

Department of Parks and Recreation

Investigations of Improper Activities by State Employees, July 2008 Through December 2008

ALLEGATION I2008-0606 (REPORT I2009-1), APRIL 2009

Department of Parks and Recreation's response as of July 2009

We investigated and substantiated that a supervisor at the Department of Parks and Recreation (Parks and Recreation) failed to ensure that he paid a fair and reasonable price for goods costing \$4,987 in violation of state law. Consequently, Parks and Recreation overpaid for the items by at least \$1,253.

Finding: A supervisor did not solicit competitive bids from suppliers of goods and failed to pay a fair and reasonable price for goods he purchased.

The supervisor purchased a storage container in December 2007 to store supplies for several parks that he oversaw at the time. However, the supervisor did not obtain two price quotes using any of the five techniques described in the State Contracting Manual to ensure that the cost of the storage container was fair and reasonable, as required by state law. The supervisor later asserted to us that he contacted other suppliers but apparently did not document the price quotes he obtained. He also admitted to us that he had not obtained the "best possible price" for the storage container. As proof that the supervisor did not obtain a fair and reasonable price, just three weeks later another Parks and Recreation employee who worked for him obtained a price quote of \$3,734 for a similar storage container. Thus, if the supervisor had obtained and documented fair and reasonable price quotes, Parks and Recreation could have avoided spending an additional \$1,253 for the storage container.

The supervisor provided various reasons why he did not document other price quotes. According to the supervisor, he did not have sufficient staff and was overwhelmed by his workload. In addition, he stated that he had not received sufficient training at the time of the purchase. Parks and Recreation promoted the supervisor in January 2007. However, he indicated that he did not complete his three weeks of supervisor training until June 2008, six months after the purchase of the container.

We recommended that Parks and Recreation require its employees to adequately document their efforts to obtain price quotes to ensure that they obtain a fair and reasonable price for the purchase of goods under \$5,000. We also recommended that Parks and Recreation provide timely training for new supervisors.

Parks and Recreation's Action: Corrective action taken.

In June 2009 Parks and Recreation reported that it gave the supervisor a letter of reprimand for failing to ensure that it paid a fair and reasonable price for the goods costing \$4,987. In July 2009 Parks and Recreation provided a copy of its existing procurement

Investigative Highlight . . .

The Department of Parks and Recreation paid at least \$1,253 more than necessary on a \$4,987 purchase without obtaining competitive price quotes.

policy that addressed the requirement that its employees adequately document their efforts to obtain price quotes to ensure that they obtain a fair and reasonable price for the purchase of goods under \$5,000. Parks and Recreation also stated that it provides courses on purchasing policies and procedures, which are required for all employees that make purchases, not just supervisors. Parks and Recreation noted that the supervisor received the training in April 2004 yet he still failed to ensure that he paid a fair and reasonable price for the goods previously cited.