

Often, the debriefing occurs before or during the time a contract is being assembled for signature. For competitive sealed bids, a summary of bid prices is assembled and distributed just prior to meeting with a responding bidder. During the meeting, the Contracting Officer responds to vendor questions about the bid process. For competitive sealed proposals, separate discussions are held with each bidder. The Contracting Officer discusses how the proposal was scored and answers any questions specific only to the bidder's proposal. Should debriefings occur prior to award, the other proposals and pricing are discussed only after the award has been made.

The bidder's participation in the debriefing at the minimum might include the person(s) signing the bid and the bidder's proposed project lead. Persons representing the public agency should minimally include the Contract Officer, and the Technical Project Officer. The bidders usually welcome debriefings conducted in open, honest communications.

Post-Award Start-Up Conferences with the Awarded Contractor

The decision to conduct a post-award conference depends on the following variables:

- size and complexity of the project
- contract type
- urgency of the project
- contractor's performance history.

In most situations, it is very beneficial to hold a post-award conference attended by personnel from both parties to the contract. After the contract has been executed, it is time to discuss contract performance expectations with the Contract Administration Team. Attendees should include all members of the public agency's Contract Administration Team and their corresponding contractor counterparts. A post-award conference ensures that the contractor understands the expectations, performs accordingly, and can provide the foundation for an effective contract effort. If it is determined after a contract award that the contractor does not or may not have a clear understanding of the scope of the contract, the technical requirements, or the rights and obligations of each party, it is essential that the public agency initiate appropriate actions to clarify any ambiguities and resolve any misunderstandings.

The basic objectives of a post-award conference are to:

- make sure the contractor understands the technical requirements of the contract
- clarify the rights and responsibilities of both parties
- determine the need for a follow-up meeting.

During the post-award conference, the Contracting Officer should provide leadership in reviewing the following issues:

- the public agency's mission and objective and how they relate to the contract
 - restating the promises made by both parties in the contract language
 - any special contract provisions
 - identification of all individuals authorized to make decisions or modifications regarding the contract
 - the procedures that will be followed in monitoring the contractor's effort (inducing any quality control and testing requirements, time sheets, reports required and when, etc.)
 - any approach to quality control that the contractor plans to use
 - any incentive features included in the contract
 - the reporting requirements the contractor is expected to meet
 - payment procedures
 - any subcontracting issues
 - delivery
 - hazardous material or operations and safety precautions required.
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Following the post-award conference, the Contracting Officer should produce a formal report summarizing the major issues and should identify any issues not resolved or requiring additional action. The report should be distributed to everyone who attended the meeting and to any other appropriate personnel.

Critical Areas for Monitoring by the Contract Administration Team

Chapter 3 mentioned that anticipating the typical contract administration problems that can occur and developing contract goals could manage risk. Each type of purchase has typical contract administration problems associated with it. A graph included in Chapter 3 has been repeated as Figure 7 due to the critical nature of monitoring for these types of problems.