



Florida Department of TRANSPORTATION

Office of Inspector General
Kristofer B. Sullivan, Inspector General

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Kristofer B. Sullivan

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Audit Report No. 20C-008-B
Audit of Duplicate Payments
Metric Engineering, Inc.

December 15, 2022

What We Did

The Office of Inspector General conducted an Audit of Duplicate Payments to Construction Engineering Inspection (CEI) firms to determine if invoiced non-labor direct project costs were excluded from the firm's direct expense and overhead rates per Federal Acquisition Regulations (FAR) 31.201-2 and FAR 31.202 and the Department's governing directives. This audit was conducted as part of the fiscal year 2020-21 annual audit plan.

We examined Metric Engineering, Inc. (Metric) project job cost records for Standard Professional Services Agreement C9U57. We tested five expense transactions invoiced from August 31, 2019, to November 29, 2019, totaling \$7,733.80, or 6.8% of the total maximum limiting amount of \$113,815.

What We Found

We determined Metric properly excluded the tested non-labor direct project costs from the audited overhead and direct expense rates for calendar year 2019 in compliance with FAR 31.202, Direct Costs and FAR 31.201-2, Determining Allowability.

What We Recommend

This report does not contain any recommendations as the results of the audit found Metric was compliant with the FAR and Department governing directives.

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BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION

The Office of Inspector General conducted an Audit of Duplicate Payments to Construction Engineering and Inspection (CEI) firms to determine if invoiced non-labor direct project costs were excluded from the firm's direct expense and overhead rates per Federal Acquisition Regulations (FAR) 31.201-2 and FAR 31.202 and the Department's governing directives. This audit was conducted as part of the fiscal year 2020-21 annual audit plan.

On April 26, 2017, Metric Engineering, Inc. (Metric) entered into contract C9U57 as the Prime consultant with the Department. The purpose of this contract was for CEI services for the Suntrax Test Facility located in Polk County.

The original anticipated length of service was 31 months. For satisfactory completion of service authorized under this contract, the Department agreed to pay the total fee for all accumulated task assignments not to exceed \$4,408,955. The contract allowed reimbursement of field office expenses up to a maximum limiting amount¹ of \$113,815.

¹ The consultant is reimbursed the actual costs incurred in the performance of the contract. A "maximum limiting amount" is normally established to cap the amount the Department will pay for the services.

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RESULTS OF REVIEW

Finding – Other Direct Cost [Rent and Utilities]

We determined Metric properly excluded the tested non-labor direct project costs from the audited overhead and direct expense rates for calendar year (CY) 2019 in compliance with FAR 31.202, Direct Costs and FAR 31.201-2, Determining Allowability.

Federal Acquisition Regulation Part 31.202(a) and (b), (1) and (2) Direct costs states:

- a) No final cost objective shall have allocated to it as a direct cost any cost, if other costs incurred for the same purpose in like circumstances have been included in any indirect cost pool to be allocated to that or any other final cost objective. Direct costs of the contract shall be charged directly to the contract. All costs specifically identified with other final cost objectives of the contractor are direct costs of those cost objectives and are not to be charged to the contract directly or indirectly.
- b) For reasons of practicality, the contractor may treat any direct cost of a minor dollar amount as an indirect cost if the accounting treatment
 - (1) is consistently applied to all final cost objectives; and
 - (2) produces substantially the same results as treating the cost as a direct cost.

FAR 31.201-2 Determining allowability states that:

(d) A contractor is responsible for accounting for costs appropriately and for maintaining records, including supporting documentation, adequate to demonstrate that costs claimed have been incurred, are allocable to the contract, and comply with applicable cost principles in this subpart and agency supplements. The contracting officer may disallow all or part of a claimed cost that is inadequately supported.

Florida Department of Transportation Reimbursement Rate Audit Guidelines Part II – Accounting Systems and Procedures states:

To meet Florida Department of Transportation standards, an accounting system must separate and accumulate direct and indirect costs and must be adequate to support billings to the Department and other clients.

A direct cost is typically any cost that can be identified to a single cost objective (job, contract, project), regardless of whether it is allowable or billable. Any cost not directly identified to the production of a specific product or service, but an essential cost of doing business, is classified as an indirect cost.

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AASHTO² Uniform Audit and Accounting Guide – Chapter 4 – Cost Principles - 4.6 Direct and Indirect Costs [References: Federal Acquisition Regulation 31.202 and 31.203]

A direct cost is any cost that can be identified specifically with a particular contract or project. Costs identified specifically with a contract or project are direct costs and must be allocated/charged directly to the contract or project. All costs specifically identified with a project are direct costs of that project and may not be allocated to another project, either directly or indirectly. Finally, a cost may not be charged as direct and be included in an indirect cost pool.

Direct Expense Rate

Florida Department of Transportation, Negotiation Handbook, Professional Services Contracts, Section 4, Negotiation of Cost of Services, (c) Direct expenses (2021):

Direct project expenses will be compensated using the direct expense rate which is required as a part of annual overhead audits performed for fiscal years ending December 31, 2002, and after. All professional services contracts negotiated since October 1, 2003, have included reimbursement of direct expenses by application of a direct expense rate based on the audit listing of direct costs in relation to the direct labor base. Separate audited rates are required for home office expenses and field office expenses. These rates represent the ratio of direct expenses to actual direct labor excluding premium overtime.

FAR 31.201-5 Credits states that:

The applicable portion of any income, rebate, allowance, or other credit relating to any allowable cost and received by or accruing to the contractor shall be credited to the Government either as a cost reduction or by cash refund. See 31.205-6(j)(3) for rules governing refund or credit to the Government associated with pension adjustments and asset reversions.

As reported in the governing directives above, an incurred cost related to a project or contract is required to be recorded in the accounting system as a direct cost. The Department reimburses CEI firms for certain project related incurred costs, such as rent, utilities, mobilization, and certain approved CEI pay items.

We examined Metric's project job cost records for contract C9U57.³ We tested three field office rent expenses and two field office utility expense transactions invoiced from August 31, 2019, to November 29, 2019, totaling \$7,733.80, or 6.8% of the total maximum limiting amount of \$113,815. See Figure 1: Metric Test Items

² American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials

³ Metric was the prime consultant on standard professional services agreement C9U57

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Figure 1: Metric Test Items

Metric Engineering, Inc.				
Contract C9U57				
Invoice Period Begin	Invoice Period End	Invoice Number	Invoice Amount	Cost Description
8/31/2019	9/27/2019	30	\$2,101.91	Rent
8/31/2019	9/27/2019	30	\$888.45	Utility
9/28/2019	11/1/2019	31	\$2,101.91	Rent
9/28/2019	11/1/2019	31	\$539.62	Utility
11/2/2019	11/29/2019	32	\$2,101.91	Rent
Total: \$7,733.80				

Source: Consultant Invoice Transmittal System (CITS), C9U57

We traced the five invoiced expenses to the job cost detail report and found the costs were recorded as direct costs for the project. We found the field office rent and utility costs were excluded from cost pools used to compute the audited overhead and direct expense rates for CY 2019, in compliance with FAR 31.202, Direct Costs and FAR 31.201-2, Determining Allowability.

During our review of invoice number 32 that included \$2,101.91 for field office rent, we noted Metric recorded the expense to their project job cost but then reversed (removed) the expense. Based upon audit inquiry, Metric confirmed the field office was vacated prior to the rent being due. Additionally, Metric noted they had not provided a credit to the Department. On March 2, 2022, Metric refunded \$2,101.91 to the Department.

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APPENDIX A – Purpose, Scope, and Methodology

The **purpose** of this engagement is to determine if invoiced non-labor direct project costs were excluded from the firm's direct expense and overhead rates.

The **scope** of this audit included the contract between the Department and Metric for contract C9U57, executed April 26, 2017.

The **methodology** included:

- reviewing applicable laws, rules, and regulations, including Federal Acquisition Regulation, Part 31, Contract Cost Principles and Procedures;
- examining and testing job cost records, invoices submitted through the Department's Consultant Invoice Transmittal System, and other direct cost supporting documents; and
- reviewing the Schedule of Direct Labor, Fringe Benefits, and General Overhead audit report.

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APPENDIX B – Affected Entity Response

On December 2, 2022, Metric Engineering, Inc. responded in an email stating they had no comments.

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APPENDIX C – Management Response

On December 5, 2022, the Procurement Office responded by email stating, “Thank you and the Office of Inspector General for looking into the potential duplicate payment issue. It is encouraging that the report on Metric Engineering, Inc. did not have any findings or observations.”

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Julie Garcia, Financial Controller, Metric Engineering, Inc.

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PROJECT TEAM

Engagement was conducted by:
Corbitt Lyons, Auditor

Under the supervision of:
Ryan Moore, Senior Audit Supervisor
Bill Pace, Deputy Audit Director for Contracts
Joseph W. Gilboy, Director of Audit

Approved by:
Kristofer B. Sullivan, Inspector General

STATEMENT OF ACCORDANCE

The Department's mission is to provide a safe transportation system that ensures the mobility of people and goods, enhances economic prosperity, and preserves the quality of our environment and communities.

The Office of Inspector General's mission is to provide independent and objective investigative and audit services that promote accountability, integrity, and efficiency within the Florida Department of Transportation and its partners.

This work product was prepared pursuant to section 20.055, Florida Statutes, in accordance with the Association of Inspectors General *Principles and Standards for Offices of Inspector General*, and conforms with The Institute of Internal Auditors' *International Standards for the Professional Practice of Internal Auditing*.

Please address inquiries regarding this report to the Department's Office of Inspector General at (850) 410-5800.