



**Department of
Civil Service**

**Procurement Lobbying Policy
RFP entitled:
"New York State Vision Plan Services"**

**Procurement Lobbying, Ch.4, L. 2010 State Finance Law (SFL)
Sections 139-j and 139-k
ADM 982-1 (7/2019)**

I. Definitions

For the purpose of this policy, the following definitions apply:

"Article of procurement" means a commodity, service, technology, public work, construction, revenue contract, the purchase, sale or lease of real property or an acquisition or granting of other interest in real property, that is the subject of a Department governmental procurement.

"Contacts" means any oral, written, or electronic communication (unless it is a Contact that is included among certain statutory exemptions set forth in State Finance Law §139-j(3)(a)) with a governmental entity under circumstances where a reasonable person would infer that the communication was intended to influence the governmental entity's conduct or decision regarding the governmental procurement.

"Procurement Contract" means any contract or other agreement, including an amendment, extension, renewal, or change order to an existing contract (other than amendments, extensions, renewals, or change orders that are authorized and payable under the terms of the contract as it was finally awarded or approved by the comptroller, as applicable), for an article of procurement involving an estimated annualized expenditure in excess of \$15,000. Grants, contracts entered into under SFL Article 11-B, and intergovernmental agreements shall not be deemed "procurement contracts" for the purpose of this policy.

"Governmental entity" means:

- a) Any department, board, bureau, commission, division, office, council, committee or officer of the state, whether permanent or temporary, including the Department;
- b) Each house of the state legislature;
- c) The unified court system;
- d) Any public authority, public benefit corporation or commission created by or existing pursuant to the public authorities law;

- e) Any public authority or public benefit corporation, at least one of whose members is appointed by the governor or who serves as a member by virtue of holding a civil office of the state;
- f) A municipal agency, as that term is defined in paragraph (ii) of subdivision (s) of section one-c of the legislative law;
- g) A subsidiary or affiliate of such a public authority.

“Offeror” means any individual or entity, or any employee, agent, consultant, or person acting on behalf of such individual or entity, who contacts the Department or any other State governmental entity about a governmental procurement during that procurement’s restricted period of such governmental procurement whether or not the caller has a financial interest in the outcome of the procurement; provided, however, that a governmental agency or its employees that communicates with the procuring agency regarding a governmental procurement in the exercise of its oversight duties shall not be considered an Offeror.

“Offeror” includes prospective Offerors prior to the due date for the submission of offers/bids in response to the solicitation document.

"Proposal" means any bid, quotation, offer or response to a Department solicitation of submissions relating to procurement.

“Governmental procurement” means:

- a) The public announcement, public notice, or public communication to any potential vendor of a determination of need for a procurement, which shall include, but not be limited to, the public notification of the specifications, bid documents, request for proposals or evaluation criteria for a procurement contract;
- b) The solicitation for a procurement contract;
- c) The evaluation of a procurement contract;
- d) The award, approval, denial, or disapproval of a procurement contract; or
- e) The approval or denial of an assignment, amendment (other than amendments that are authorized and payable under the terms of the procurement contract as it was finally awarded or approved by the State Comptroller, as applicable), renewal or extension of a procurement contract, or any other material change in the procurement contract resulting in a financial benefit to the Offeror/Contractor.

"Restricted period" means the period of time commencing with the earliest posting, on the Department's website, in a newspaper of general circulation, or in the procurement opportunities newsletter in accordance with Article four-C of the Economic Development Law, of written notice, advertisement or solicitation of a request for Proposal, invitation for bids, or solicitation of proposals, or any other method provided for by law or regulation for soliciting a response from Offerors intending to result in a procurement contract with the Department, and ending with the final contract award and approval of the contract by the Department and, where applicable, the Office of the State Comptroller.

"Revenue contract" means any written agreement between the Department and an Offeror whereby the Department gives or grants a concession or a franchise.

II. Designated Contacts

For each governmental procurement, the Department shall at the same time that a restricted period is imposed, designate, with regard to each governmental procurement, a person or person(s) who are knowledgeable about the procurement and who may be contacted by Offerors relating to the governmental procurement. Each Offeror who contacts the Department during a procurement's restricted period is permitted to make permissible contacts only the person(s) designated by the Department for that purpose (i.e., Designated Contact). Such contacts must comply with the requirements established by SFL sections 139-j and 139-k, and with the requirements set forth by the Department in the solicitation document.

III. Offeror Affirmation of Understanding and Agreement to Comply

As a threshold requirement to participating in a procurement, the Department shall require each Offeror to provide written affirmation of its understanding of and agreement to comply with the Department's policy and procedures relating to permissible contacts during the governmental procurement's restricted period. Such a written affirmation by an Offeror shall be deemed to apply to any amendments to a procurement submitted by the Department after an initial affirmation is received with an initial bid.

IV. Contact Documentation

Upon any contact during the procurement's restricted period, Department staff shall obtain the name, address, telephone number, place of principal employment, and occupation of the person or organization making the contact, and also shall inquire whether the person or organization making the contact was the Offeror or was retained, employed, or designated by or on behalf of the Offeror to appear before or contact the

Department about the procurement. All recorded contacts shall be recorded on the appropriate form(s) and included in the procurement record.

V. Non-responsibility Disclosure

Department staff shall ensure that all solicitation documents require Offerors to disclose findings of non-responsibility made within the previous four years by any State governmental entity where such prior finding of non-responsibility was due to:

- a) A violation of the procurement lobbying requirements established at SFL section 139-j; or
- b) The intentional provision of false or incomplete information to a government entity.

VI. Non-responsibility Determination

The failure of an Offeror to timely disclose accurate or complete information to the Department regarding the above shall be considered by the Department in its determination of the Offeror's responsibility. No procurement contract shall be awarded to any such Offeror, its subsidiaries, and any related or successor entity with substantially similar function, management, board of directors, officers and shareholders unless the Department finds that the award of the contract to that entity is necessary to protect public property or public health or safety, and that the entity is the only source capable of supplying the required article of procurement within the necessary timeframe, provided however, that the Department shall include in the procurement record a statement describing the basis for such finding.

VII. Contractor Certification

A contract award subject to SFL sections 139-j and 139-k shall contain a certification by the successful Offeror that all information provided to the Department with respect to the procurement lobbying requirements established by those sections is complete, true and accurate.

Each contract shall contain a provision authorizing the Department to terminate such contract in the event such certification is found to be intentionally false or intentionally incomplete. The Department shall include in the procurement record a statement describing the basis for such termination.

Any employee of the Department who becomes aware that an Offeror has made an impermissible contact(s) during the procurement shall immediately notify the Department's Ethics Officer or the Department's Director of Internal Audit. If an Offeror violates these requirements with regard to permissible contacts at a governmental entity

other than the Department, the employee of that entity who becomes aware of the violation shall notify that entity's Ethics Officer, Inspector General, if any, or other official of that entity responsible for reviewing or investigating such matters, who shall in turn notify the Department's Ethics Officer or the Department's Director of Internal Audit.

VIII. Department Review of Alleged Violations and the Imposition of Sanctions

- a) If the Department's Ethics Officer or the Department's Director of Internal Audit receives notification of an allegation that an Offeror has made an impermissible contact during the procurement's restricted period as described above, the Department's Director of Internal Audit shall immediately investigate such allegation. If the position of Director of Internal Audit is vacant, the Ethics Officer shall conduct the investigation, or the Commissioner may appoint a designee to investigate the allegation. In no event shall the person conducting the investigation be someone who has participated in the preparation of the solicitation document, the evaluation of Proposals, or the selection decision.
- b) If the investigation indicates that sufficient cause exists to believe that the allegation is true, the Department shall give the Offeror reasonable notice that an investigation is ongoing and an opportunity to be heard in response to the allegation. At the Department's discretion, such opportunity to be heard may be provided by giving the Offeror the opportunity to meet with the Department staff conducting the investigation or by the Offeror's submission of a written statement, or both. The Offeror may, but need not, be represented by counsel during the investigation. Any and all issues concerning the manner in which the investigation process is conducted shall be determined solely by the Department staff conducting the investigation.
- c) If it is found that an Offeror has knowingly and willfully made an impermissible contact in violation of these requirements, then the Department staff making such findings shall report to the President of the Civil Service Commission related instances, if any, of any Department employee's violation of Public Officers Law sections 73(5) and 74.

IX. Sanctions

- a) A finding that an Offeror has knowingly and willfully made an impermissible contact shall result in a determination of non-responsibility for such Offeror. Concomitantly, such Offeror and its subsidiaries, and any related or successor entity with substantially similar function, management, board of directors, officers and shareholders, shall not be awarded the procurement contract, unless the Department finds that the award of the procurement contract to that entity is necessary to protect public property or public health or safety, and that the entity

is the only source capable of supplying the required article of procurement within the necessary timeframe. If such in the case, the Department shall include in the procurement record a statement describing the basis for such a finding.

- b) Any subsequent determination of an Offeror's non-responsibility due to violation of these requirements within four years of a prior determination of non-responsibility due to a violation of these requirements shall result in the Offeror being rendered ineligible to submit a proposal on or be awarded any procurement contract for a period of four years from the date of the second non-responsibility determination.