

[(2)] (II) Locating potential sources for various products and services and affirmatively seeking to locate potential minority business enterprise sources for various products and services;

[(3)] (III) Assisting small businesses in complying with the procedures for bidding on State contracts;

[(4)] (IV) Examining requests from using authorities for purchase of products or services to help determine which invitations to bid are to be designated small business set-asides;

[(5)] (V) Simplifying procurement specifications and terms in order to increase the opportunities for small business participation;

[(6)] (VI) Investigating the responsibility of bidders on small business set-asides; and

[(7)] (VII) Providing to a small business the reason for which any bid by the small business for a small business set-aside was rejected.

(2) The Secretary shall be provided assistance from the Department of Economic and Community Development in specifying procedures for [paragraphs (c) (1) and (2)] PARAGRAPHS (1) (I) AND (II) OF THIS SUBSECTION.

(d) [The] EACH Secretary may designate purchase requests for specified supplies or services, which have been requested through or with the approval of the Secretary, as small business set-asides. The invitation to bid shall indicate purchases that have been designated small business set-asides.

(e) Each small business set-aside purchase shall be made through bidding procedures established by the Secretary. Invitations to bid shall be sent to small businesses in addition to regular bidders to establish a reasonable price range commensurate with current market conditions. Subject to subsection (f) of this section, the purchase, contract, or expenditure of funds shall be awarded in accordance with this article.

(f) (1) EACH SECRETARY SHALL ESTABLISH, FOR EACH CLASS OF BUSINESSES, A PREDETERMINED PERCENTAGE PREFERENCE FOR THE PURPOSES OF PARAGRAPH (2) OF THIS SUBSECTION. THE PREDETERMINED PERCENTAGE PREFERENCES ~~SHALL~~ MAY VARY FROM INDUSTRY TO INDUSTRY TO REFLECT DIFFERENT INDUSTRY CHARACTERISTICS. THE PERCENTAGE IS SUBJECT TO THE APPROVAL OF THE BOARD OF PUBLIC WORKS.

(2) The Secretary shall accept the lowest responsive and responsible bid from a small business for a small business set-aside, if the bid does not exceed by [5 percent] THE PREDETERMINED PERCENTAGE PREFERENCE the bid received from the