

ACEC/MW advocates for the use of Qualifications-Based Selection (QBS) for the procurement of engineering services



**The Issue:**

*Some government agencies consider price when procuring engineering services*

**The Impact:**

*Increased cost, reduced quality, and limited innovation in the delivery of capital programs and projects.*

**Conclusion:**

*Legislators should support the use of QBS in procurement of engineering services.*

**Why this is Important:**

Qualifications-based selection (QBS) is a procurement method where architecture and/or engineering firms are retained on the basis of **qualifications, rather than price factors**. Under the QBS method, the procuring agency reviews the qualifications submitted by firms, ranks respondents, and then negotiates with the most qualified respondent for a mutually agreeable contract price. In QBS, selection is based on the qualifications, experience and competence of the consultant, rather than the lowest price.

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.

The ACEC Research Institute released a comprehensive study that found federal and state projects using Qualifications-Based Selection (QBS) procurement methods had lower project costs and better on-time delivery versus selecting firms based on the cheapest bid.

Other key findings include:

- **QBS saves money** — projects where QBS was used to procure engineering services experienced less cost growth (3 percent) versus the national average (6 percent).
- **QBS saves time** — QBS projects perform better in terms of project delivery time, experiencing less schedule growth versus the national average (7 percent with QBS versus 10 percent without).
- **QBS produces higher levels of client satisfaction** — 89% of QBS projects receiving “high” or “very high” satisfaction ratings from project owners.
- **QBS promotes innovation** — Projects incorporating QBS have a greater likelihood of producing innovative solutions.

To view the ACEC Research Institute’s Report  
<https://program.acec.org/qbs-resources-portal>