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# **A Guide For The Selection of Design Professionals For Public Owners**

**The Minnesota Coalition for Qualification Based Selection, Inc.**

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# FOREWORD

When initiating a project, all owners, whether municipalities, private companies or institutions, and the design professionals (architects, engineers, landscape architects, land surveyors and other professionals) with whom they contract, seek the same results -- a completed project which meets the owners needs, is completed on schedule and within budget. Following an organized process for selecting and procuring professional services can help both the public owner and the design professional achieve these results.

During the preliminary stages of a project, the question often arises of how to best go about procuring the services of a design professional. While many selection processes exist and can be used by both the public owner and the design professional, one that has gained widespread support is Qualification Based Selection (QBS).

Qualification Based Selection (QBS) is an equitable process that enables the owner to obtain the services of a highly qualified design professional at a fair and reasonable cost, an investment in quality which will

result in substantial savings over the life-cycle of the project.

The purpose of this handbook is to provide guidance in selecting qualified design professionals and establishing the framework for a successful project. This manual presents suggested procedures for conducting a qualification based selection process, defining a scope of services which adequately addresses the needs of a specific project, and negotiating a fair compensation commensurate with services. Using these procedures can help to clarify and smooth the selection and negotiating processes involved in procuring a design professional.

Owners who follow these procedures gain confidence that they are working with the best qualified design professional for their project and will represent the greatest value to their communities or organizations.

Nothing in this publication is intended or should be construed as to prohibit any project owner, client or design professional from participating in any selection competition of their choice.

*Portions of this document has been reprinted with permission from the American Consulting Engineers Council*

# THE SELECTION OF A DESIGN PROFESSIONAL

*"The Utility Commission has always felt that in order to have the best project, we needed to focus on finding the best qualified firm, rather than focusing on price alone."*

Terry Jackson  
General Manager of Public Utilities  
Ely, Minnesota

In retaining a design professional, an owner should be guided by one primary consideration: the qualifications of the firm for the specific project to be undertaken. In short, selecting a design professional should be by the same criteria that apply to choosing a physician, attorney, accountant or other specialist, most importantly: skill, reputation, rapport, past performance, technical expertise, and commitment to the owner's interests. The selection of the design professional will have a major impact on the quality of the project.

The quality of services provided by the design professional represent the single most important factor in determining the overall success of the project. Further, while design services represent only a small fraction of the overall construction budget, they often have a great impact on construction costs as well as life-cycle costs. Therefore, it is in the best interest of public owners to ensure that the most qualified firms are selected for their projects.

## Why Use The QBS Process?

Every project is unique, with its own technical challenges. Unfortunately, most people do not understand the complexities of the project, nor the extent of professional design services that will be required to make the project a reality.

In the construction process, the design professional typically serves as the agent of the owner, representing the owners interests in day to day dealings with contractors, suppliers, equipment manufacturers and others working on the project. Therefore, it is crucial that the owner and the design professional share a professional relationship based on trust, respect, and effective communication. The QBS process fosters this kind of relationship by bringing the owner and design professional together early in the project as members of a team. This enables them to define the project in detail and agree on the services that are required for the project.

The QBS process is the most widely endorsed method of selecting a design professional. Since 1972, all agencies of the Federal government have been required to use the QBS process in selecting design professionals. In recommending the use of Qualification Based Selection by state and local government, the American Bar Association states:

*"The principal reasons supporting this selection procedure for architect, engineer and land surveying services are the lack of a definitive scope of work for such services at the time the selection is made and the importance of selecting the best qualified firm. In general, the architect, engineer or land surveyor is engaged to represent the (state's) interest and is, therefor, in a different relationship with the (state) from that normally existing in a buyer-seller situation. For these reasons, the qualifications, competence, and availability of the most qualified architect, engineer or land surveyor firms is considered initially, and price negotiated later."*

Nearly 40 states, including Minnesota, also mandate QBS or a similar procedure for the selection of design professionals for state projects.

## The QBS process is also endorsed by a variety of national public associations including the:

- American Bar Association
- American Public Works Association
- Associated General Contractors of America
- American Road and Transportation Builders Association
- American Water Works Association
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
- American Consulting Engineers Council
- American Institute of Architects
- American Congress of Surveying and Mapping
- American Society of Civil Engineers
- American Society of Landscape Architects
- National Society of Professional Engineers
- Management Association of Private Photogrammetric Surveyors

## And used locally by the:

- Minnesota Department of Transportation
- Minnesota Department of Administration
- Hennepin County
- Minneapolis School System
- City of Ely: Public Utility Commission and many others

## THE BROOKS ACT

In 1949, the U.S. Congress established the federal Administrative Services Act, mandating that the QBS process be used for all federally funded projects. Public Law 92-582, commonly known as the Brooks Act, amended this act to include the U. S. Government's selection procedures for the procurement of architectural and engineering services. The Brooks Act states:

*"The Congress hereby declares it to be the policy of the Federal Government to publicly announce all requirements for architectural and engineering services, and to negotiate contracts for architectural and engineering services on the basis of demonstrated competence and qualification for the type of professional services required and at fair and reasonable prices."*

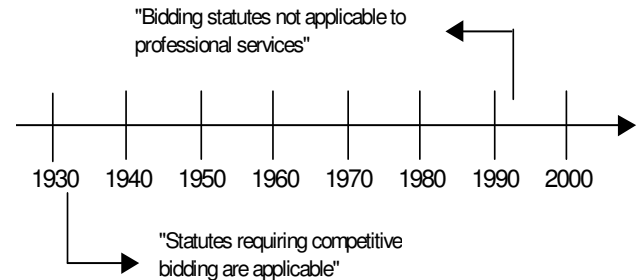
The Brooks Act was further amended in 1988 to include land surveyors and landscape architects.

Simply put, the law mandates that all architectural, land surveying, and engineering services required for a federally funded project be procured on the basis of competence and qualifications with fees to be discussed once the firm has been selected.

## MINNESOTA LAW AND QBS

The Minnesota Supreme Court has on two occasions (Krohnberg v. Pass, 244 N. 329 (Minn, 1932) and Ruzic v. City of Eden Prairie, 479 N.W. 2d 417 (Minn. App. 1991) specifically stated that price bidding of professional services is not in the public's best interest - and has stated that the State of Minnesota's Procurement Code does NOT pertain to professional services.

## MINNESOTA SUPREME COURT VALIDATES AND REAFFIRMS QBS AS A RIGHT



The Minnesota Supreme Court has evaluated the applicability of competitive bidding requirements on the procurement of professional services in a decision announced over sixty years ago. The Court stated the rule in Krohnberg v. Pass, 244 N. W. 329 (Minn. 1932), as follows:

Scientific knowledge or professional skill has been regarded as furnishing a ground for an exception to the statutory rule. Thus, it has been said that the services of a lawyer, of a physician, or of an architect or surveyor, are not embraced within a provision requiring the letting of contracts to the lowest bidder.

Id. at 330: The Court went on to hold that statutes requiring competitive bidding were inapplicable to securing the professional services of an architect, mechanical engineer, and superintendent of construction on a school construction project.

In Ruzic v. City of Eden Prairie, 479 N.W. 2d 417 (Minn. App. 1991), a developer appealed a special assessment for city improvements. The developer challenged the City's authority to award a contract for engineering construction supervision services without advertising for bids under the provision of Minn. Stat. §429.041. The Court held that the statutes provisions were not applicable to contracts for professional services, citing the rationale developed in Krohnberg v. Pass, 244 N.W. 329, 330 (Minn.1932).

# THE QBS PROCESS

*"It is necessary to have a process that you're comfortable with so that you can move quickly and efficiently each time you need to hire a design professional."*

Clyde Kane  
Manager of Design & Construction  
Minneapolis Public Schools  
Minneapolis, Minnesota

The QBS process recognizes that design professionals play a critical role in the building process and that the quality of design services is the single most important factor in determining the overall construction costs and life-cycle costs of a project.

Hiring a qualified design professional using the QBS process involves three steps: Selection, Definition of the Scope of the project, and Retention of the design professional.

## **Step 1: Selection**

The objective of step one is to select the most qualified design professional for the project. This step includes:

- The owner prepares a preliminary scope of work
- A non-partisan selection committee is created
- Selection criteria are established
- A request for qualification statements is published
- Qualification statements are evaluated
- A short list of firms is determined
- Interviews or presentations are conducted and references are investigated
- Firms are evaluated and ranked

## **Step 2: Definition of the Scope**

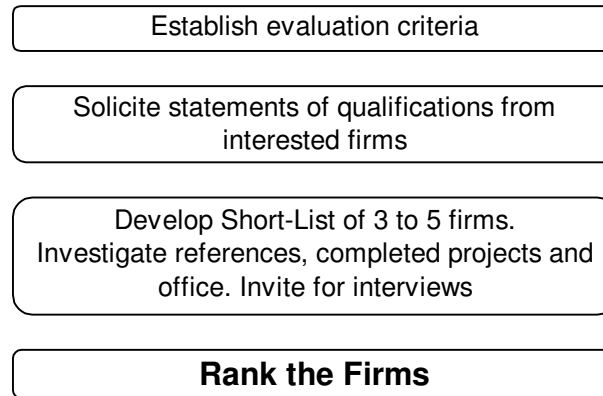
In this step, the highest ranked design professional works with the owner to determine the scope of the project, the services required, and the forms/terms of the contract. This joint effort benefits the owner tremendously by allowing them to have an open dialog and discuss the project thoroughly, resulting in a mutual understanding of expectations and the type of work required.

## **Step 3: Retention**

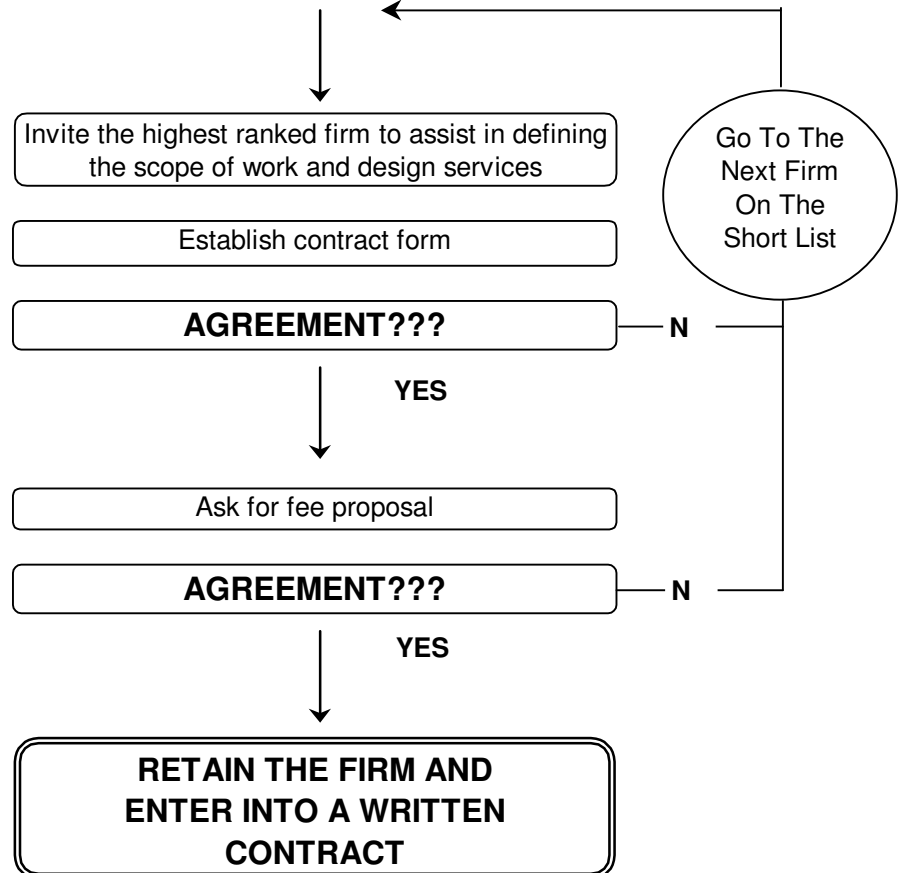
The objective of step three is for the public owner to retain the design professional on the basis of an acceptable fee proposal. If the proposal is accepted, the two groups enter into written contract. If an agreement is not reached, the owner and design professional return to step two and review the project scope and the services to be provided and a new fee is proposed. If an agreement still cannot be reached with the highest ranked firm, the negotiations are terminated and the owner initiates negotiations with the second ranked firm.

# DIAGRAM OF THE QBS PROCESS

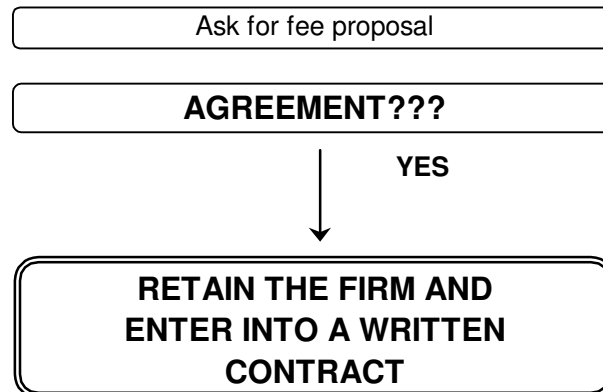
## STEP 1 Select the best Qualified firm.



## STEP 2 Jointly define scope and contract form, taking advantage of the firm's experience.



## STEP 3 Retain the firm on the basis of an acceptable proposal



# STEP 1 – SELECTION

## DEVELOPING THE PRELIMINARY SCOPE OF WORK

The objective of step 1 is to determine the most qualified design professional for the project. To begin this process the owner must prepare a brief description of the project (the scope) and identify the needs of the project. Just as the owner needs information about the qualifications of the design professional, the design professional needs to know the details of the project. When the scope of work is accurately defined and communicated, it saves money, time, and effort for both the owner and the design professional. A well-defined scope also allows design professionals to tailor their statements of qualifications to the project requirements, therefore providing the owner with a more uniform basis for evaluating the responses.

### The following elements are usually included in a scope of work:

- Owners name
- A brief history of the owner organization and description. This should include the goals or events that precipitated the project.
- Project contact person, including address, telephone, and fax number
- Project location
- Project specifications including intended size, function, capacity, and other anticipated general requirements (i.e. renovation; additions; new construction; demolition; and energy, land use, and site selection considerations)
- Descriptions of completed studies, surveys, and/or preliminary feasibility work that are relevant to the project and available to the firms that will be short-listed and interviewed
- Requirements for further feasibility planning prior to design and construction
- Anticipated project target dates including completion of design work, beginning of construction, and planned project completion date
- Description of selection process and identification of selection panel or client groups (i.e. foundations, boards, committees, and citizen groups)
- Additional or unique requirements or considerations (i.e. referenda, anticipated funding delays, and budgeting)

## ESTABLISHING A SELECTION TIME FRAME

In order to keep the selection process progressing smoothly, owners should establish a time frame for completion of the selection process. Establishing the time frame communicates requirements with the firms and prevents misunderstandings and any last minute "surprises" which might delay the process.

The time frame for each project will differ, depending upon the nature of the project, the concerns of the owner, and other factors.

## REQUESTING STATEMENTS OF QUALIFICATIONS

After the owner has prepared a general scope of work, the next step is to invite qualified firms to submit professional resumes or statements of qualifications. At this time, the owner must decide whether the invitation will be made to all interested firms, or if this information will be solicited from a more select group of firms. Some factors that should be considered in compiling the list of firms are:

- The number of firms the owner wishes to involve
- The geographic location and distribution of the firms

Many governmental agencies are required to advertise their intent to contract for design services and to permit all interested parties to submit a statement of qualifications. Such advertisements will reach a significant sector of the design community and will usually generate a large number of responses.

Some professional organizations publish directories or make their member mailing lists available. These are often helpful in identifying firms with interest and/or experience in specific types of projects. Or, to identify design professionals on a more selective basis, an owner may wish to contact other owners who have recently contracted with design professionals.

### Invitations to submit statements of qualifications should include the following information:

- The general scope of the project
- The project owner's name and name, address and telephone number of the project contact person

- A list of information each firm should include in its statement of qualifications (i.e. names of firm owners, number of years in business, the types of services offered, approach to quality, similar projects previously designed by the firm, current projects, etc.)
- Number of copies required
- Relative weight given to evaluation factors
- A notice that Statements of Qualifications received after the deadline will not be considered.

(See Appendix: Pages 1-4)

### EVALUATING THE STATEMENTS OF QUALIFICATIONS TO DEVELOP A SHORT LIST

The ultimate goal of this evaluation is to narrow the field of qualified firms to a "short list" of three to five firms. Each firm should be evaluated based on the project criteria given in the request for statements of qualifications.

Statements of qualifications may be evaluated by a single individual or a selection committee, however it is the owners responsibility to ensure that the committee is composed of competent individuals who will be able to make a knowledgeable selection decision.

Before meeting to evaluate the statements of qualifications, the owner should check the references of each firm under consideration. This check need not be limited to the references supplied by the firms.

Based on the evaluation of the statements of qualifications and reference checks, less-qualified firms can be disqualified. Because all firms submitting letters of qualifications have made a commitment of time and expense in pursuing the project, the owner should notify the firms not selected for further consideration, as well as those who are short-listed.

(See Appendix: Pages 5-9)

### PROJECT SITE/FACILITY TOURS

In many cases, site and/or facility tours will be an integral part of the selection process. A tour of the project site gives firms first hand knowledge of the proposed project and the owners needs. Tours may not be necessary in all cases and such determinations should be made on a case-by-case basis.

### INTERVIEWING SHORT-LISTED FIRMS

*"The interview/discussion process helped us save dollars that otherwise may have been put into effort that wasn't necessary."*

Thomas Colbert, P.E.  
Public Works Director  
Eagan, Minnesota

Interviewing short-listed firms gives the owner an opportunity to compare the firms' different approaches to the design process, as well as their interpretations and understanding of the specific project requirements. The interviews are designed to allow for evaluations of the personal style of each firms' management and key personnel and how they match up with the pre-identified criteria for the owner's project. It is imperative that the design personnel assigned to the project, as well as key representatives from the firm's consultants, be present at the interviews. It is also imperative that project users be involved in the interview process.

Interviews may be conducted at either the owner's office or the offices of the design firms. Holding the interviews at the offices of the design firms provides the opportunity to gain a better understanding of the firm, get a feel for their operation and meet more of the people that would be involved in the project. However, it is desirable to conduct all the interviews on the same day. Logistics may make site interviews impractical.

### INTERVIEW ROOM SET-UP

The physical set-up of the interview should be comfortable, with good acoustics and plenty of room. If possible, a separate waiting area should be provided for other firms to be interviewed. Equipment such as blackboards, flip charts, and audio-visual screens will be useful if available, however most firms are likely to provide their own presentation equipment. Due to the amount of time necessary for equipment set-up, two interview rooms should be used if possible. While one firm is being interviewed in the first room, another firm can set-up and prepare for its presentation in the second room. This will help to ensure that the interview will run smoothly and valuable time is not wasted checking equipment.

Interviews are usually held in a closed session. If applicable statutes or regulations require an open public meeting, firms should be notified in advance.

## INTERVIEW GUIDELINES

The following are some suggested guidelines for setting up and conducting interviews:

- Interview only those firms short-listed to ensure that all interviewed firms have had equal opportunity to prepare presentations.
- Schedule all interviews on the same day. This will permit the selection committee to compare all of the interviewed firms while the information is fresh and ensures consistent interview scoring.
- Schedule approximately 45 minutes for each presentation and 15 minutes between interviews. This should allow ample time for the presentation, a brief question and answer session, and time for the committee to discuss the presentation privately before beginning the next interview.
- The evaluation criteria for the interview scoring should be communicated to all firms at the same time the initial request for qualifications is made.
- Notify all firms when the selection decision will be made and when they will be notified of their standing. If possible, it is recommended that the selection decision be made on the same day as the interviews after the selection committee has had time to review all firms.
- Owners should NOT ask for design solutions during the interview phase. Appropriate and responsive design requires considerably more interaction between the design professional and

the owner than is possible during the selection phase. Preconceived ideas, may in fact, impede the progress of the project and prevent the exploration of other more appropriate solutions to the project's requirements.

## RANKING THE SHORT-LISTED FIRMS

An evaluation form that includes a weight and score for each criteria or question is an extremely useful tool in evaluating, ranking and ultimately selecting the most qualified firm.

Each firm should be evaluated separately by each member of the selection committee.

Once all presentations/interviews are completed, the committee chairperson should compile the individual score sheets. This system provides a documented record of the selection process and the committee's decision.

It is recommended that the selection committee thoroughly discuss the evaluations and arrive at their decision by consensus rather than a majority vote.

Once the presentations/interviews have been completed, a memo should be sent to all firms who participated in the interview process listing the participating firms in alphabetical order stating the order in which they were ranked by the selection committee. It is customary for owners to provide this information as a courtesy to the firms.

**(See Appendix: Pages 11-13)**

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## STEP 2 - DEFINITION OF THE SCOPE

*"When dealing with projects that focus wholly on price, the project stands the risk of not matching your needs, ultimately leading to a higher overall cost. Through the QBS process, we are able to effectively communicate our goals and objectives."*

Terry Jackson  
General Manager of Public Utilities  
Ely, Minnesota

As soon as possible after the firm selection has been made, the owner should begin negotiations with the firm deemed most qualified. The objective of step 2 is to understand the owner's needs and expectations and to jointly define the scope of the project, the services required, and the contract form. This step gives the public owner access to the advice and expertise of the top-ranked firm in developing the most appropriate scope of the proposed work.

If an agreement on the scope, the services required, and the contract form cannot be reached, the owner may terminate negotiations with the top-ranked firm and begin step 2 with the second ranked firm. However, normally it is not difficult to reach an agreement, since the QBS process facilitates an early understanding of the project scope and requirements through a progression of steps involved in the selection.

### **DEVELOPING THE SCOPE OF SERVICES**

A detailed and comprehensive scope of services should be developed jointly by the owner and design professional. This is often accomplished through one or more meetings and leads to the development of the detailed scope and work plan. The work plan should list the consultants and the roles and responsibilities of all members of the design team as well as the owner.

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## STEP 3 - RETENTION

*"In working with the QBS process, we know that the design professionals on the project are looking out for our best interests and aim to deliver the best project possible at the best price."*

Terry Jackson  
General Manager of Public Utilities  
Ely, Minnesota

Once the detailed scope has been agreed upon, the design professional is in the position to submit a detailed fee proposal to the owner. If the proposed fee is more than the owner had budgeted, the owner and design professional work together to modify the scope of services. This process will make certain that the owner is fully aware of any limitations or problems that may arise. This type of team-work greatly enhances the working relationship and increases the odds for a quality project.

If an agreement on the scope of services and compensation cannot be reached, discussions with the first-ranked firm are terminated and the owner should initiate negotiations with the second-ranked firm.

Given the important nature of the services and growth of litigation, the owner and design professional should enter into a written agreement. The two parties may wish to use standard forms of agreement which are time-tested, widely used, and drafted to fairly protect the interests of the owners, design professionals and contractors.

# QBS FACILITATOR PROGRAM PROVIDES FREE ASSISTANCE TO PUBLIC OWNERS

Trained QBS facilitators are available to assist owners in developing a selection process that is tailored to their specific needs and requirements. QBS facilitators are retired architects and engineers who are experts on the QBS process. Facilitators provide free assistance in the implementation of a QBS process that will work successfully for their community or organization. Facilitators may also provide professional directories and refer the public owner to others who have successfully used the QBS process.

While Facilitators may assist in the development of the QBS process, they cannot recommend firms or individual design professionals, provide evaluations, or participate in the evaluation or negotiation process in any way. This ensures that the QBS process is fair, competitive and without bias.

**For further information on QBS, please contact:**

**The Minnesota Coalition  
for  
Qualification Based Selection, Inc.**

**275 Market Street, Suite 54  
Minneapolis, MN 55405  
Phone: (612) 338-6763  
Fax: (612) 338-7981**

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**AIA Minnesota**

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**Consulting Engineers Council of Minnesota**

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**Minnesota Chapter of American Society of  
Landscape Architects**

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**Minnesota Society of Professional Engineers**

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**Minnesota Society of Professional Surveyors**

## **APPENDIX - QBS FORMS**

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# REQUEST FOR LETTERS OF QUALIFICATIONS

TO: (List all firms in alphabetical order)

FROM: (Owner) (Individual's Name) (Title)

RE: REQUEST FOR LETTERS OF QUALIFICATIONS

Your firm is invited to submit your Letters of Qualifications to become eligible for a possible interview for architectural/engineering services relative to design and construction requirements for the (owner)

Attached to this memo are the following:

1. A list of materials and information that should be included with your Letters of Qualifications.
2. A general definition of the scope of the work.
3. A schedule of dates and requirements.

For firms that are selected for an interview, a tour of the facility and site will be arranged.

Your Letters of Qualifications should be forwarded to the following address to be received no later than 5 p.m. on (date).

To: (Name)

(Title)

(Address)

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# REQUIREMENTS FOR LETTERS OF QUALIFICATIONS

Owner: \_\_\_\_\_

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

1. Name, address, and brief history of firm
2. Resumes of personnel to be assigned to this project
3. Related projects/areas of expertise on which the firm has performed work or had experience during the last two years. Please include the name of the project, a contact person, and dollar amount for each example.
  - a) Include projects where architectural/engineering/surveying services related to design and construction work were performed.
  - b) Include examples of other projects that are similar in scope to this one. (Example: restoration, new construction, or feasibility study, etc.)
  - c) Include examples of project budgeting, cost estimating, and results.
4. You are invited to include a maximum of one page of information not covered above which you feel may be useful and applicable to this project.

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# SCHEDULE OF ACTIVITIES

Owner: \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Needs are identified by the owner. A scope of work in general terms is developed.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Design firms are identified by the owner to receive memo requesting Letters of Qualifications.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Memo requesting Letters of Qualifications mailed to interested and invited firms.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Letters of Qualifications due. Allow a minimum of 10 days for the firms to submit their materials.  
Note: Before the next action date, references should be reviewed.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Develop a short list of approximately three to five firms for subsequent interviews. Selection should be based on qualifications, references, and compatibility with owner's project.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. Memo mailed to short-listed firms advising them of the date for interview and pre-interview tour of site and/or facilities, along with criteria to be reviewed during the interview.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. Memo mailed to non-short listed firms informing them of who will be interviewed and expressing appreciation of their interest.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. Tour of facilities at (date and time) and (location). Should be scheduled at least 10 days prior to the date of interviews to allow for preparation.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. Scheduled interviews to be held at the time and location as previously communicated. The best firm to be selected based on qualifications.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. Contract with selected firm to be negotiated and implemented.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 11. Memo mailed to all firms interviewed reflecting the results of the interviews and expressing appreciation.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 12. Post-selection requirements. (Example: Referendum approved)

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# PRELIMINARY SCOPE OF SERVICES

*The preliminary scope for a project should include the following information in general terms and be limited to one page.*

Owner: \_\_\_\_\_

Project Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Project Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Person: \_\_\_\_\_

Project outline and general anticipated requirements: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Example: Demolition, renovation, addition, new construction, energy, land use, site selection, etc.)

Anticipated time frame:

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Include projected start and completion for both the design and construction phases)

Groups involved in selection process:

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Example: boards, committees, citizens groups, etc.)

Site requirements or restrictions:

Attachments:

- Feasibility Studies
- Survey
- Other information

# STATEMENT OF QUALIFICATIONS EVALUATION FORM

To the following model, you should add or delete questions as appropriate for your specific situation. It is suggested that the weights and rating values assigned be on the same scale as those used for interviewing firms, which you will do later.

## Qualifications Evaluation

Owner: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Contact Person: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Project Description: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Professional Design Firm: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
 City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ Contact: \_\_\_\_\_

	Rating (1-5)	x	Weight (1-10)	=	Total
1. Firm's history and resource capability to perform required services		x		=	
2. Evaluation of assigned personnel		x		=	
3. Related experiences (as appropriate)		x		=	
a. Design services		x		=	
b. Demolition		x		=	
c. Construction observation		x		=	
d. Studies		x		=	
e. Other		x		=	
4. Meeting schedule		x		=	
5. Meeting project budget		x		=	
6. Approach to quality		x		=	
7. Familiarity with local area geography and facilities		x		=	
8. Analysis of subject statements (one page) applicable to the project		x		=	
9. Reference check		x		=	



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# REFERENCE CHECK FORM

Owner: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Design Firm: \_\_\_\_\_

Reference Information:

Owner: \_\_\_\_\_

Project Reference: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Person: \_\_\_\_\_

1. What was your project? \_\_\_\_\_

2. When was it completed? \_\_\_\_\_

3. Did the design firm listed above do the work? \_\_\_\_\_

4. What did they do for you? Design work? Construction coordination? Studies? Surveying? Other?  
\_\_\_\_\_

5. Who was the staff person assigned to work with you on this project and how satisfied were you with this person?  
\_\_\_\_\_

6. Was the project started as scheduled? \_\_\_\_\_

7. Was the project completed as planned? \_\_\_\_\_

8. Was the budget, cost control, and financial administration within the planned controls and limitations?  
\_\_\_\_\_

9. Did the design firm and (you) the owner work well as a team as it related to the project in general terms?  
\_\_\_\_\_

10. Did the firm's personnel work well with the committees/board and staff on all requirements of the project's specific requirements?  
\_\_\_\_\_

11. What is your overall evaluation of the firm based on your experience? \_\_\_\_\_

Other questions (add, etc.)

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Rating: Rate from 1 to 5 , with 1 being the lowest rating and 5 being the highest. The reference check rating is included as a line item on the firm's Letters Of Qualifications Evaluation Sheet.

\_\_\_\_\_ Reference Check Rating

# MEMO TO FIRMS NOT SELECTED FOR AN INTERVIEW

TO: (List firms not asked to interview - in alphabetically order)  
FROM: (Owner) (Individual's Name) (Title)  
RE: REQUEST FOR LETTERS OF QUALIFICATIONS

The (committee or board) would like to express their appreciation to you and your firm for submitting your Letters Of Qualifications.

After careful consideration by the (committee or board) of all firms who submitted their qualifications, a decision to interview (number) firms has been made.

For your information, the firms selected for further consideration are:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

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# MEMO TO SHORT-LISTED FIRMS

TO: (List of firms asked for interview - in alphabetical order)

FROM: (Owner) (Individual's name) (Title)  
(Address)  
(Project name)

RE: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE AND REQUIREMENTS

The firms listed above have been asked to be interviewed for the design/survey services relative to the work necessary to implement this project. (Specify feasibility study, survey, design/construction, etc.)

Attached to this memo are the following:

1. An interview score sheet which will be used by the (name of board, committee, etc.) during the interview session.
2. Evaluation form to be used by the chairperson to compile the evaluation scores.
3. Copies of (name of studies or reports) compiled by (name of committee or group) for your information and review.

Each firm will be allowed 30 minutes to present their qualifications and to answer questions. The committee/board will schedule 15 minutes between interviews for an informal discussion on information presented during the preceding interview. At the completion of the interviews, the committee will rank the firms interviewed in accordance with their determination of which firm is most competent to do the work. The firm deemed to be most competent will then be invited to negotiate a contract to provide the necessary design services. If contract terms cannot be reached, the firm deemed the next most competent will be invited in for contract negotiations.

Interviews will be held on (date). The location is (name of building and address).

The order and time of interview is:

Firm A: (Time)

Firm B: (Time)

Firm C: (Time)

Firm D: (Time)

Firm E: (Time)

A tour of the site and/or facility has been arranged for (date and time). Please have your firm's representatives assemble at the (building), (location) at (time) on this date.

# INTERVIEW PROCESS: QUESTIONS AND SCORE SHEET

Owner: \_\_\_\_\_

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

<b>Categories</b>	<b><u>Rating</u></b>		<b><u>Weight</u></b>		<b><u>Total</u></b>
1. Related project experience	_____	x	_____	=	_____
2. Firm's ability and capacity to perform the work •key personnel assigned to this project	_____	x	_____	=	_____
3. Grasp of the project requirements •feasibility studies •design •construction	_____	x	_____	=	_____
4. Method to be used to fulfill the required services, including design and construction phases	_____	x	_____	=	_____
5. Management approach for technical requirements. (i.e. Cost controls, construction phase involvement)	_____	x	_____	=	_____
6. Use of consultants that may work on the project •discuss in-house resources	_____	x	_____	=	_____
7. Time schedule planned for this project •availability	_____	x	_____	=	_____
8. Firm's experience and methods used for: •budgeting and financial controls •determining fee and compensation	_____	x	_____	=	_____
<b>Grand Total</b>					_____

**Instructions for the Selection Committee/Board:**

**Rating:** During the interview, rate each firm on a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being the highest, in each of the categories. Enter the rating numbers on the lines provided opposite each category.

**Weight:** Weights on a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being the highest, should be established for each category before the interview. (It is suggested that weights used here correspond to weights of categories used for evaluating Letters Of Qualifications.) Enter the pre-established weight for each category on the lines provided.

**Totals:** At the completion of the interview, multiply the rating by the weight in each category and enter the totals on the lines provided. Add all totals to establish a grand total.

# GROUP INTERVIEW EVALUATION FORM

*(For use by the chairperson to compile all scores of firms participating in the interview process.  
Note: Enter the grand total for each firm as recorded by each interviewer on the interview score sheet.)*

Combined Group Totals

	Firm A	Firm B	Firm C	Firm D	Firm E
Interviewer 1					
Interviewer 2					
Interviewer 3					
Interviewer 4					
Interviewer 5					
<b>Grand Total</b>					

# MEMO TO FIRMS INTERVIEWED BUT NOT SELECTED

TO: (Firms interviewed but not selected - list all firms in alphabetical order)  
FROM: (Owner) (Individual's name) (Title)  
RE: STATUS OF SELECTION PROCESS  
(Project)

The (Owner) has completed its selection process regarding professional services for the above named project(s).

It has been our objective to select the most qualified firm to perform this service through this selection process.

The results of the (committee's/board's) decision ranks the firms interviewed in the following order:

Firm # 1: (Name)  
Firm # 2: (Name)  
Firm # 3: (Name)

We have now entered into contract negotiations with (Firm # 1).

The (committee/board) expresses their appreciation for your time, effort, and interest spent on our behalf. Thank you.