



## **ARE YOU USING QBS TO SELECT YOUR DESIGN ENGINEER OR ARCHITECT?**

### **What is Qualifications-Based Selection (QBS)?**

QBS is widely recognized as the national and state standard by which professional design contracts are awarded by public agencies. QBS was mandated for federal use by passage of the Brooks Act in 1972 and state use by passage of the Hammett Act in 2006.

Engineering is a highly skilled service that should not be selected on the basis of the firm offering the lowest bid. 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 Safeguards Public Interest.** Public health and safety considerations are at stake with public sector projects. There is a responsibility to the taxpayers to obtain the highest quality and safest project design possible. To assure that the highest standards are obtained, the qualifications-based procurement method is most suited for A/E services.

**QBS Encourages Competition.** QBS is based on a firm's ability to perform a job, not merely on the lowest price a firm can offer. Since each firm is reviewed with respect to the personnel that will actually work on a project, a small firm has the opportunity to match its design against a larger firm's design team.

**QBS Promotes Technical Innovation.** Using QBS, owners have the opportunity to fully define the project scope during the selection process. This process fosters innovative, cost-saving and timesaving approaches to problems, ensuring that the final project meets or exceeds the functional and performance goals set by the owner.

**QBS Includes Cost Consideration.** When engineers compete for projects by the qualifications-based method, price is considered; it is taken into account after the most qualified firm is selected. During the procurement procedure for A/E services the agency negotiates a fee for the A/E firm that is fair and reasonable. If the most qualified firm cannot agree with the owner on a fee, the second most qualified firm is contacted. This process continues until the agency is successful in negotiating a fair and reasonable fee with a selected firm. A well-designed project by a highly qualified firm will stay on time and on budget, solve project and operational challenges, enhance performance of projects, and reduce long-term maintenance and repair costs.