



QUALIFICATIONS-BASED SELECTION

NSPE policy states that “all engineering services should be performed by qualified engineers on the basis of design ability, experience, integrity and judgment. Engineering is a learned profession, requiring of its members sound technical experience, personal ability, education, honesty, and integrity.”

NSPE believes Qualifications-Based Selection (QBS) is the best method for procuring engineering services.

NSPE recommends a QBS procedure for the procurement of consultant and subconsultant engineering services. This process provides the opportunity for engineers and firms to be considered in the selection process based on their merits, and not the cost of their bid. NSPE further recognizes that QBS provides the means for qualified engineers or firms to be ranked on the basis of their ability to provide the service, followed by negotiations to determine a mutually satisfactory agreement for the scope of services agreed upon with the client.

So why is QBS the best method for procuring engineering services?

- **QBS Places the Public Health, Safety, and Welfare Above All Other Considerations**

Highly skilled services that impact public safety, such as those provided by medical and design professionals, are simply too critical to leave to the lowest bid. The selection process should be based upon expertise, qualifications, and the ability to perform the work, not the lowest bid, to protect the interests and well-being of our citizens.

- **QBS Protects Taxpayers**

Over the life of a project, design services represent only a tiny percentage of the overall construction cost. However, the initial services play a pivotal role in the full life-cycle costs. It is therefore in the taxpayer’s best interest that the most qualified firms are selected for these projects. A properly designed project will reduce construction and operational challenges, better adhere to timelines and budgets, reduce change orders, and decrease long-term maintenance costs.

- **QBS Fosters Innovation**

By encouraging owners to determine the project’s scope during the selection process, QBS fosters the development of innovative design solutions at a fair market value, resulting in lower overall project costs, minimized delays and cost overruns, and lower operating and ownership costs, while ensuring that the final project meets or exceeds the owner’s performance standards.

The federal Brooks Architect-Engineers (A/E) Act (PL 92-582), enacted in 1972, requires federal agencies to use QBS procedures when procuring design services. Forty-six states have implemented some sort of QBS law, and numerous localities have also adopted laws modeled after the federal statute (known as “Mini-Brooks” acts). Other states and localities have adopted regulations or executive orders that accomplish the same objectives as the statutes.

NSPE has been working tirelessly to protect and promote QBS to ensure that qualifications, not price, are the key factor in procuring engineering services.