

# QBS: Qualifications-Based Selection

QBS is used by all federal agencies, 46 state governments and is the law of the land in Illinois.

## QBS Explained

QBS stands for Qualifications Based Selection, which is the preferred method for selection of professional services. QBS is a negotiated, competitive procurement process for the selection based on qualifications and competence in relation to the work to be performed.

QBS procedures are required of federal agencies by the Brooks Act, Public Law 92-582. State and local grant recipients of federal highway, transit and airport funds are also required to use QBS pursuant to the Surface Transportation Act of 1987. QBS is recommended by the American Bar Association in their model procurement code, and is required of most Illinois local government units pursuant to Illinois Public Act 85-854, and Illinois State agencies pursuant to Illinois Public Act 87-673.

## Why QBS

- ✓ **QBS protects the public welfare.** Engineers design the highways and bridges we drive on, our water treatment systems, and all other infrastructure and systems upon which we rely. The design services provided by engineering firms directly affect the health, safety and welfare of the public, and it is important that only the most qualified and experienced firms be tasked with this critical function.
- ✓ **QBS Protects Taxpayers:** Qualifications Based Selection process outperforms the national performance in cost growth and in schedule growth. Based on the analysis of the projects in a recent study by the ACEC Research Institute, the authors conclude that there is a strong association between the use of Qualifications Based Selection, the quality of construction documents developed by the design team, and the final cost and schedule performance-ultimately delivering projects on-time and on-budget.
- ✓ **QBS Drives Innovation:** Qualifications Based Selection leads to increased innovation on projects. The ACEC Research Institute study found that projects incorporating Qualifications Based Selection have a greater likelihood of producing innovative solutions. This is often based on firms having greater opportunities to explore innovations and collaborations when cost is not the driving factor in design team selection.
- ✓ **QBS Benefits Small and Diverse Firms:** QBS helps these firms compete by providing a forum to demonstrate their unique capabilities that often include a greater degree of niche market expertise, knowledge of local regulations and business practices, and greater involvement of senior level management in the execution of a project.

## HOW QBS WORKS

Identify your project

Issue a Request for Qualifications

Evaluate the qualifications

Make a short list of firms to interview

Conduct interviews

Rank firms

Select your top-ranked firm

Jointly define scope with the top ranked consultant

Negotiate a fee

Execute a contract