the Judiciary or the State of Maryland, including the payment of taxes and employee benefits, and that it shall not become so in arrears during the term of the Contract, if selected for Contract Award."

- (D) Bid/Proposal Affidavit. Each Solicitation shall provide notice that the Bid/Proposal affidavit provided by the Judiciary shall be completed and submitted to the Department of Procurement, Contract and Grant Administration with the Supplier's Bid or offer.
- (E) Non-Disclosure Agreement. Each Solicitation shall provide notice that the NDA provided by the Judiciary may need to be completed and submitted to the Department of Procurement, Contract and Grant Administration upon acceptance of the Supplier's Bid or offer.

(6) **Prohibitions**

- (A) Automatic Renewal Provisions. There shall be no automatic renewal provision in any Contract.
- (B) Cost-plus Contracts. Cost-plus-a-percentage-of-cost Contracts and subcontracts are prohibited.
- (C) Late Payment Provisions. There shall be no provision assessing additional fees for any late payment in any Contract.
- (D) Penalty Provisions. There shall be no penalty provisions in any Contract unless they are tied to compliance with specific provisions of the Contract.

(7) **Suspicion that Collusion Has Occurred**

- (A) If there is a reasonable basis for believing that collusion has occurred among any Persons for any reason, the Procurement Officer shall immediately notify the Director and send a written notice of this concern to the Managing Legal Counsel or designee.
- (B) All documents involved in any Procurement in which there is a reasonable basis for believing that collusion has occurred shall be retained by the Department of Procurement, Contract and Grant Administration. These

documents shall be turned over to the Managing Legal Counsel or designee, immediately upon request.

(b) ARTICLE II. SPECIFICATIONS

(1) General Purpose

- (A) A Specification is the basis for procuring an Item in a cost-effective manner. It is the policy of the Judiciary that Specifications be written to permit maximum practicable competition. Specifications may not be drawn in such a manner as to favor a single Supplier over other Suppliers.
- (B) Brand name, or Equivalent Item, means a Specification that uses one or more manufacturer's names or catalog numbers to describe the standard of quality, performance, and other characteristics needed to meet the Judiciary's Procurement requirements.

(2) Responsibility for Preparation

The Using Unit shall be responsible for preparing the Specifications. To the extent practicable or functional, performance criteria shall be emphasized while limiting design or other detailed physical descriptions to those necessary to meet the needs of the Judiciary.

(3) Responsibility for Review and Approval

The Procurement Officer, or designee, shall be responsible for reviewing the Specifications for content, clarity, and completeness and to ensure that the Specifications are nonrestrictive. Final approval of the Specifications shall rest with the Procurement Officer. Specifications may be revised by the Procurement Officer for purposes of clarification as long as technical elements of the Specifications remain the same. Revisions which change the technical elements of the Specifications may be made in consultation with the Judiciary Using Unit.

(c) ARTICLE III. PROCUREMENT METHODS

(1) General Provisions

- (A) Judiciary Procurement Methods. This policy allows six different Procurement methods which are:
 - (i) Small Procurements – for Procurements of \$100,000 or less;

- (ii) Invitation for Bids (IFB);
- (iii) Request for Proposals (RFP);
- (iv) Intergovernmental Cooperative Purchasing;
- (v) Sole Source Procurements; and,
- (vi) Emergency Procurements.

The Procurement Officer shall determine the appropriate Procurement method.

(2) **Small Procurement (\$100,000 or Less)**

(A) **Application.**

- (i) Use of the Small Procurement method described shall be based on an initial decision by the Procurement Officer and application of dollar limits.
- (ii) To the extent that the Department of Procurement, Contract and Grant Administration delegates authority to Using Units to make Small Procurements, those Procurements shall be made in accordance with this Policy and as prescribed in the Procurement Procedures Manual.

(B) **Conditions for Use.**

- (i) Small Procurements are for Procurements of \$100,000 or less, and are classified in three categories:
 - (I) Category I Small Procurements - \$5,000 or less; and,
 - (II) Category II Small Procurements - More than \$5,000 but not more than \$25,000.
 - (III) Category III Small Procurements- More than \$25,000 but not more than \$100,000.
- (ii) **Prohibitions:** A Procurement may not be divided artificially in order to use the Small Procurement method instead of the other Procurement methods set forth in this Policy, or to use a lesser category defined under of this section.

(3) **Invitation for Bids (IFB).**

- (A) Application – The decision to use the Invitation for Bids method shall be determined by the Procurement Officer.
 - (B) Conditions for Use – When price is the sole or main consideration in a Procurement, an Invitation for Bids may be used as the Procurement method for Solicitations in excess of \$100,000.
- (4) Request for Proposals (RFP).
- (A) Application – The decision to use Request for Proposals method shall be determined by the Procurement Officer.
 - (B) Conditions for Use – Request for Proposals is an appropriate method for the Procurement of services of any dollar value, or when considerations other than price are of the essence and in the Judiciary’s best interest.
- (5) Intergovernmental Cooperative Purchasing.
- (A) Application – The decision to use the Intergovernmental Cooperative Purchasing method shall be determined by the Procurement Officer.
 - (B) Conditions for Use – An Intergovernmental Cooperative Purchasing Agreement (ICPA) is created when a public entity (such as the federal government, another state, a county, city or any other municipal entity) has solicited and awarded a Contract under competitive conditions resulting in competitive prices, terms, and conditions.

Use of Intergovernmental Cooperative Purchasing is appropriate when a public entity (such as the federal government, another state, a county, city or any other municipal entity) has solicited and awarded a Contract under competitive conditions resulting in identical prices, terms, and conditions as stipulated in the Intergovernmental Cooperative Purchasing Contract; or, if the Supplier agrees to provide the Judiciary with more favorable prices, terms, and conditions than those provided in the Intergovernmental Cooperative Purchasing Contract, and the Judiciary desires to avail itself of the more favorable prices, terms, and conditions.

- (C) State of Maryland Contracts – A Statewide contract for use by any public entity in the State of Maryland does not constitute an ICPA and may be leveraged directly. The Procurement Officer shall verify that the pricing, terms, and conditions are identical to the Statewide contract.
- (6) Sole Source Procurement.
- (A) Application – If the Procurement Officer determines that a competitive source selection method cannot be used because certain Sole Source conditions

exist, the Procurement Officer, after obtaining all appropriate approvals, may Award a Contract without competition to the Sole Source.

(B) Conditions for Use

- (i) The following circumstances may necessitate a Sole Source Procurement:
 - (I) When only one source exists that meets the requirements;
 - (II) When the compatibility of Equipment, accessories, services, software, or replacement parts is the paramount consideration;
 - (III) When a sole Supplier's Item is needed for trial use or testing;
 - (IV) When certain public utility services are to be procured and only one reasonable source exists; or,
 - (V) When moving services to an alternative Supplier would cause undue hardship or excess costs to the Judiciary.
- (ii) The Determination as to whether a Procurement shall be made as a Sole Source shall be made in writing by the Procurement Officer, with the appropriate approval(s). The Procurement Officer may specify the application of the Determination and the duration of its effectiveness. In cases of reasonable doubt, competition should be solicited. Any request by a Using Unit that a Procurement be restricted to one Supplier shall be accompanied by an acceptable explanation as to why no other Supplier shall be suitable or acceptable to meet the need.

- (7) Emergency Procurement. The Director, or designee, with written approval of the ASCA-O, may activate and proceed with Emergency Procurement Procedures as outlined within the Procurement Procedures Manual. Emergency Procurement Procedures may be updated and modified by the Director as required.

(d) ARTICLE IV. CONTRACT AWARD

(1) Qualification and Duties

The Procurement Officer, with the approval of the Director, or designee, has sole authority to determine that a Person is not a Responsible Bidder or Offeror, or that the Bid is nonresponsive, or the Proposal is not reasonably susceptible of Award.

(e) ARTICLE V. CONTRACT MODIFICATIONS, RENEWAL OPTIONS, EXTENSIONS, AND NOVATIONS

(1) Contract Modifications

- (A) Goods and services that are outside the scope of an existing Contract must be procured through one of the source selection methods prescribed in this Policy document rather than by modifying the existing Contract. The Director, or designee, shall determine whether a proposed modification is outside the scope of the existing Contract, considering whether the proposed modification may have affected the competition at the time the original Solicitation was issued.
- (B) The Director may seek guidance from the Managing Legal Counsel, or designee, when deciding if proposed work may be accomplished through a Contract Modification or if it requires a new Contract action.

(2) Contract Renewal Options

- (A) A valid Contract renewal Option is one where the Judiciary alone holds the power to exercise the Option, and the Option price is fixed in, or is objectively ascertainable under, the terms of the original Contract. Exercise of a renewal Option is not considered a Contract Modification. The Procurement Officer may exercise a renewal Option before the expiration of the Contract.
- (B) Bid or Proposal Solicitation containing Options to extend must include the following:
 - (i) Statement that the Judiciary has the unilateral right to exercise any Option(s);
 - (ii) Time frame for the initial period of performance (initial term);
 - (iii) Number of and time periods covered by Option periods; and,
 - (iv) Notice that the original Bid/offer must set forth the pricing for both the initial term and the Option periods (or Option

quantities).

- (C) Contracts containing Options must include the following:
 - (i) Statement that the Judiciary has the unilateral right to exercise any Option(s).
 - (ii) Time frame for the initial period of performance (initial term).
 - (iii) Number of and time periods covered by Option periods; and,
 - (iv) Pricing for both the initial term and the Option periods (or Option quantities).
- (D) The exercise of a Contract Option must be approved by the appropriate authority and renewed before the initial term, or before any previously renewed Option term expires. A Contract which has expired may not be reinstated through modification or by the exercise of Options.

(3) **Extensions**

Modifications to extend a Contract term are permitted only if it is extended before the term expires and the Procurement Officer has received approval from the appropriate approval authority when the purpose is to:

- (A) Complete work under a purchase order issued before the Contract expires; or,
- (B) Provide the Judiciary time to complete the new Procurement, to resolve a protest, or to facilitate a successful transition between Contractors; or,
- (C) There are unspent funds remaining, in which case the Judiciary may extend a Contract, but not add funds, for a total period no longer than one-third of the term of the original Contract, if the scope of work under the extension is the same as the original Contract.

(4) **Assignment/Novation/Name Change**

- (A) Assignment. A Contract is not transferable, or otherwise assignable, without the written consent of the Procurement Officer and approval of both the Director and the Managing Legal Counsel or designee. However, a Contractor may assign monies receivable under a Contract after due notice to the Judiciary.

- (B) Recognition of a Successor in Interest Novation. When it is in the best interest of the Judiciary, a successor in interest may be recognized in a novation agreement in which the assignor and the assignee agree that:
- (i) The assignee assumes all of the transferor's obligations; and,
 - (ii) The assignor waives all rights under the Contract against the Judiciary; and,
 - (iii) Unless the assignor guarantees performance of the Contract by the assignee, the assignee shall, if required, furnish a satisfactory performance bond.
- (C) Change of Name. When a Contractor requests a change to the name under which it holds a Contract with the Judiciary, the Procurement Officer shall, upon receipt of sufficient documentation indicating the change of name (e.g., an amendment to the articles of incorporation or organization), process this change through a Contract Modification. The Contractor must affect the change of name contingent upon the approval of the Director and the Managing Legal Counsel, or designee. The agreement changing the name shall expressly state that no other terms and conditions of the Contract are changed.

(f) **ARTICLE VI. PROTESTS AND APPEALS**

(1) **Protests**

(A) Filing a Protest

- (i) An actual or prospective Bidder or Offeror who is aggrieved by a Solicitation or Award of a Contract, or by a Protest, may file a Protest with the Procurement Officer identified in the specific Solicitation.
- (ii) The Protest shall be in writing and addressed to the specific attention of the Procurement Officer.
- (iii) A Protest is considered filed when received in writing by the Procurement Officer.
- (iv) The written Protest shall include the following information:
 - (I) The name and address of the Protestor;
 - (II) Appropriate identification of the Procurement;

- (III) A statement of the reasons for the Protest; and,
 - (IV) Supporting exhibits, evidence, or documents to substantiate the reasons for the Protest.
 - (v) Filing of a Protest does not automatically stay the issuance of the Award.
- (B) Time for Filing a Protest.
- (i) A Protest based upon alleged improprieties or ambiguities in a Solicitation that are apparent before the Bid/Proposal due date shall be filed before the closing date and time for receipt of the initial Bids/Proposals.
 - (ii) A Protest based upon alleged improprieties in a Solicitation that did not exist in the original Solicitation, but which arose because of an addendum to the Solicitation, shall be filed no later than the Solicitation closing date and time for receipt of Bids or Proposals identified in the addendum (or in the original Solicitation if the opening date and time were not changed by addendum).
 - (iii) In all other cases, Protests shall be filed no later than seven (7) calendar days after the basis for the Protest is known, or should have been known, whichever is earlier.
 - (iv) The Protestor shall bear all costs associated with filing and prosecuting a Protest.
- (C) Requests for Additional Information. The Procurement Officer may request additional information in order to consider a Protest. The Protestor shall file the additional information with the Procurement Officer within five (5) calendar days after receiving the request. Failure of any party to comply with a request by the Procurement Officer for information or substantiation may result in a resolution of the Protest without consideration of any additional information or, if the Procurement Officer determines the information is necessary, denial of the Protest.
- (D) Confidentiality and Disclosure. Upon written request, the Procurement Officer shall make available information submitted that bears on the substance of the Protest, except when information is confidential or otherwise is permitted or required to be withheld by law. The Procurement Officer with the approval of the Director and, if necessary, in consultation with the Office of Legal Affairs & Fair Practices, will determine whether any information may be withheld in accordance with the Access to Judicial Records Title of the Maryland Rules.
- (E) Decision.

- (i) The Procurement Officer, with the approval of the Director, shall issue a written decision on a Protest within thirty (30) Days after receiving all relevant information.
- (ii) The decision of the Procurement Officer shall include:
 - (I) A description of the controversy;
 - (II) A statement of the decision, with supporting material; and,
 - (III) A statement that provides the Protester with the name and address of the Appeals Board, and that they have seven (7) Days from the date of the decision to file an appeal.
- (iii) The Procurement Officer shall furnish the written decision to the Protester and all other interested parties by any method that provides evidence of receipt.

(F) Appeals.

- (i) A Protestor who wishes to appeal the decision of the Procurement Officer on a Protest shall submit a written appeal, addressed to the Appeals Board care of the Deputy State Court Administrator, or designee, as identified in the notice to the Protester, within seven (7) Days after receiving the Procurement Officer's written decision.
- (ii) The written appeal shall be expressly identified as an appeal and shall include:
 - (I) The name and address of the appellant(s);
 - (II) Appropriate identification of the Procurement; and,
 - (III) A statement of the reasons for the appeal, including all alleged error(s) of fact and/or law in the decision of the Procurement Officer that is being appealed.
- (iii) The Appeals Board shall issue its decision within 90 Days after the receipt of the appeal.
- (iv) The decision of the Appeals Board is final.

(g) ARTICLE VII. INSPECTION OF JUDICIARY PROCUREMENT DOCUMENTS

(1) General

Pursuant to Maryland Rule 16-913(f), inspection of judicial records in the form of Procurement documents shall be governed exclusively by this Procurement Policy as approved by the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Maryland and posted on the Judiciary website. Procurement documents are presumed to be open to the public for inspection, except as otherwise provided by this policy.

(2) **Custodian**

The Director of Procurement, Contract & Grant Administration is the designated custodian for Judiciary Procurement documents. Trade secrets, confidential commercial information, confidential financial information, or confidential security information furnished by a Bidder or Offeror under this section may be disclosed to the Legislative or Executive branches of Maryland State Government only when otherwise provided by law and may not be disclosed outside of Maryland State Government. Trade secrets, confidential commercial information, confidential financial information, or confidential security information furnished by a Bidder or Offeror shall be clearly identified in a list provided to the Director, including reasons why the information should be treated as such. The Director, or designee, in consultation with the Office of Legal Affairs & Fair Practices, shall determine whether a Procurement document may be disclosable to the public, pursuant to a request under the Maryland Rules governing access to judicial records, in accordance with this Maryland Judiciary Procurement Policy. In some instances, documents may be disclosed subject to redactions listed in (3) below and subject to consultation with the Contractor. Procurement documents not specifically included in (3) may be subject to other privileges, statutes, or rules governing access to Judicial Records rendering them undisclosable to the public.

(3) **Categories of records; Disclosure**

- (A) The Procurement Procedures Manual shall not be available for public inspection.
- (B) Contract Award Process. The custodian shall deny inspection of any record or part of a record concerning deliberations regarding the award of a Contract or Contracts.
- (C) Financial information. The custodian shall deny inspection of a record that contains information about finances including, but not limited to, itemized pricing in Bids, Contracts, Purchase Orders, and Contract Modifications.
- (D) Intergovernmental Cooperative Purchasing Agreements. A Contract, or the terms thereof, including pricing, and/or applicable discounts, between a Supplier and a governmental entity other than the Judiciary, that underlies an Intergovernmental Cooperative Purchasing Agreement between the Judiciary and the Supplier, shall not be available from the Judiciary for

public inspection.

- (E) Real Estate Leases. The custodian shall deny inspection of all or any part of real estate leases that contain pricing information or payment terms, or building Specifications, including but not limited to building security plans and standards.
- (F) Safety and Security Information. The custodian shall deny inspection of any records or parts of records concerning the safety or security of Judiciary personnel, facilities, Equipment, networks, or data.
- (G) Trade Secrets, Confidential Information. The custodian shall deny inspection of a Procurement record, or any part of a Procurement record, that contains trade secrets, confidential commercial information, confidential financial information, or confidential security information.
- (H) The custodian may deny inspection of any record or part of a record that would not otherwise be available by law to a private party in litigation with the Judiciary.
- (I) The custodian may deny inspection of any bid or proposal that is not set forth or incorporated by reference in a contract entered into between the Judiciary and the Offeror that submitted the proposal, and which is not the basis for a Small Procurement award.