

(i) Request approval prior to publishing the proposed rule containing the size standard. The request must include: an explanation of the contemplated industry size standard, the reasons the SBA size standard is not appropriate, and the reasons the proposed size standard would be appropriate; and a certification that there will be compliance with the criteria set forth in paragraphs (b)(1)(i) and (b)(1)(ii) of this section; and

(ii) Agree to provide written notice to SBA's Administrator prior to publishing the contemplated size standard as a final rule. The notice must include: a copy of the intended final rule, including the preamble, or a separate written justification for the intended size standard followed by a copy of the intended final rule and preamble prior to its publication; copies of all public comments relating to the size standard received in response to the proposed rule; and any other supporting documentation relevant to the size standard and requested by SBA's Administrator.

(3) When approving any size standard established pursuant to subsection (b) of this section, SBA's Administrator will ensure that the size standard varies from industry to industry to the extent necessary to reflect the differing characteristics of the various industries, and consider other relevant factors.

(4) Where the agency head is developing a size standard for the sole purpose of performing a Regulatory Flexibility Analysis pursuant to the Regulatory Flexibility Act, the department or agency may, after consultation with the SBA Office of Advocacy, establish a size standard different from SBA's which is more appropriate for such analysis.

§ 121.903 When does SBA determine the size status of a business concern?

For the purpose of compliance with programs of other agencies, SBA will base its size determination on the size of the concern as of the date set forth in the request of the other agency.

PROCEDURES FOR SIZE PROTESTS AND REQUESTS FOR FORMAL SIZE DETERMINATIONS

§ 121.1001 Who may initiate a size protest or request a formal size determination?

(a) *Size Status Protests.* (1) For SBA's Small Business Set-Aside Program, including the Property Sales Program, the following entities may file a size protest in connection with a particular procurement or sale:

- (i) Any offeror;
- (ii) The contracting officer;
- (iii) The SBA Government Contracting Area Director having responsibility for the area in which the headquarters of the protested offeror is located, regardless of the location of a parent company or affiliates, or the Associate Administrator for Government Contracting; and

(iv) Other interested parties. Other interested parties include large businesses where only one concern submitted an offer for the specific procurement in question. A concern found to be other than small in connection with the procurement is not an interested party unless there is only one remaining offeror after the concern is found to be other than small.

(2) For competitive 8(a) contracts, the following entities may protest:

- (i) Any offeror;
- (ii) The contracting officer; or
- (iii) The SBA District Director, or designee, in either the district office serving the geographical area in which the procuring activity is located or the district office that services the apparent successful offeror, or the Associate Administrator for 8(a) Business Development.

(3) For SBA's Subcontracting Program, the following entities may protest:

- (i) The prime contractor;
- (ii) The contracting officer;
- (iii) Other potential subcontractors;
- (iv) The responsible SBA Government Contracting Area Director or the Associate Administrator for Government Contracting; and
- (v) Other interested parties.

(4) For SBA's Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) Program, the following entities may protest:

- (i) A prospective offeror;
- (ii) The funding agreement officer;
- (iii) The responsible SBA Government Contracting Area Director or the Assistant Administrator for Technology; and
- (iv) Other interested parties.

(5) For the Department of Defense's Small Disadvantaged Business (SDB) Program, and any other similar program of another Federal agency, the following entities may file a protest in connection with a particular SDB procurement:

- (i) Any offeror for the specific SDB requirement;
- (ii) The contracting officer; and
- (iii) The responsible SBA Government Contracting Area Director, the Associate Administrator for Government Contracting, or the Associate Administrator for MED.

(6) For SBA's HUBZone program, the following entities may protest in connection with a particular HUBZone procurement:

- (i) Any concern that submits an offer for a specific HUBZone set-aside contract;
- (ii) Any concern that submitted an offer in full and open competition and its opportunity for award will be affected by a price evaluation preference given a qualified HUBZone SBC;
- (iii) The contracting officer; and
- (iv) The Associate Administrator for Government Contracting, or designee.

(7) For any unrestricted Government procurement in which status as a small business may be beneficial, including, but not limited to, the award of a contract to a small business where there are tie bids, the opportunity to seek a Certificate of Competency by a small business, and SDB price evaluation preferences, the following entities may protest in connection with a particular procurement:

- (i) Any offeror;
- (ii) The contracting officer; and
- (iii) The responsible SBA Government Contracting Area Director, the Associate Administrator for Government Contracting, or the Associate Administrator for MED.

(b) *Request for Size Determinations.* (1) For SBA's Financial Assistance Programs, the following entities may request a formal size determination:

- (i) The applicant for assistance; and
- (ii) The SBA official with authority to take final action on the assistance requested. That official may also request the appropriate Government Contracting Area Office to determine whether affiliation exists between an applicant for financial assistance and one or more other entities for purposes of determining whether the applicant would exceed the loan limit amount imposed by § 120.151 of this chapter.

(2) For SBA's 8(a) BD program:

- (i) Concerning initial or continued 8(a) BD eligibility, the following entities may request a formal size determination:

(A) The 8(a) BD applicant concern or Participant; or

(B) The Assistant Administrator of the Division of Program Certification and Eligibility or the Associate Administrator for 8(a)BD.

- (ii) Concerning individual sole source 8(a) contract awards, the following entities may request a formal size determination:

(A) The Participant nominated for award of the particular sole source contract;

(B) The SBA program official with authority to execute the 8(a) contract; or

(C) The SBA District Director in the district office that services the Participant, or the Associate Administrator for 8(a)BD.

(3) For SBA's Certificate of Competency Program, the following entities may request a formal size determination:

(i) The offeror who has applied for a COC; and

(ii) The responsible SBA Government Contracting Area Director or the Associate Administrator for Government Contracting.

(4) For SBA's sale or lease of government property, the following entities may request a formal size determination:

(i) The responsible SBA Government Contracting Area Director or the Associate Administrator for Government Contracting; and

(ii) Authorized officials of other Federal agencies administering a property sales program.

(5) For eligibility to pay reduced patent fees, the following entities may request a formal size determination:

(i) The applicant for the reduced patent fees; and

(ii) The Patent and Trademark Office.

(6) For purposes of determining compliance with small business requirements of another Government agency program not otherwise specified in this section, an official with authority to administer the program involved may request a formal size determination.

[61 FR 3286, Jan. 31, 1996, as amended at 63 FR 31907, June 11, 1998; 63 FR 35739, June 30, 1998]

§ 121.1002 Who makes a formal size determination?

The responsible Government Contracting Area Director or designee makes all formal size determinations in response to either a size protest or a request for a formal size determination, with the exception of size determinations for purposes of the Disaster Loan Program, which will be made by the Disaster Area Office Director or designee responsible for the area in which the disaster occurred.

§ 121.1003 Where should a size protest be filed?

A protest involving a government procurement or sale must be filed with the contracting officer for the procurement or sale, who must forward the protest to the SBA Government Contracting Area Office serving the area in which the headquarters of the protested concern is located, regardless of the location of any parent company or affiliates.

§ 121.1004 What time limits apply to size protests?

(a) *Protests by entities other than contracting officers or SBA.* (1) *Non-negotiated procurement or sale.* A protest must be received by the contracting officer prior to the close of business on the 5th day, exclusive of Saturdays, Sundays, and legal holidays, after bid or proposal opening.

(2) *Negotiated procurement.* A protest must be received by the contracting officer prior to the close of business on the 5th day, exclusive of Saturdays,

Sundays, and legal holidays, after the contracting officer has notified the protestor of the identity of the prospective awardee.

(3) *Multiple award schedule.* On a multiple award schedule procurement set aside for small business, protests will be considered timely if received by SBA at any time prior to the expiration of the contract period (including renewals).

(b) *Protests by contracting officers or SBA.* The time limitations in paragraph (a) of this section do not apply to contracting officers or SBA, and they may file protests before or after awards, except to the extent set forth in paragraph (e) of this section.

(c) *Effect of contract award.* A timely filed protest applies to the procurement in question even though a contracting officer awarded the contract prior to receipt of the protest.

(d) *Untimely protests.* A protest received after the allotted time limits must still be forwarded to SBA. SBA will dismiss untimely protests.

(e) *Premature protests.* A protest filed by any party, including the contracting officer, before bid opening or notification to offerors of the selection of the apparent successful offer will be dismissed as premature.

§ 121.1005 How must a protest be filed with the contracting officer?

A protest must be delivered to the contracting officer by hand, telegram, mail, FAX, or telephone. If a protest is made by telephone, the contracting officer must later receive a confirming letter either within the 5-day period in § 121.1004(a)(1) or postmarked no later than one day after the date of the telephone protest.

§ 121.1006 When will a size protest be referred to an SBA Government Contracting Area Office?

(a) A contracting officer who receives a protest (other than from SBA) must forward the protest promptly to the SBA Government Contracting Area Office serving the area in which the headquarters of the offeror is located.

(b) A contracting officer's referral must contain the following information: