

(2) As far as practicable in the course of administering a program, the unit shall treat fairly and equally with respect to discussions all responsible service providers who have submitted expressions of interest.

[(d)] (E) After obtaining any approval required by law, the unit may award a procurement contract if the head of the unit determines, on the basis of continuing discussions or past program experience, that an award will serve the best interests of the State.

[(e)] (F) A unit shall publish in the Contract Weekly notice of a procurement contract awarded under this section.

13-204.

(a) (1) By regulation, each of the primary procurement units may provide for the prequalification of persons as prospective responsible bidders or offerors for procurements other than leases of real property.

(2) Each of the primary procurement units shall keep a register of all prequalified persons.

(3) PERSONS PREQUALIFIED AS PROSPECTIVE RESPONSIBLE BIDDERS OR OFFERORS BY A PRIMARY PROCUREMENT UNIT FOR PROCUREMENTS OF DIRECT OR INDIRECT WORK-RELATED SERVICES SHALL BE DEEMED TO BE PREQUALIFIED FOR THE PURPOSES OF PROCUREMENTS BY THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES OF DIRECT OR INDIRECT WORK-RELATED SERVICES TO BENEFIT CURRENT RECIPIENTS, FORMER RECIPIENTS OR NON-CUSTODIAL PARENTS OF CHILDREN WHO ARE CURRENT OR FORMER RECIPIENTS OF FAMILY INVESTMENT PROGRAM BENEFITS.

(b) If a primary procurement unit OR THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES uses a prequalification procedure for awarding a procurement contract:

(1) a person who is not prequalified may submit a bid or proposal; and

(2) after bid opening or receipt of proposals and before awarding the procurement contract, a procurement officer may determine that:

(i) a person who was not prequalified at the time of bid opening or receipt of proposals is a responsible bidder or offeror; or

(ii) a prequalified person is not a responsible bidder or offeror.

13-224.

(a) (1) In this section the following words have the meanings indicated.

(2) "Department" means the Department of Human Resources.

(3) "Eligible contract" means a procurement contract designated by the Board as appropriate for the execution of a hiring agreement.

(4) "FIP" means the Family Investment Program established under Article 88A of the Code.