

# **QUALIFICATIONS BASED SELECTION POLICY (QBS)**

## **Vermilion County Highway Department**

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**Adopted**

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## Purpose and Procurement

In accordance with guidelines and requirements set forth by the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), The Brooks Act (40 USC11) and the Federal Highway Administration's requirements for Procurement, Management and Administration of Engineering and Design Related Services (23 CFR 172), the Vermilion County Highway Department is desirous to establish a Qualifications Based Selection (QBS) process to procure architectural, professional and engineering services from a qualified firm through open competition in a timely manner and at a fair and reasonable cost.

The Vermilion County Highway Department QBS Policy assigns responsibilities to the following. The County Engineer is responsible for determining when architectural, engineering or professional services are needed and will oversee the procurement, management and administration of such services. When applicable, the Assistant County Engineer will aid in these responsibilities. When required, the County Engineer will involve the Vermilion County Board and its various committees for review and approval of processes or contracts.

The Vermilion County Highway Department believes their adopted written QBS policy substantially follows Section 5-5 of the BLRS Manual and specifically Section 5-5.06(e), therefore; approval from IDOT is not required.

The Qualifications Based Selection process will apply to services approaching or valued at \$40,000.00 or more when Federal, State, MFT or TBP funds are used. The process will generally involve the following:

- Solicit Statements of Interest from prequalified firms by posting a public notice
- Shortlist a minimum of three (3) firms for further consideration.
- Solicit a Request for Proposal from shortlisted firms.
- Interview shortlisted firms.
- Rank and select a firm based on proposals and interviews.
- Negotiate a professional services contract for the project.
- Execute the contract.

If an emergency occurs, this process or portions thereof may be waived by the County Engineer or his/her designee. The County Engineer will coordinate justification of and seek approval from IDOT and/or FHWA for emergency selection.

If conditions arise that only a sole source is available for a specific architectural, professional or engineering service, then the County Engineer or his/her designee will coordinate with IDOT and/or FHWA for justification of and approval for selection. Sole source selection will only be used when it is in the public interest and economically advantageous to the County. Sole source selection will be contingent upon satisfactory negotiation for the specific service.

In order to accomplish a comprehensive Qualifications Based Selection process in a legal, impartial and effective manner, the following shall apply:

### **Solicit Statements of Interest**

The County Engineer or his/her designee will publish a notice requesting a Statement of Interest (SOI) from prequalified firms. The due date for the SOI's will be a minimum of fourteen (14) days from the request date. To notify possible interested firms, the County will publish an advertisement in a newspaper with local circulation as well as the 'Official State Newspaper' as designated by the Illinois Department of Central Management Services. The County may also advertise on the County's website and/or solicit by direct contact.

The request for a SOI will generally include:

- Project description (purpose and need)
- Type of work being sought
- Any issues specific to project
- Schedule for selection process
- Possible schedule for project
- Budget, when appropriate
- Prequalification Category as defined by the Illinois Department of Transportation

Submitted SOI's will include the following information:

- Name of firm with address, email and telephone/fax
- Contact person for the firm
- Statement indicating the firm's interest in the project
- A short list of similar projects recently completed by the firm
- A listing of proposed key staff who would be assigned to the project
- A listing of possible sub-consultants/DBE consultants, if utilized or required
- Potential Conflicts of Interest Disclosure using IDOT's form BDE DISC2 TEMPLATE

Submitted SOI's are limited to two (2) pages plus the IDOT form BDE DISC2 TEMPLATE.

## **Prequalification**

Firms must be prequalified to perform the specific work or service being sought by the Vermilion County Highway Department. The Illinois Department of Transportation maintains a list of prequalified firms for engineering, architectural and professional services. Firms seeking to provide services for the Vermilion County Highway Department must be on the prequalified list maintained by IDOT prior to submittal of a Statement of Interest.

If sub-consultants or DBE firms are utilized, they also must be on IDOT's list of prequalified firms or list of prequalified DBE firms.

If services are solicited which IDOT does not maintain a prequalification list, such as GIS or right of way, then those firms will need to provide information on their specific licensure requirements or credentials to be checked by the County Engineer.

## **Debarment/Suspension**

Vermilion County Highway Department uses IDOT form BDE DISC2 TEMPLATE, which includes a section for suspension or disbarment disclosure. No contract will be awarded to any firm/party listed on any state or federal government website that tracks information regarding those who have been disbarred, suspended or limited in rights to contract with any government entity. The County will use various sources to check consultants including, but not limited to, the System for Award Management Exclusions (SAM Exclusions) and the Chief Procurement Office (IDOT) (CPO) website along with other associated CPO's such as the Capital Development Board, General Services and Higher Education. The Illinois Department of Labor and Illinois Department of Human Rights websites may also be utilized.

## **Process to Shortlist Firms**

After SOI's are received, a selection committee will be assembled with the County Engineer serving as chairperson. The committee will have a minimum of three members that typically will include the Assistant County Engineer, other Highway Department staff or other stakeholders.

No employee of the contracting agency or other stakeholder will participate in the selection, award or administration of a contract if there could be a real or perceived conflict of interest.

A minimum of three (3) firms will be shortlisted. If only one or two SOI's are received from prequalified firms, the Vermilion County Highway Department will coordinate with IDOT to ensure compliance with the Qualification Based Selection Process.

The determination for which firms are shortlisted will be based on qualifications, abilities of professional personnel, availability, and past record and experience.

## **Solicit a Request for Proposal (RFP)**

The County Engineer will contact the shortlisted firms and issue a Request for Proposal. The RFP will include:

- Deadline for submittal. Typically, the proposal will be due a minimum of fourteen (14) days from the request date.
- The maximum number of pages for the proposal. Typically, proposals should not be more than twenty (20) pages.
- Any known special requirements for the project.
- A more expanded project description than was provided in the SOI solicitation.
- Whether or not interviews will be conducted.
- County contact information.

The submitted proposal should include:

- Cover letter with firm's logo and contact information
- Key staff resumes
- Listing of support staff with resumes
- Information on sub-consultants or DBE consultants, if utilized
- Current or completed projects similar in scope and magnitude with references
- Project approach/project understanding

## **Interviews**

Inclusion of an interview is at the discretion of the County Engineer. Interviews may be omitted based on issues such as complexity, anticipated fees or number of interested firms. Interviews will be conducted by the Vermilion County Engineer, the Assistant County Engineer and other staff or interested parties, as appropriate. The panel will have at least three (3) members, but no more than five depending on the agencies involved.

It is expected that the firm's consultant interview team will make a presentation and participate in a question and answer session. While no limits are being placed on the number of people or presentation length, the consultant interview team should choose their team wisely and be respectful of everyone's time.

## Selection

After review of the proposals and completion of the interviews (if conducted), the interview panel will score each firm. Scoring will be based on the following evaluation factors:

Evaluation Factor	Weighting
Relevant Experience (Firms previous experience of similar projects will be evaluated)	0-30
Key staff identified (Firms qualifications and professional skills of key personnel will be evaluated)	0-30
Support staff (Qualifications of support will be evaluated)	0-30
Technical approach (Understanding of work, quality control procedures and suggested alternatives)	0-30
Available work capacity of the firm (The firms capability to complete project on time will be determined)	0-30
Communication Skills (The firm's ability to form successful working relationships will be evaluated)	0-30
Reputation (References may be requested and checked)	0-30
Presentation and Interview (Formal presentation and interview may be waived at the discretion of the County Engineer)	0-30
Total	100%

Depending on the project, these criteria may vary slightly with other factors such as past relationships and use of sub-consultants/DBE consultants and their qualifications being taken into consideration. The selection team will also take into account the presentation and interview in making the selection.

In general, location will not be a factor, nor will price.

Upon review of the proposals and completion of the interviews (if conducted) the Section Committee members will assign a score to each firm. Scores will be determined using the Selection and Scoring Sheet in Appendix A. The firm with the highest cumulative score will be selected. After the firms are scored and ranked, the County Engineer will first contact the firm with the highest score by direct contact. Then, the remaining firms will be contacted with the results either by email or direct contact. Rankings will be available upon request.

## **Dispute Resolution**

If any dispute arises from a prequalified participating firm, notice shall be given in writing to the County Engineer within ten (10) working days of the selection. A working day is defined as any weekday, Monday through Friday, excluding federal holidays. After receipt of the written dispute, the County Engineer will schedule a meeting with IDOT District 5 Local Roads, representatives from the Selection Committee and the appellant. The decision by the Illinois Department of Transportation shall be final.

## **Negotiations/Contract**

The County Engineer will use available information and previous contract information to develop an in-house estimate for the project. The County Engineer and the selected firm will discuss by phone or in person the scope of services and formula for payment. After discussions, the firm will prepare a cost proposal for review. After the firm submits a written cost proposal, the County Engineer will review it to ensure that all services desired are included with direct and indirect rates shown as well as a not-to-exceed amount depending on the type of contract being sought. If sub-consultants are to be utilized, the same compensation information for them shall be included in the cost proposal. If terms are agreeable, the contract will follow the typical review and approval process by the Vermilion County Highway Department, Vermilion County Board and IDOT.

If the terms are not agreeable, negotiations will continue until they are. If no agreement can be reached, then negotiations will commence with the second ranked firm and if necessary, the third ranked. If, for some reason, no contract is entered into with any of the firms, the process will be terminated and subsequently restarted.

## **Administration of the Contract**

The Vermilion County Engineer or his/her designee will monitor and evaluate the contract on a continual basis. Invoices for payment will be reviewed by the County Engineer. Invoices will be compared to the agreed upon cost proposal prior to payment or submission to IDOT for reimbursement.

All records will be kept in accordance with IDOT procedures and all required forms including, but not limited to, BLR 05613 will be submitted when applicable. An evaluation of the firm will be done after completion of the project. A copy of the evaluation will be provided to the subject firm. Vermilion County Highway Department will use the evaluation when considering the firm for future projects.



# Appendix A

## Selection and Scoring Sheet

## Selection and Scoring Sheet

Project Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Section Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Project Description: \_\_\_\_\_

Selection Committee Members: \_\_\_\_\_

Firm 1: \_\_\_\_\_ Firm 2: \_\_\_\_\_ Firm 3: \_\_\_\_\_

Evaluator: \_\_\_\_\_

Ratings: 1 – Poor; 2 – Below Average; 3 – Average; 4 – Above Average; 5 - Excellent

<b>Ranking Criteria of Short Listed Firms</b>							
Rating Description	Weight %	Firm 1		Firm 2		Firm 3	
		Rating	Total	Rating	Total	Rating	Total
Relevant Experience (Firms previous experience of similar projects will be evaluated)	0 – 30						
Key staff identified (Firms qualifications and professional skills of key personnel will be evaluated)	0 – 30						
Support staff (Qualifications of support staff will be evaluated)	0 – 30						
Technical approach (Understanding of work, quality control procedures and suggested alternatives)	0 – 30						
Available work capacity of the firm (The firms capability to complete project on time will be determined)	0 - 30						
Communication Skills (The firm’s ability to form successful working relationships will be evaluated)	0 - 30						
Reputation (References may be requested and checked)	0 - 30						
Presentation and Interview (Formal presentation and interview may be waived at the discretion of the County Engineer)	0 - 30						
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.00</b>						

# Appendix B

## Consultant Evaluation Form

# Consultant Evaluation

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Evaluator: \_\_\_\_\_

Reviewer: \_\_\_\_\_

Phase I \_\_\_\_\_ Phase II-Design \_\_\_\_\_ Phase II-Construction \_\_\_\_\_

Section Number \_\_\_\_\_

Route \_\_\_\_\_

Description \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Rating Scale: Exceeds / Satisfactory / Needs Improvement**

**A rating of Needs Improvement requires an explanation.**

## **Project Management** (using the rating scale...)

Did the consultant accomplish the intent and scope of the contracted services by managing personnel, resources, budget and schedule? \_\_\_\_\_

Were appropriate personnel assigned to various project tasks? \_\_\_\_\_

Did the consultant maintain appropriate documentation? \_\_\_\_\_

Did the consultant communicate issues and information effectively? \_\_\_\_\_

If necessary, did the consultant maintain adequate coordination with subconsultants or other outside entities involved with the project? \_\_\_\_\_

Considering the above questions, the **overall** rating is: \_\_\_\_\_

**Timeliness** (using the rating scale...)

Did the consultant maintain adequate resources and equipment throughout the project to meet demands? \_\_\_\_\_

Did the consultant adjust resources in response to demands of project delivery? \_\_\_\_\_

Did the consultant make various project submittals giving local agency and/or IDOT adequate review time? \_\_\_\_\_

Did the consultant meet submittal dates and ultimately, the target letting date? \_\_\_\_\_

Considering the above questions, the **overall** rating is: \_\_\_\_\_

**Technical Skills** (using the rating scale...)

Was the consultant staff qualified and possess appropriate technical knowledge, skills and abilities for assigned tasks? \_\_\_\_\_

Did the consultant services reflect good engineering practice utilizing established industry practices? \_\_\_\_\_

Were good engineering thought and sound judgement applied? \_\_\_\_\_

Did the consultant work well independently, without significant help from the local agency or IDOT? \_\_\_\_\_

Were routine details properly utilized on this project? \_\_\_\_\_

Were innovative or original concepts proposed if the opportunity presented itself? \_\_\_\_\_

Was the consultant's engineering estimate accurate? \_\_\_\_\_

Considering the above questions, the **overall** rating is: \_\_\_\_\_

**Quality of Work** (using the rating scale...)

Was the consultant familiar with established guidelines, standards and procedures of IDOT D5?

\_\_\_\_\_

Did the consultant have a quality control plan in effect and was it evident that it was followed?

\_\_\_\_\_

Were studies and reports, including surveys, quantities, estimates and special provisions, complete and accurate? \_\_\_\_\_

Was work well organized, properly presented, clear and concise? \_\_\_\_\_

Were all submittal items (such as the ESR, PDR, hydraulic report, special provisions and plans) complete, accurate and in compliance with IDOT D5 procedure? \_\_\_\_\_

Were errors or omissions numerous, serious, significant or costly? \_\_\_\_\_

Did the project result in the expenditure of reasonable time by the local agency or IDOT staff?

\_\_\_\_\_

Considering the above questions, the overall rating is: \_\_\_\_\_

**Human Relations** (using the rating scale...)

Was the consultant responsive to requests from the local agency, IDOT or any other reviewing agencies? \_\_\_\_\_

Was the consultant cooperative? \_\_\_\_\_

Was it easy to work with the consultant? \_\_\_\_\_

Did the consultant react well to criticism? \_\_\_\_\_

Was the consultant courteous and helpful in dealing with the local agency, IDOT, other agencies and the general public? \_\_\_\_\_

Considering the above questions, the overall rating is: \_\_\_\_\_

**Overall Performance and Any Aspects not Covered Above –**

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**Would it be worthwhile to select this firm for another project? \_\_\_\_\_**

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Evaluator Date

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Vermilion County Engineer Date

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Consultant