



Comptroller General  
of the United States

Washington, D.C. 20548

# Decision

**Matter of:** Commercial Transfer Systems, Inc.  
**File:** B-240776  
**Date:** August 21, 1990

John G. McJunkin, Esq., Mays & Valentine, for the protester. Catherine M. Evans, and David Ashen, Esq., Office of the General Counsel, GAO, participated in the preparation of the decision.

## DIGEST

1. Bid which contains "n/c" (no charge) instead of dollar price for line item is responsive, as notation indicates bidder's affirmative intent to provide the requirement covered by the line item at no charge to the government.
2. Protest that bid is unbalanced because it offers to provide certain requirements at no charge is dismissed where protester does not allege that bid also contained overstated charges.

## DECISION

Commercial Transfer Systems, Inc. (CTS) protests the award of a contract to Eureka Van and Storage, Inc., the apparent low bidder under invitation for bids (IFB) 3FBG-W-T3-5067-7-31-90, issued by the General Services Administration for moving services. CTS alleges that Eureka's bid of "n/c" (no charge) for two line items renders the bid unbalanced and nonresponsive to the solicitation.

We dismiss the protest.

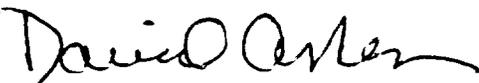
The IFB required bidders to provide hourly standard, overtime, and weekend/holiday rates for each of five line items, for a base year and each of 4 option years. The solicitation provided that, in order to be considered for award, bids must contain hourly rates for each item. CTS argues that Eureka's entry of "n/c" for 2 of the line items renders the bid nonresponsive to this requirement. CTS further contends that Eureka's bid is unbalanced because the "no charge" items were bid below cost.

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The solicitation requirement for bidders to submit rates for each item meant only that a bidder could not leave any items blank but had to take some affirmative step to establish its intent to be obligated by the requirements of each line item. A bidder may indicate its intent to be obligated on a solicitation item by inserting in the appropriate space in the bid schedule a notation--such as "n/c" --that the item will be provided at no cost to the government. Keahey's Moving Co., B-224273, Nov. 24, 1986, 86-2 CPD ¶ 602. Eureka so indicated its intent; therefore, there is no basis for finding its bid nonresponsive in this regard.

Before a bid can be rejected as unbalanced, it must be found both mathematically and materially unbalanced. A bid is mathematically unbalanced only where it is based on nominal prices for some of the items and overstated prices for other items. Thus, in order to prove that a bid is mathematically unbalanced, the protester must offer evidence that the bid contains both understated and overstated prices. OMSERV Corp., B-237691, Mar. 13, 1990, 90-1 CPD ¶ 271. As CTS does not allege that any of the prices in Eureka's bid were overstated, its protest provides no basis for finding Eureka's bid to have been unbalanced.

The protest is dismissed for failure to state a valid basis of protest.

  
for John M. Melody  
Assistant General Counsel