

Complaints and Protest Policy

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

PUBLISH DATE: April 26, 2021

1. **Question:** **What is the difference between the complaint and question and answer period during the solicitation process?**
- Answer:** Both processes occur during the competitive solicitation portion of the procurement process with a focus on the solicitation requirements and evaluation process. The question and answer period and the pre-bid conference are both opportunities to seek clarifications regarding the solicitation requirements and evaluation process. In the event of unresolved vendor issues or concerns that were not resolved during the question and answer period or pre-bid conference, solicitations allow for a formal complaint process. A formal complaint may be based only on one or more of the following grounds: (a) The solicitation unnecessarily restricts competition; (b) The solicitation evaluation or scoring process is unfair or flawed; or (c) The solicitation requirements are inadequate or insufficient to prepare a response.

The intent of these processes allows vendors to raise issues early enough in the process to allow an agency to correct a problem before bids are submitted and time is expended on evaluations.

The question and answer, pre-bid conference, and complaint periods are all opportunities for vendor feedback on the solicitation requirements and evaluation process; and to assist the state agency with market research, accountability, and to improve overall competition.

The agency will consider all questions and complaints and if they result in changes to the solicitation, written amendments will be issued and posted on the state's bidder notification system.