

TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND COMMUNITY AFFAIRS
TDHCA Governing Board Approved Rule Review for
§1.4, Protest Procedures for Contractors

Disclaimer

Attached is 10 TAC Chapter 1, Administration, Subchapter A, General Policies and Procedures, §1.4, Protest Procedures for Contractors, that was approved by the TDHCA Governing Board on February 10, 2022 for rule review. The purpose of the proposed action is to conduct a rule review in accordance with Tex. Gov't Code §2001.039, which requires a state agency to review its rules every four years. At this time, the Department has determined that there continues to be a need for this rule and has also determined that no changes to this rule as currently in effect are necessary. This document, including its preamble, is expected to be published in the February 25, 2022, edition of the *Texas Register* and that published version will constitute the official version for purposes of public comment and can be found at the following link: <https://www.sos.texas.gov/texreg/index.shtml>.

Public Comment

Public Comment Period: Start: 8:00 a.m. Austin local time on February 25, 2022
End: 5:00 p.m. Austin local time on March 25, 2022

Comments received after 5:00 p.m. Austin local time on March 25, 2022, will not be accepted.

Written comments may be submitted, in hard copy or electronic formats within the designated public comment period to:

Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs
Attn: Brooke Boston
Rules Comments
P.O. Box 13941
Austin, Texas 78711-3941
Email: brooke.boston@tdhca.state.tx.us

Those making public comment are encouraged to reference the specific draft rule, policy, or plan related to their comment as well as a specific reference or cite associated with each comment.

Please be aware that all comments submitted to the TDHCA will be considered public information.

TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND COMMUNITY AFFAIRS
Street Address: 221 East 11th Street, Austin, TX 78701
Mailing Address: PO Box 13941, Austin, TX 78711-3941
Main Number: 512-475-3800 Toll Free: 1-800-525-0657
Email: info@tdhca.state.tx.us Web: www.tdhca.state.tx.us

Attachment 1: Notice of Proposed Rule Review for 10 TAC Chapter 1, Administration, Subchapter A, General Policies and Procedures, 10 TAC §1.4, Protest Procedures for Contractors

The Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs (the Department) files this notice of rule review for 10 TAC Chapter 1, Administration, Subchapter A, General Policies and Procedures, 10 TAC §1.4, Protest Procedures for Contractors. The purpose of the proposed action is to conduct a rule review in accordance with Tex. Gov't Code §2001.039, which requires a state agency to review its rules every four years.

At this time, the Department has determined that there continues to be a need for this rule, which is to comply with 34 TAC Chapter 20, Subchapter F, Division 3, the rules of the Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts addressing procurement, which require state agencies to adopt protest procedures consistent with the Comptroller's procedures. The Department has also determined that no changes to this rule as currently in effect are necessary. This rule proposed for readoption will be noted in the Texas Register's Review of Agency Rules section without publication of the text.

REQUEST FOR PUBLIC COMMENT. All comments or questions in response to this notice of rule review may be submitted in writing from February 25, 2022, through March 25, 2022. Written comments may be submitted to Brooke Boston, Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs, P.O. Box 13941, Austin, Texas 78711-3941, or by email to bboston@tdhca.state.tx.us. ALL COMMENTS MUST BE RECEIVED BY 5:00 p.m. Austin local time, March 25, 2022.

Attachment 2: Text of Rule as Currently in Effect for 10 TAC §1.4, Protest Procedures for Contractors

(a) Purpose. The purpose of this rule provides for the Department's compliance with 34 TAC Chapter 20, Subchapter F, Division 3, the rules of the Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts addressing procurement, which require state agencies to adopt protest procedures consistent with the Comptroller's procedures.

(b) Definitions. The following words and terms, when used in this subchapter, shall have the following meanings, unless the context clearly indicates otherwise.

(1) Board--The Governing Board of the Department.

(2) Department--The Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs.

(3) Interested Parties-- All vendors who have submitted bids or proposals for the contract involved. A list of interested parties is available upon request from the Department.

(4) Protest--A written objection submitted to the Department by any actual or prospective bidder, offeror, or contractor who is aggrieved in connection with the solicitation, evaluation, or award of a procurement contract by the Department.

(c) These procedures are for Department procurements only. Any actual or prospective bidder, offeror, or contractor who is aggrieved in connection with a solicitation, evaluation, or award may formally protest to the Department's Purchasing Officer.

(d) To be considered timely, the Protest must be filed in accordance with the requirements of 34 TAC §20.535(b).

(e) To be considered complete, the Protest must be in writing, signed by an authorized representative, notarized, and contain:

(1) a specific identification of the statutory or regulatory provision(s) that the Person submitting the Protest alleges to have been violated;

(2) a specific description of each act made by the Department that the Person submitting the Protest alleges to have been violated specified in the statutory or regulatory provision(s) identified in paragraph (1) of this Subsection;

(3) a precise statement of the relevant facts including:

(A) sufficient documentation to establish that the Protest has been timely filed;

(B) a description of the adverse impact to the Department or the state; and

(C) a description of the resulting adverse impact to the protesting vendor;

(4) a statement of the argument and authorities that the Person submitting the Protest offers in support of the Protest;

(5) an explanation of the subsequent action the Person submitting the Protest is requesting; and

(6) except for a Protest that concerns the solicitation documents or actions associated with the publication of solicitation documents, a statement confirming that copies of the Protest have been mailed or delivered to other identifiable Interested Parties.

(f) The Purchasing Officer shall have the initial authority to settle and resolve the Dispute concerning the solicitation or award of a contract. The Purchasing Officer may dismiss the Protest if it is not timely filed or does not meet the requirements of this section. The Purchasing Officer may solicit written responses to the Protest from other Interested Parties.

(g) If the Protest is not resolved by mutual agreement, the Purchasing Officer will provide a written recommendation to the Department's Executive Director.

(h) The Executive Director shall issue a final written determination on the Protest within 15 calendar days after receipt of the Purchasing Officer's recommendation in accordance with the requirements of 34 TAC §20.537(c).

(i) In the alternative, the Executive Director may, in his or her discretion, refer the matter to the Department's Governing Board for their consideration at a regularly scheduled meeting. The decision of the Board shall be final.

(j) A protesting party may appeal the determination of the Executive Director under Subsection (g) of this section to the Department's Governing Board. An appeal of the Executive Director's determination must be in writing and received by the Purchasing Officer not later than 10 calendar days after the date the Executive Director sent written notice of their determination. The scope of the appeal shall be limited to review of the Executive Director's determination. The protesting party must mail or deliver to all other interested parties a copy of the appeal, which must contain a certified statement that such copies have been provided.

(1) The appeal will be presented for consideration at the next regularly scheduled meeting of the Governing Board. The decision of the Governing Board shall be final.

(2) An appeal that is not filed timely shall not be considered unless good cause for delay is shown in writing relating to issues that are significant to agency procurement practices or procedures, or the Department's General Counsel makes such a determination.

(k) All documents collected by the Department as part of a solicitation, evaluation, and/or award of a contract shall be retained with the procurement file according to Department's Records Retention Schedule.

(l) The Department reserves all of its rights under 34 TAC §20.536. The Department may award a solicitation or award without delay, in spite of a timely filed Protest, to protect the best interests of the state.