



Fluet

Bid Protest Post-Award Debriefing Playbook

TURN THE AGENCY'S EXPLANATION INTO AN INFORMED BUSINESS DECISION

A debriefing is more than a meeting; it's a **critical step** in understanding the award decision, protecting your rights, and deciding what comes next. *Use this playbook to make every debriefing count!*

1

PREPARE

Before the Debriefing

**KNOW THE RECORD.
KNOW YOUR RIGHTS.
KNOW WHAT YOU NEED TO LEARN.**



RECONSTRUCT THE COMPETITION

Review the solicitation, amendments, your proposal and final revisions, agency communications, and the award notice. Identify where the competition was likely won or lost.



KNOW WHAT YOU ARE ENTITLED TO RECEIVE

Understand whether a debriefing is required, what information the agency must disclose, what it may not disclose, and whether enhanced debriefing procedures apply.



IDENTIFY THE QUESTIONS THAT MATTER

Prioritize questions tied to the evaluation and award decision. Focus on the issues that could affect your understanding of the result-or your rights.



SET THE OBJECTIVE

Clarify what you need from the debriefing: greater clarity about the evaluation, information to assess a potential challenge, lessons for future competitions, or some combination of those objectives.

2

LISTEN

During the Debriefing

**FOLLOW THE EVALUATION LOGIC.
TEST THE EXPLANATION
AGAINST THE SOLICITATION.**

ASK YOURSELF:

- Does the agency's explanation track the solicitation's **stated** evaluation criteria?
- Can you understand why one proposal was rated **differently** from another?
- Are the strengths, weaknesses, deficiencies, or risks described **consistently** with your proposal?
- Does the best-value determination explain why the awardee's advantages **justified** the result?
- Does anything suggest **unequal treatment** or reliance on unstated consideration?
- Are there gaps, inconsistencies, or explanations that raise **additional** questions?



LISTEN MORE THAN YOU ARGUE.

The debriefing is usually more valuable as an information gathering opportunity than as an opportunity to relitigate the evaluation in real time. Ask focused follow up questions, listen carefully to the answers, and preserve unresolved issues for further analysis.

3

ASSESS

After the Debriefing

**CONNECT THE FACTS
TO THE RULES.**



WHAT HAPPENED?

What does the agency's explanation tell you about the evaluation and award decision?



WHAT RULE APPLIES?

Did the agency comply with the solicitation, the FAR and applicable procurement rules, and the standards governing the evaluation?



DID IT MATTER?

If an error occurred, was there a reasonable possibility that it affected the competitive outcome?



WHAT IS STILL UNKNOWN?

Identify questions that remain unanswered and information that might become available only through a protest record or further proceedings.

4

DECIDE

Then Make the Business Decision

CHOOSE YOUR PATH.



CHALLENGE

There appears to be a viable procurement error affecting the award.

Consider:

- Protest grounds
- Timeliness
- Availability of a stay
- Forum
- Likely remedy
- Business objective



PRESERVE

You do not yet have enough information - or the business case does not currently support a protest.

Consider:

- Preserve relevant records
- Confirm debriefing disclosure
- Track applicable deadlines
- Evaluate later-discovered information



LEARN + REPOSITION

The award appears supportable, and a protest is not warranted.

Use the information to:

- Improve future proposals
- Understand the customer's priorities
- Reassess competitive positioning
- Strengthen future capture strategy



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Bid Protest Post-Award Debriefing Playbook, *cont.*

PREPARE FOR WHAT COMES NEXT

Recognize potential protest issues, protect the record, and be ready to respond.

FOR SUCCESSFUL OFFERORS: BE READY FOR A CHALLENGE

You won; prepare to **defend it.**

ANTICIPATE THE CHALLENGE

Consider what disappointed offerors are likely to learn and what aspects of the evaluation they may question.

PREPARE FOR POSSIBLE INTERVENTION

For significant awards, identify protest counsel early and be prepared to respond if a GAO or COFC protest is filed.

PROTECT THE RECORD

Preserve proposal materials and other relevant information and understand the role of protective orders if litigation follows.

THINK BEYOND THE INITIAL PROTEST

Consider how corrective action, reevaluation, reopened discussions, or a subsequent protest could affect the award.



DEBRIEFING RED FLAGS

Watch for signals that may indicate a **protest issue.**



The evaluation explanation does not track the solicitation.



The agency's word choice or tone in response to questions seems stilted or guarded.



The agency relies on a consideration not disclosed in the evaluation criteria.



The best-value rationale does not explain the tradeoff.



The explanation conflicts with contemporaneous communications or evaluation feedback.



The agency cannot clearly explain a material aspect of the award decision.

**This playbook provides general information only and is not exhaustive. It does not constitute legal advice. For guidance on your specific situation, please consult with qualified legal counsel.*