

Subpart 16.5 -- Indefinite-Delivery Contracts

16.500 -- Scope of Subpart.

- (a) This subpart prescribes policies and procedures for making awards of indefinite-delivery contracts and establishes a preference for making multiple awards of indefinite-quantity contracts.
- (b) This subpart does not limit the use of other than competitive procedures authorized by part 6.
- (c) Nothing in this subpart restricts the authority of the General Services Administration (GSA) to enter into schedule, multiple award, or task or delivery order contracts under any other provision of law. Therefore, GSA regulations and the coverage for the Federal Supply Schedule program in [Subpart 8.4](#) and Part 38 take precedence over this subpart.
- (d) The statutory multiple award preference implemented by this subpart does not apply to architect-engineer contracts subject to the procedures in Subpart 36.6. However, agencies are not precluded from making multiple awards for architect-engineer services using the procedures in this subpart, provided the selection of contractors and placement of orders are consistent with [Subpart 36.6](#).

16.501-1 -- Definitions.

As used in this subpart --

“Delivery order contract” means a contract for supplies that does not procure or specify a firm quantity of supplies (other than a minimum or maximum quantity) and that provides for the issuance of orders for the delivery of supplies during the period of the contract.

“Task order contract” means a contract for services that does not procure or specify a firm quantity of services (other than a minimum or maximum quantity) and that provides for the issuance of orders for the performance of tasks during the period of the contract.

16.501-2 -- General.

(a) There are three types of indefinite-delivery contracts: definite-quantity contracts, requirements contracts, and indefinite-quantity contracts. The appropriate type of indefinite-delivery contract may be used to acquire supplies and/or services when the exact times and/or exact quantities of future deliveries are not known at the time of contract award. Pursuant to 10 U.S.C. 2304d and section 303K of the Federal Property and Administrative Services Act of 1949, requirements contracts and indefinite-quantity contracts are also known as delivery order contracts or task order contracts.

(b) The various types of indefinite-delivery contracts offer the following advantages:

(1) All three types permit --

- (i) Government stocks to be maintained at minimum levels; and
- (ii) Direct shipment to users.

(2) Indefinite-quantity contracts and requirements contracts also permit --

- (i) Flexibility in both quantities and delivery scheduling; and
- (ii) Ordering of supplies or services after requirements materialize.

(3) Indefinite-quantity contracts limit the Government's obligation to the minimum quantity specified in the contract.

(4) Requirements contracts may permit faster deliveries when production lead time is involved, because contractors are usually willing to maintain limited stocks when the Government will obtain all of its actual purchase requirements from the contractor.

(c) Indefinite-delivery contracts may provide for any appropriate cost or pricing arrangement under Part 16. Cost or pricing arrangements that provide for an estimated quantity of supplies or services (*e.g.*, estimated number of labor hours) must comply with the appropriate procedures of this subpart.

16.502 -- Definite-Quantity Contracts.

(a) *Description.* A definite-quantity contract provides for delivery of a definite quantity of specific supplies or services for a fixed period, with deliveries or performance to be scheduled at designated locations upon order.

(b) *Application.* A definite-quantity contract may be used when it can be determined in advance that --

- (1) A definite quantity of supplies or services will be required during the contract period and
- (2) The supplies or services are regularly available or will be available after a short lead time.

16.503 -- Requirements Contracts.

(a) *Description.* A requirements contract provides for filling all actual purchase requirements of designated Government activities for supplies or services during a specified contract period, with deliveries or performance to be scheduled by placing orders with the contractor.

(1) For the information of offerors and contractors, the contracting officer shall state a realistic estimated total quantity in the solicitation and resulting contract. This estimate is not a representation to an offeror or contractor that the estimated quantity will be required or ordered, or that conditions affecting requirements will be stable or normal. The contracting officer may obtain the estimate from records of previous requirements and consumption, or by other means, and should base the estimate on the most current information available.

(2) The contract shall state, if feasible, the maximum limit of the contractor's obligation to deliver and the Government's obligation to order. The contract may also specify maximum or minimum quantities that the Government may order under each individual order and the maximum that it may order during a specified period of time.

(b) *Application.* A requirements contract may be appropriate for acquiring any supplies or services when the Government anticipates recurring requirements but cannot predetermine the precise quantities of

supplies or services that designated Government activities will need during a definite period.

(c) *Government property furnished for repair.* When a requirements contract is used to acquire work (e.g., repair, modification, or overhaul) on existing items of Government property, the contracting officer shall specify in the Schedule that failure of the Government to furnish such items in the amounts or quantities described in the Schedule as “estimated” or “maximum” will not entitle the contractor to any equitable adjustment in price under the Government Property clause of the contract.

(d) *Limitations on use of requirements contracts for advisory and assistance services.*

(1) Except as provided in paragraph (d)(2) of this section, no solicitation for a requirements contract for advisory and assistance services in excess of three years and \$11.5 million (including all options) may be issued unless the contracting officer or other official designated by the head of the agency determines in writing that the services required are so unique or highly specialized that it is not practicable to make multiple awards using the procedures in [16.504](#).

(2) The limitation in paragraph (d)(1) of this section is not applicable to an acquisition of supplies or services that includes the acquisition of advisory and assistance services, if the contracting officer or other official designated by the head of the agency determines that the advisory and assistance services are necessarily incident to, and not a significant component of, the contract.

16.504 -- Indefinite-Quantity Contracts.

(a) *Description.* An indefinite-quantity contract provides for an indefinite quantity, within stated limits, of supplies or services during a fixed period. The Government places orders for individual requirements. Quantity limits may be stated as number of units or as dollar values.

(1) The contract must require the Government to order and the contractor to furnish at least a stated minimum quantity of supplies or services. In addition, if ordered, the contractor must furnish any additional quantities, not to exceed the stated maximum. The contracting officer should establish a reasonable maximum quantity based on market research, trends on recent contracts for similar supplies or services, survey of potential users, or any other rational basis.

(2) To ensure that the contract is binding, the minimum quantity must be more than a nominal quantity, but it should not exceed the amount that the Government is fairly certain to order.

(3) The contract may also specify maximum or minimum quantities that the Government may order under each task or delivery order and the maximum that it may order during a specific period of time.

(4) A solicitation and contract for an indefinite quantity must—

(i) Specify the period of the contract, including the number of options and the period for which the Government may extend the contract under each option;

(ii) Specify the total minimum and maximum quantity of supplies or services the

Government will acquire under the contract;

(iii) Include a statement of work, specifications, or other description, that reasonably describes the general scope, nature, complexity, and purpose of the supplies or services the Government will acquire under the contract in a manner that will enable a prospective offeror to decide whether to submit an offer;

(iv) State the procedures that the Government will use in issuing orders, including the ordering media, and, if multiple awards may be made, state the procedures and selection criteria that the Government will use to provide awardees a fair opportunity to be considered for each order (see [16.505\(b\)\(1\)](#));

(v) Include the name, address, telephone number, facsimile number, and e-mail address of the agency task and delivery order ombudsman (see [16.505\(b\)\(5\)](#)) if multiple awards may be made;

(vi) Include a description of the activities authorized to issue orders; and

(vii) Include authorization for placing oral orders, if appropriate, provided that the Government has established procedures for obligating funds and that oral orders are confirmed in writing.

(b) Application. Contracting officers may use an indefinite-quantity contract when the Government cannot predetermine, above a specified minimum, the precise quantities of supplies or services that the Government will require during the contract period, and it is inadvisable for the Government to commit itself for more than a minimum quantity. The contracting officer should use an indefinite-quantity contract only when a recurring need is anticipated.

(c) Multiple award preference—

(1) Planning the acquisition.

(i) Except for indefinite-quantity contracts for advisory and assistance services as provided in paragraph (c)(2) of this section, the contracting officer must, to the maximum extent practicable, give preference to making multiple awards of indefinite-quantity contracts under a single solicitation for the same or similar supplies or services to two or more sources.

(ii)

(A) The contracting officer must determine whether multiple awards are appropriate as part of acquisition planning. The contracting officer must avoid situations in which awardees specialize exclusively in one or a few areas within the statement of work, thus creating the likelihood that orders in those areas will be awarded on a sole-source basis; however, each awardee need not be capable of performing every requirement as well as any other awardee under the contracts. The contracting officer should consider the following when determining the number of contracts to be awarded:

(1) The scope and complexity of the contract requirement.

(2) The expected duration and frequency of task or delivery orders.

(3) The mix of resources a contractor must have to perform expected task or delivery order requirements.

(4) The ability to maintain competition among the awardees throughout the contracts' period of performance.

(B) The contracting officer must not use the multiple award approach if--

(1) Only one contractor is capable of providing performance at the level of quality required because the supplies or services are unique or highly specialized;

(2) Based on the contracting officer's knowledge of the market, more favorable terms and conditions, including pricing, will be provided if a single award is made;

(3) The expected cost of administration of multiple contracts outweighs the expected benefits of making multiple awards;

(4) The projected orders are so integrally related that only a single contractor can reasonably perform the work;

(5) The total estimated value of the contract is less than the simplified acquisition threshold; or

(6) Multiple awards would not be in the best interests of the Government.

(C) The contracting officer must document the decision whether or not to use multiple awards in the acquisition plan or contract file. The contracting officer may determine that a class of acquisitions is not appropriate for multiple awards (see [subpart 1.7](#)).

(2) *Contracts for advisory and assistance services.*

(i) Except as provided in paragraph (c)(2)(ii) of this section, if an indefinite-quantity contract for advisory and assistance services exceeds 3 years and \$11.5 million, including all options, the contracting officer must make multiple awards unless--

(A) The contracting officer or other official designated by the head of the agency determines in writing, as part of acquisition planning, that multiple awards are not practicable. The contracting officer or other official must determine that only one contractor can reasonably perform the work because either the scope of work is unique or highly specialized or the tasks so integrally related;

(B) The contracting officer or other official designated by the head of the agency determines in writing, after the evaluation of offers, that only one offeror is capable of providing the services required at the level of quality

required; or

(C) Only one offer is received.

(ii) The requirements of paragraph (c)(2)(i) of this section do not apply if the contracting officer or other official designated by the head of the agency determines that the advisory and assistance services are incidental and not a significant component of the contract.

16.505 -- Ordering.

(a) *General.*

- (1) The contracting officer does not synopsise orders under indefinite-delivery contracts.
- (2) Individual orders shall clearly describe all services to be performed or supplies to be delivered so the full cost or price for the performance of the work can be established when the order is placed. Orders shall be within the scope, issued within the period of performance, and be within the maximum value of the contract.
- (3) Performance-based acquisition methods must be used to the maximum extent practicable, if the contract or order is for services (see [37.102\(a\)](#) and Subpart [37.6](#)).
- (4) When acquiring information technology and related services, consider the use of modular contracting to reduce program risk (see [39.103\(a\)](#)).
- (5) Orders may be placed by using any medium specified in the contract.
- (6) Orders placed under indefinite-delivery contracts must contain the following information:
 - (i) Date of order.
 - (ii) Contract number and order number.
 - (iii) For supplies and services, contract item number and description, quantity, and unit price or estimated cost or fee.
 - (iv) Delivery or performance schedule.
 - (v) Place of delivery or performance (including consignee).
 - (vi) Any packaging, packing, and shipping instructions.
 - (vii) Accounting and appropriation data.
 - (viii) Method of payment and payment office, if not specified in the contract (see [32.1110\(e\)](#)).

(7) Orders placed under a task-order contract or delivery-order contract awarded by another agency (*i.e.*, a Governmentwide acquisition contract, or multi-agency contract)

- (i) Are not exempt from the development of acquisition plans (see [Subpart 7.1](#)), and an information technology acquisition strategy (see Part 39);
- (ii) May not be used to circumvent conditions and limitations imposed on the use of funds (*e.g.*, 31 U.S.C. 1501(a)(1)); and
- (iii) Must comply with all FAR requirements for a bundled contract when the order meets the definition of “bundled contract” (see [2.101\(b\)](#)).

(8) In accordance with section 1427(b) of Public Law 108-136, orders placed under multi-agency contracts for services that substantially or to a dominant extent specify performance of architect-engineer services, as defined in 2.101, shall—

- (i) Be awarded using the procedures at Subpart 36.6; and
- (ii) Require the direct supervision of a professional architect or engineer licensed, registered or certified in the State, Federal District, or outlying area, in which the services are to be performed.

(9) No protest under [Subpart 33.1](#) is authorized in connection with the issuance or proposed issuance of an order under a task-order contract or delivery-order contract, except for a protest on the grounds that the order increases the scope, period, or maximum value of the contract (10 U.S.C. 2304c(d) and 41 U.S.C. 253j(d)).

(b) *Orders under multiple award contracts—*

(1) *Fair opportunity.*

- (i) The contracting officer must provide each awardee a fair opportunity to be considered for each order exceeding \$3,000 issued under multiple delivery-order contracts or multiple task-order contracts, except as provided for in paragraph (b)(2) of this section.
- (ii) The contracting officer may exercise broad discretion in developing appropriate order placement procedures. The contracting officer should keep submission requirements to a minimum. Contracting officers may use streamlined procedures, including oral presentations. In addition, the contracting officer need not contact each of the multiple awardees under the contract before selecting an order awardee if the contracting officer has information available to ensure that each awardee is provided a fair opportunity to be considered for each order. The competition requirements in part 6 and the policies in [subpart 15.3](#) do not apply to the ordering process. However, the contracting officer must--

(A) Develop placement procedures that will provide each awardee a fair opportunity to be considered for each order and that reflect the requirement and other aspects of the contracting environment;

- (B) Not use any method (such as allocation or designation of any preferred awardee) that would not result in fair consideration being given to all awardees prior to placing each order;
- (C) Tailor the procedures to each acquisition;
- (D) Include the procedures in the solicitation and the contract; and
- (E) Consider price or cost under each order as one of the factors in the selection decision.

(iii) The contracting officer should consider the following when developing the procedures:

(A)

- (1) Past performance on earlier orders under the contract, including quality, timeliness and cost control.
- (2) Potential impact on other orders placed with the contractor.
- (3) Minimum order requirements.
- (4) The amount of time contractors need to make informed business decisions on whether to respond to potential orders.
- (5) Whether contractors could be encouraged to respond to potential orders by outreach efforts to promote exchanges of information, such as—
 - (i) Seeking comments from two or more contractors on draft statements of work;
 - (ii) Using a multiphased approach when effort required to respond to a potential order may be resource intensive (*e.g.*, requirements are complex or need continued development), where all contractors are initially considered on price considerations (*e.g.*, rough estimates), and other considerations as appropriate (*e.g.*, proposed conceptual approach, past performance). The contractors most likely to submit the highest value solutions are then selected for one-on-one sessions with the Government to increase their understanding of the requirements, provide suggestions for refining requirements, and discuss risk reduction measures.

(B) Formal evaluation plans or scoring of quotes or offers are not required.

(2) *Exceptions to the fair opportunity process.* The contracting officer shall give every awardee a fair opportunity to be considered for a delivery-order or task-order exceeding \$3,000 unless one of the following statutory exceptions applies:

- (i) The agency need for the supplies or services is so urgent that providing a fair

opportunity would result in unacceptable delays;

(ii) Only one awardee is capable of providing the supplies or services required at the level of quality required because the supplies or services ordered are unique or highly specialized;

(iii) The order must be issued on a sole-source basis in the interest of economy and efficiency as a logical follow-on to an order already issued under the contract, provided that all awardees were given a fair opportunity to be considered for the original order.

(iv) It is necessary to place an order to satisfy a minimum guarantee.

(3) *Pricing orders.* If the contract did not establish the price for the supply or service, the contracting officer must establish prices for each order using the policies and methods in [subpart 15.4](#).

(4) *Decision documentation for orders.* The contracting officer shall document in the contract file the rationale for placement and price of each order, including the basis for award and the rationale for any tradeoffs among cost or price and non-cost considerations in making the award decision. This documentation need not quantify the tradeoffs that led to the decision. The contract file shall also identify the basis for using an exception to the fair opportunity process. If the agency uses the logical follow-on exception, the rationale shall describe why the relationship between the initial order and the follow-on is logical (*e.g.*, in terms of scope, period performance, or value).

(5) *Task and Delivery Order Ombudsman.* The head of the agency shall designate a task-order contract and delivery-order contract ombudsman. The ombudsman must review complaints from contractors and ensure they are afforded a fair opportunity to be considered, consistent with the procedures in the contract. The ombudsman must be a senior agency official who is independent of the contracting officer and may be the agency's competition advocate.

(c) *Limitation on ordering period for task-order contracts for advisory and assistance services.*

(1) Except as provided for in paragraphs (c)(2) and (c)(3), the ordering period of a task-order contract for advisory and assistance services, including all options or modifications, normally may not exceed 5 years.

(2) The 5-year limitation does not apply when--

(i) A longer ordering period is specifically authorized by a statute; or

(ii) The contract is for an acquisition of supplies or services that includes the acquisition of advisory and assistance services and the contracting officer, or other official designated by the head of the agency, determines that the advisory and assistance services are incidental and not a significant component of the contract.

(3) The contracting officer may extend the contract on a sole-source basis only once for a period not to exceed 6 months if the contracting officer, or other official designated by the

head of the agency, determines that--

(i) The award of a follow-on contract is delayed by circumstances that were not reasonably foreseeable at the time the initial contract was entered into; and

(ii) The extension is necessary to ensure continuity of services, pending the award of the follow-on contract.

16.506 -- Solicitation Provisions and Contract Clauses.

(a) Insert the clause at [52.216-18](#), Ordering, in solicitations and contracts when a definite-quantity contract, a requirements contract, or an indefinite-quantity contract is contemplated.

(b) Insert a clause substantially the same as the clause at [52.216-19](#), Order Limitations, in solicitations and contracts when a definite-quantity contract, a requirements contract, or an indefinite-quantity contract is contemplated.

(c) Insert the clause at [52.216-20](#), Definite Quantity, in solicitations and contracts when a definite-quantity contract is contemplated.

(d)

(1) Insert the clause at [52.216-21](#), Requirements, in solicitations and contracts when a requirements contract is contemplated.

(2) If the contract is for nonpersonal services and related supplies and covers estimated requirements that exceed a specific Government activity's internal capability to produce or perform, use the clause with its Alternate I.

(3) If the contract includes subsistence for both Government use and resale in the same Schedule, and similar products may be acquired on a brand-name basis, use the clause with its Alternate II (but see paragraph (d)(5) of this section).

(4) If the contract involves a partial small business set-aside, use the clause with its Alternate III (but see paragraph (d)(5) of this section).

(5) If the contract--

(i) Includes subsistence for Government use and resale in the same schedule and similar products may be acquired on a brand-name basis; and

(ii) Involves a partial small business set-aside, use the clause with its Alternate IV.

(e) Insert the clause at [52.216-22](#), Indefinite Quantity, in solicitations and contracts when an indefinite-quantity contract is contemplated.

(f) Insert the provision at [52.216-27](#), Single or Multiple Awards, in solicitations for indefinite-quantity contracts that may result in multiple contract awards. Modify the provision to specify the estimated number of awards. Do not use this provision for advisory and assistance services contracts that exceed 3 years and \$11.5 million (including all options).

(g) Insert the provision at [52.216-28](#), Multiple Awards for Advisory and Assistance Services, in solicitations for task-order contracts for advisory and assistance services that exceed 3 years and \$11.5 million (including all options), unless a determination has been made under 16.504(c)(2)(i)(A). Modify the provision to specify the estimated number of awards.