

QUALIFICATION BASED SELECTION (QBS)

Transportation Professional Services
Procurement Process for Contracts
over \$40,000 in value



Menard County Highway Department
P.O. Box 497
15620 Chautauqua Road
Petersburg, Illinois 62675-0497
Phone: (217) 632-2722
Fax: (217) 632-7820

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Executive Summary

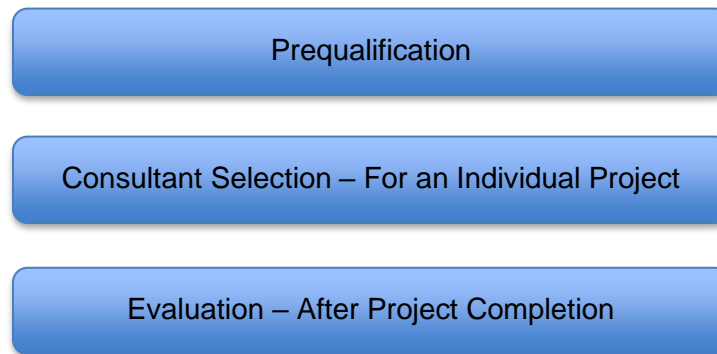
The Menard County Highway Department (MCHD) is responsible for the maintenance, planning, design and construction of approximately 100 miles of county highways. MCHD also provides technical assistance to the 9 road districts and coordinates with a number of different State, regional, and local agencies on transportation and land use issues. In order to fulfill the fundamental duties of the Menard County Highway Department, contracted professional services are necessary to supplement manpower or to provide specialized expertise. Menard County Highway Department receives federal funds, which may be used to fund the engineering and design related consultant's services. Our Written policies and procedures as described herein for QBS will meet the requirements of 23 CFR 172 and the Brooks Act.

Professional Engineering services are typically needed in the development and implementation of capital improvement projects. Since many capital projects include Federal funding, professional engineering services follow the typical Federal project *phases*, described as Phase I (Preliminary Engineering), Phase II (Final Engineering: Plans, Specifications & Estimates), or Phase III Engineering (Construction Engineering).

The Menard County Highway Department Qualifications Base Selection (QBS) of Transportation Professional Services Procurement Process describes how firms are selected to provide such work. MCHD believes their adopted QBS written policies and procedures substantially follows Section 5-5 of the BLRS Manual and specifically Section 5-5.06(e) when federal funds are being used to pay for consultant services, therefore; approval from IDOT is not required. When only state or local funds are used to pay for consultant services the County engineer may elect to follow the procedures defined in Section 5-5.06(c) "State Required QBS Procedure using State, MFT or TBP Funds" of IDOT's BLRS manual. Consultants will be required to Submit SOIs, and proposals via Menardhwy1@sbcglobal.net.

The QBS process is conducted under the Menard County Board through its County Engineer for the procurement management and administration of consultant Services.

The QBS is divided into three primary steps:



Prequalification

Firms must be prequalified by the Illinois Department of Transportation.

Consultant Selection (Project-Specific)

Generally, when a project-specific need is identified, the Menard County Highway Department will publish a request soliciting a Statement of Interest (SOI). From the submitted SOIs, our typical approach will be:

- *Shortlist*: select 3+ firms for further consideration
- *RFP*: request proposals from the shortlisted firms or consultant terms
- *Interview* shortlist firms
- *Rank* shortlist firms based on proposals and interviews
- *Select* the successful firm(s)/consultant team(s)
- *Negotiate* a professional services contract(s) for the project.
- **Contract Approvals**: Since the Menard County Highway Department is a department of Menard County Government, most contracts for professional services must be approved by the Menard County Board. Staff will work with the selected firm/consultant team to develop the requisite supporting information and present it to the County Board.

Summary of Full Consultant Selection Process

(Process may be streamlined where appropriate as discussed in this document)



Performance Evaluation

At the conclusion of each phase of the project, staff will evaluate the firm's work. A copy of the final evaluation will be shared with the consultant. Staff will use this information when considering the firm for future contracts. See Appendix B for sample evaluation form.

Prequalification

All engineering, land surveying and architectural consultants interested in providing services to MCHD, whether as a prime or subconsultant, must be prequalified with the Illinois Department of Transportation. DOT prequalifies architectural/engineering consultants in multiple transportation categories of service. Prequalification is based on the firm's and the individual's professional experience and qualification. Annual updates to statements of experience and financial condition must be completed to maintain prequalification status. The process is governed by state Statute (30 ILCS 535/1).

The firm acting as the prime must be prequalified in all of the prequalification categories requested in the project advertisement even if they plan to subcontract part of the project, except where noted in a specific project advertisement. Any Work being done by a consultant, prime or sub must be prequalified in the IDOT prequalification category of work they are performing.

Consultant Selection

The Menard County Highway Department will initiate consultant selection procedures when the need for contracted professional services has been identified. Exceptions include the need for unique and specialized services, an emergency situation or the County has an existing satisfactory relationship with a professional services firm.

Request for Statement of Interest

At the beginning of a project, the Menard County Highway Department will publish a notice requesting SOIs from professional services firms. The due date for SOIs will be specified to be a minimum of 14 calendar days from the date of issuance, unless it is an emergency situation. A notice will be placed on the Menard County Highway Department Web page, www.menardcountyil.org/departments/highway-department and/or publish an ad in a local newspaper with appropriate circulation.

SOIs received after the specified deadline will not be considered. SOIs must be limited to 2 pages.

Request for a SOI will typically include:

- A project description - need, purpose, and objective
- The type of work being sought
- The appropriate prequalification category
- The schedule for the selection process
- The schedule for the proposed work
- Identifiable anticipated problems
- Total project budget

Submitted SOIs will include the following information:

- Name of firm, with address, email and telephone/fax information
- Contact person for the firm
- Statement indicated the firm's interest in the specific project
- Summary of the proposed project
- A short listing of projects similar in scope and magnitude recently completed by the firm within the past 5 years
- Listing of proposed key staff who would be assigned to the project
- Listing of proposed subconsultants
- Conflict of Interest Disclosure Statement - use DOT BDE DISC 2 Template

Suspension and Debarment - MCHD will use System for Award Management (SAM) Exclusions, IDOT's Chief Procurement Officer's (CPO) website and the three other state CPO's websites to verify suspension and debarment actions to ensure the eligibility of firms short listed and selected for projects.

SOI Submission

All firms wishing to submit an SOI must submit their SOI, in Portable Document Format (pdf) format, to: www.menardcountyl.org/departments/highway-department.

Evaluation Factors - Menard County Highway Department will use a minimum of three (3) of the following criterion to set the evaluation factors for each project.

The selection of professional consultants is not based on competitive bidding but on the firm's professional qualifications, experience, and expertise of key personnel to be assigned to the project with consideration also given to additional criteria established in the advertisement.

Rating Description	Weighted %
Past Performance in Project Categories	0-30
Proposed Staffing from Prime and any subconsultants	0-30
Proximity of firm to project location	0-10
Proposed DBE use	
Available work capacity of firm	0-30
The firms experience with required project work	0-30
Firm's understanding/method of accomplishing project requirements	0-30
Project Specific Criteria: Specific requirements in an advertisement	0-30
Total =	100

Shortlisting

After all the SOIs are received, a selection committee of staff members will review the submittals. Typically, this committee will have at least two or three members. Collectively, the committee will develop a shortlist of the most qualified firms to consider for the work. Typically, the shortlist will consist of three firms.

- A firm will not be considered if it has received a rating of less than 3.0 on an evaluation (See Appendix B) from the Menard County Highway Department in the past 12 months for similar work.
- A firm also must be prequalified in the category most related to the proposed project.

If only one firm submits an SOI, Menard County Highway Department staff will determine if they are qualified and if so, contract negotiations for work may be initiated. If not, the process may be restarted with the notice requesting SOIs. If only two or three firms submit a SOI and are qualified, MCHD staff will use the QBS process to select among those firms.

The firms selected by the staff committee for the shortlist will be posted on the Menard County Highway Department web page. Firms responding to the request for SOI's will be notified of the selection via email and the website.

Request for Proposal (RFP)

After the firms are shortlisted, the County will request a proposal from each one for the proposed work. Proposals will be due no sooner than 14 calendar days after issuance of the RFP unless an emergency situation arises. The proposal shall be submitted as a single Portable Document Format (pdf). **For contracts with an estimated fee less than \$100,000, proposals are limited to 15 pages in length. For all other contracts, proposals are limited to 25 pages in length.** The RFP shall not be construed as a request for formal or informal submittal of verbal or written estimates of costs or proposals in terms of dollars, hours required, percentage of Construction cost, or any other measure of compensation.

RFP: typically, the request for proposal will include the following items:

- A deadline for the submittal
- The maximum number of pages to be included in the document
- A more detailed project description than what was used in the request for SOIs
- Any special requirements for the proposal
- Indication whether or not interviews will be conducted for the project
- County contact information.

A Proposal shall be limited to the appropriate number of pages and contain the following items:

- Cover letter on the firm's letterhead transmitting the proposal, indicating the contact person
- Section 1 - Organizational chart showing key staff
- Section 2 - Key staff resumes, with a maximum of two pages per resume
- Section 3 - Listing of support staff, likely to work on the project
- Section 4 - Proposed subconsultants
- Section 5 - Ongoing or completed projects similar in scope and magnitude worked on by the firm with references.
- Section 6 - Project Approach/Project Understanding

Interview

Inclusion of an interview as part of the project is at the discretion of the Menard County Highway Department. The interview may be omitted for the following conditions: the project has a small anticipated fee (less than \$40,000), if the Menard County Highway Department determines the proposals are sufficient to evaluate the firms, or if the anticipated scope of services is uncomplicated.

Interviews will be generally forty-five to sixty minutes in length. The consultant will make a twenty to thirty-minute presentation on their firm and the project, and Menard County Highway Department Staff will facilitate a question and answer for the remainder of the session. The format of the consultant's presentation is at the discretion of the consultant team.

The Menard County Highway Department interview panel will typically consist of at least two or three staff members. Certain joint/intergovernmental projects may include panel members from other county departments or government agencies as appropriate.

The interview format and requirements can be adjusted as the Menard County Highway Department deems appropriate to best fit the requirements for the project being considered.

Ranking & Selection

Upon review of the proposals and completion of the interviews (if conducted for a given project) the Committee members will assign a score to each firm. Scores will be developed considering items such as qualifications of the key staff, qualifications of the subconsultants, experience with projects of similar scope and magnitude, and understanding of the proposed work. The cumulative score will be used to rank the firms. Selection and Scoring Sheet is included as Appendix "A".

Negotiations

The Menard County Highway Department will initiate contract negotiations with the top ranked firm. If those efforts are unsuccessful, the negotiations will commence with the second ranked firm, and if necessary, then the third ranked firm. If those efforts are not successful, the process will be terminated, and then restarted for the project, with requests for SOIs.

Independent Estimate - MCHD will prepare an independent in-house estimate for the project prior to contract negotiation. The estimate is used in the negotiation.

Contract Approvals

After the contract is successfully negotiated it will follow the typical review and approval process of the Menard County Highway Department. Staff presents the contract for approval through the Menard County Board of Commissioners. This 5 member board considers (votes on) a resolution authorizing the County Board Chairman to execute the contract. If the resolution passes, the Menard County Board Chairman then signs the agreement and County staff returns copies to the selected firm. Staff then provides the written notice to proceed. For some projects, the issuance of the notice to proceed may be contingent on IDOT approvals.

Recurring Projects

Some contractual work is by nature, recurring and repetitive, frequently annual. Contracts such as design engineering, traffic counting, traffic signal engineering, bridge safety inspections, material testing, right of way negotiations services and appraisers are examples. The Menard County Highway Department can greatly benefit by having the same firm complete this work for several years in succession. Usually, significant efficiencies can be realized once the firm has an understanding of the Menard County Highway Department specific infrastructure and needs. This continuity also results in a significant time and manpower savings for both the Menard County Highway Department and the firms. For indefinite Delivery/Indefinite Quantity (IDIQ) contracts, the term length will be limited to 10 years when using state or local funds and 5 years when using federal funds to pay for Consultant services.

Combined Phase I / Phase II Services

Many engineering projects progress through preliminary and final engineering, with each phase managed with a separate engineering agreement. Frequently, the phase I design firm also is the selected design firm for phase II after the completion of the QBS process for phase II, due to their detailed knowledge of the project gained from their previous work. Due to this reality, Menard County Highway Department may elect to advertise for a scope of services combining phase I and phase II. This also results in a significant time and man-power savings for the Highway Department as well as the selected firm. When such instances occur, each phase may be negotiated separately. The selected phase firm is not guaranteed to be offered the phase II contract.

Post Selection Procedures

Documentation

All steps in the QBS for every project will be documented, with SOIs, proposals and scoresheets archived electronically.

Consultant Evaluations

The evaluation of previous performance is important to the execution of QBS, and selection of firms for new projects. Staff will use this information when considering the firm for future contracts. Evaluations are also helpful if performance issues arise during a project. The project manager will complete a performance evaluation at the end of each phase in a project. Once completed the evaluation will be share with the prime consultant for the project. Sample evaluation forms may be found in Appendix B.

Acceptable Costs – The County Engineer will review the contract costs and the indirect cost rates to assure they are compliant with Federal cost principles prior to submission to IDOT.

Invoice Processing - The County Engineer will review and approve all invoices prior to payment and submission to DOT for reimbursement.

Project Administration - The County Engineer will monitor work on the project in accordance with the contract. MCHD follows IDOT's requirements and the required submission of BLRS Form 05613 to the IDOT district at contract close-out along with the final invoice.

Appendix A - Selection and Scoring Sheet

SELECTION SUMMARY SHEET

Menard County Highway Department Consultant Selection Considerations

Project Name:
 Section Number:
 Description:

Notes:
 Selection Members:

Amount Budgeted:
 Start Selection Process:
 Committee Conducted:
 Interviews Conducted:

Ratings: 1 - Poor; 2 - Below Average; 3 - Average; 4 - Above Average; 5 - Excellent
 Weight for each rating category per advertisement

Rating Description	Weight	Firm 1		Firm 2		Firm 3	
		Rating	Total	Rating	Total	Rating	Total
Past Performance in Project Categories			0		0		0
Proposed Staffing from Prime & Subconsultants			0		0		0
Proximity of Firm to Project Location			0		0		0
Proposed DBE Use			0		0		0
Available Work Capacity of Firm			0		0		0
Firm's Experience in Required Project Work			0		0		0
Firm's Understanding/Method of Accomplishing Project Requirements			0		0		0
Project Specific Criteria:			0		0		0
Reviewer:	100%						
TOTAL							
CUMULATIVE TOTAL							
RANK							
Most Recent Evaluation							

Menard County Highway Department Consultant Selection Considerations

The weight given to each evaluation Criterion in the ranking process may vary from project to project, with more weight towards the criteria that are critical to the success of the project. Consideration will be given to the following technical criteria:

- (1) The education, experience, and expertise of the firm's principles and key employees.
- (2) The firm's general experience, stability, and history of performance on projects similar to the one under consideration.
- (3) Availability of adequate personnel, equipment, and facilities to do the required work expeditiously.
- (4) The name, or names, of individuals in the firm who will be assigned key project responsibilities, with particular attention to their qualification, competence, and past performance.
- (5) The firm's approach to the planning, organizing, and management of a project effort, including communication procedures, approach to problem solving, data gathering methods, evaluation techniques, and similar factors.
- (6) Facilities and equipment owned by the firm, including computer capability, reproduction and communication equipment, laboratory and testing equipment, or other Specialized equipment applicable to the project under consideration.
- (7) Present workload with attention to current and future commitments of available personnel, particularly those key persons expected to be assigned to the project.
- (8) Financial stability, with particular attention to avoiding a situation in which the firm is solely dependent on income from the project at hand for its existence.
- (9) Recommendations and opinions of each firm's previous clients as to its ability to meet deadlines, remain within budget, sense of responsibility, attitudes of key personnel, concern for economy, efficiency and environment and quality of service.
- (10) The reputation and integrity of the engineering firm within the professional field and the community.
- (11) Awards received by the firm and technical papers authored by employees.
- (12) Special considerations for project specific criteria.

The following non-technical criteria (not exceeding 10% of the total evaluation and rank weighting) will be considered:

- (1) Proximity of the engineering firm to the proposed project site and/or MCHD's office.
- (2) Qualified minority representation
- (3) How DBE goals are addressed.

Appendix B – Consultant Evaluation Forms

Menard County Highway Department

Consultant Evaluations

Evaluation Date: _____ Section No.: _____
Evaluation Type: _____ Phase: _____
Consulting Firm: _____ Original Contract: \$ _____
Consultant Project Manager: _____ Supplement(s): _____
Project Name: _____ Total Fee: \$ _____
Project Description: _____

PERFORMANCE RATING SCALE

- 5 **Outstanding Performance**
Far exceeds expectations
- 4. **Above Satisfactory Performance**
Often exceeds expectations
- 3 **Satisfactory Performance**
Consistently achieves expectations
- 2 **Below Satisfactory Performance**
Sometimes achieves expectations
- 1 **Unacceptable Performance**
Consistently below expectations

Overall Evaluation:

Note: An overall grade of 3 is considered satisfactory performance. The maximum grade attainable is 5.

Rated By: _____ Date _____

Reviewed By: _____

Administrative Technician Date _____

Approved By: _____

County Engineer Date _____

