

DECISION**THE COMPTROLLER GENERAL
OF THE UNITED STATES
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20548**

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FILE: B-213547**DATE:** January 13, 1984**MATTER OF:** United Building Service**DIGEST:**

Where, before contract performance has begun, the agency discovers that because of its error in addition of the quotations received the contract had not been awarded to the low offeror, cancellation and re-award to the low offeror is proper since, in the absence of substantial reasons showing that it is not in the best interest of the government to do so, the preservation of the integrity of the competitive procurement system requires such corrective action.

United Building Service protests the cancellation of its contract for janitorial services awarded by the Department of Agriculture under request for quotations (RFQ) No. 83-49. The Department re-awarded the contract to Juanita F. Rivera after it discovered that it had made an error in addition with respect to Rivera's quoted monthly price. Rivera is the low offeror when the error in addition is corrected. United contends that the format Rivera chose for her quotation caused the error by the agency, and argues that the contract to Rivera therefore should be set aside and award made again to United. The protester also contends that Rivera's offer did not comply with the RFQ requirements in any event.

We deny the protest.

The RFQ listed certain government-furnished property to be provided to the contractor, and stated that all other needed cleaning supplies and materials would have to be furnished by the contractor. Rivera's quotation broke the monthly unit price down into \$360.00 for wages

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and \$222.50 for supplies and miscellaneous expenses. The agency incorrectly added these figures to a monthly rate of \$592.50, rather than \$582.50. As United's quotation was \$590.00 per month, the contract was awarded to United. Before performance began, however, Rivera called the error to the attention of the agency, which then canceled United's contract and made award to Rivera. We agree that the agency's action in this instance was proper.

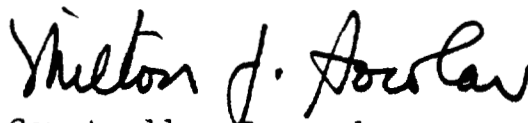
As the initial award to United was based on an erroneous evaluation of Rivera's price, it is clear that United's quotation was not low, so that the award to it was improper. The government's strong interest in the preservation of the integrity of the competitive procurement system requires the action taken here with respect to the United award and the re-award to Rivera, unless there are substantial and convincing reasons why it is not in the best interest of the government to do so. See United States Testing Company, Inc., B-205450, June 18, 1982, 82-1 CPD 604. There were no such reasons existing here that would have justified the failure of the agency to take the necessary action to award the contract to anyone other than the low offeror. We do not agree with United's contention that Rivera should lose the award because the quotation's format--breaking down unit prices instead of bidding a single unit price as contemplated by the solicitation--caused the agency's error in addition. Nothing in the solicitation precludes the price breakdown, and we do not see how Rivera realistically can be charged with the government's error in addition.¹

United also asserts that Rivera "altered the specifications" by quoting a separate price for supplies and miscellaneous expenses, since the government was to furnish all of the cleaning supplies required for performance. We do not agree, since the solicitation plainly stated that the contractor would furnish all of the cleaning supplies and materials not included in the list of government-furnished materials.

¹Rivera apparently extended her unit prices correctly for the annual contract to \$6990.00 for the year. It is therefore not apparent why the erroneous award was made in the first instance.

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The protest is denied.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Milton J. Fowler". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "M".

Acting Comptroller General
of the United States