Welcome to Lesson 5: Contractor Comments!

Now that we have validated the proposed ratings and narratives and sent the evaluation to the contractor, we are ready to log in as the Contractor Representative and provide comments. This is the step where the Contractor Representative reviews the evaluation, provides comments if desired, indicates whether or not they concur with the evaluation, signs the evaluation, and then returns it to the Assessing Official.

There are several significant dates of particular interest to the Contractor Representative once the Assessing Official has sent them the evaluation. The first set of significant dates includes days 1 through 14 following the Assessing Official signature date on the evaluation. During days 1 through 14, the Contractor Representative may provide comments. In addition, the contractor will receive a daily automatic email notification reminding them to provide comments. If the Contractor Representative provides comments during those first 14 days and the Assessing Official or Reviewing Official closes the evaluation, the evaluation will be available for source selection within 1 day. The second significant date to the Contractor Representative is day 15 following the Assessing Official signature date on the evaluation. On day 15, the evaluation is available for source selection, with or without contractor comments and whether or not it has been closed by the government. If the evaluation has not been closed by the government by day 15, it is marked as “Pending”. The third set of significant dates is days 15 through 60 following the Assessing Official signature date on the evaluation. During days 15 through 60, the Contractor Representative will receive a weekly automatic email reminder to submit comments if they have not already done so. The contractor may submit comments during this time, and those comments will be available for source selection within one day. It is important to note that, once the Contractor Representative has submitted comments, they will not be able to view the evaluation again until it has been closed by the government. Therefore, it is advisable for the Contractor Representative to download or print a copy of the evaluation prior to returning it to the Assessing Official if they would like to have a copy available for reference before the evaluation is closed. The contractor’s comments will be marked as “Pending” until the government Assessing Official or Reviewing Official has closed the evaluation. The final significant date to the contractor is day 61 following the Assessing Official signature date on the evaluation. On day 61, the contractor comment period expires. At this time, the Contractor Representative is locked out of the evaluation and may no longer provide comments. Once the contractor comment period has expired, the evaluation is updated to reflect the fact that the contractor did not submit comments. The evaluation will still be marked as “Pending” until it has been closed by the government. The Contractor Representative has 60 days to provide comments on the evaluation, if desired. If the Contractor Representative desires a meeting with the government to discuss the contents of the evaluation, they should request that meeting within 7 calendar days after receiving the transmittal email notification. However, if the Contractor Representative does not request the meeting until after the 7 day window has passed, the government is still strongly encouraged to consider holding that meeting if at all feasible.

The Contractor Representative will review the administrative information in the evaluation to ensure that it is correct. They will also review the ratings, Assessing Official narratives, and recommendation sentence, and may provide comments if desired. The guidelines and best practices that apply to the Assessing Official’s narratives also applies to the Contractor Representative’s comments. Comments should be detailed, descriptive, and supported by objective evidence wherever possible. The Contractor Representative’s comments are limited to 24,000 characters for each evaluation area as well as 24,000 characters for general comments. The Contractor Representative will also indicate if they concur or do not concur with the evaluation.

It is important to note that the decision of whether to concur or non-concur drives the need for a Reviewing Official. If the Contractor concurs with the evaluation, no Reviewing Official is required and the Assessing Official may close the evaluation once it is returned. If the Contractor Representative indicates that they do not concur with the evaluation, they are ensured an additional level of government review because only a Reviewing Official can close the evaluation. Finally, the Contractor Representative will complete their signature blocks and send the evaluation back to the Assessing Official.

Contractor Representatives should carefully note the CPARS use and handling instructions that are included in the transmittal notification email. Evaluations are considered source selection sensitive information. Disclosure of CPARS information to individuals without an official need to know, may negatively impact a contractor’s competitive position. Therefore, Contractor Representatives are advised to limit access to their CPARS information to within their company and to only those employees with a valid need to know. In addition, the use of CPARS information is limited to source selections and responsibility determinations. Contractors should not include CPARS information in their advertising and promotional materials, but may include or reference an evaluation in future proposals submitted to the U.S. Federal Government. Further, CPARS information should not be used to support pre-award surveys or production readiness reviews.

While Contractor Representatives are not required to provide comments on the evaluation, it is a best practice to acknowledge receipt of the evaluation and provide any comments within 60 calendar days. Contractor Representatives should remember that the evaluation will be available for source selection on day 15 following the Assessing Official signature date, with or without contractor comments and whether or not is has been closed by the government.

When the Assessing Official forwarded the evaluation to us as the Contractor Representative, we received an email notification letting us know that the evaluation was ready for our review and action. Let’s login as the Contractor Representative and perform the Contractor Comments step.

We will select Pending Actions in order to see a list of evaluations on our To-Do List that are awaiting our action. We will find the evaluation on our To-Do List and notice that we have an action to Input Comments. We will open our evaluation by clicking on the Document Number.

Next, we will review the sections of the evaluation by working top to bottom. We’ll start with Contractor Information. We will review the information to ensure that it is correct. If any of this information is incorrect, we should update our System for Award Management profile, and notify our Assessing Official. We’ll also review the Contract Information to ensure that the administrative contract information is accurate. We’ll move on to Miscellaneous Information, where we’ll review the Contract Effort Description to ensure that it fully covers the work we are contracted to perform as well as the Key Subcontractors and Effort Performed to ensure that the information is accurate. We can open the attachment by clicking the view button. We’ll take a look at Small Business Subcontracting then move to Ratings. Once we have clicked on Ratings, we can click on each of the evaluation areas to review the Assessing Official’s ratings and narratives for that rating area. We can tell which evaluation areas have been rated because they are indicated by a red check mark.

Let’s say we have a particular interest in the Management evaluation area. We will click on Management where we can review the rating and narrative we have received for the Management evaluation area. In this case, we will notice that we have received a rating of Marginal in Management. Let’s say that we do not agree with this rating and the Assessing Official’s supporting narrative and would like to provide comments and request that the rating and narrative be changed. We can enter comments in the Contractor Representative Comments block below the Assessing Official Comments block. It is important to remember that our comments should be descriptive and should reference documentation and objective facts and measures of performance wherever possible. We have a total of 24,000 characters available for comments for each evaluation area and another 24,000 characters available for general comments. There is a character counter above the Contractor Representative Comments block to show how many characters we have entered in our comments so far. Let’s move on to Assessor.

Here, we can review any additional Assessing Official comments on the evaluation, as well as the Assessing Official’s recommendation sentence and signature block information.

Next, we’ll move to Contractor Rep. Here, we have the option to enter general comments on the evaluation. We must next indicate if we concur or do not concur with the government’s evaluation. We will remember that if we concur, the Assessing Official may close out the evaluation with no additional government review. If we do not concur, the Assessing Official must forward the evaluation to the Reviewing Official for a second level of review before it is closed. Since we did not concur with the rating and narrative we received for the Management evaluation area, we will select the “I do not concur with this evaluation and request that it be reevaluated” choice. Finally, we will complete the signature block by clicking Sign Now, and then we will return the evaluation to the Assessing Official by clicking the Validate and Send to the Assessing Official button. Once we have sent the evaluation to the Assessing Official, the Assessing Official will be sent an email notification that the evaluation is ready for their review. At this point, the evaluation is no longer available on our To-Do List; and is now available on the Assessing Official's To-Do List for their action. We will receive a pop up message. The pop up message gives us the option to view the evaluation.

Since this is the last opportunity for the Contractor Rep to view the evaluation until it is closed, let’s click OK to view the evaluation. We can scroll through the evaluation and view our comments and concurrence or non-concurrence statement. We’ll also notice that the Contractor Representative signature blocks have now been completed. When we are finished viewing the evaluation, we’ll click Home at the top of the screen. Since we have completed the Contractor Comments step, we are ready to exit CPARS. We will do this by clicking Log Out.

Congratulations! You have completed Lesson 5: Contractor Comments. In this lesson, we logged in to CPARS as the Contractor Representative, reviewed the evaluation, provided comments, indicated concurrence or non-concurrence with the evaluation, signed the evaluation, and returned it to the Assessing Official within 60 days. You are now ready to move on to Lesson 6: Review Contractor Comments.