

**LOCAL AGENCY**  
**CONSULTANT SELECTION PROCEDURES**

**Section I – Application (These procedures do not apply to Design-Build Contracts.)**

These procedures apply to federally and state funded contracts for engineering and design related services for projects and are issued to ensure that a qualified consultant is obtained through an equitable qualifications-based selection procurement process and that the prescribed work is properly accomplished in a timely manner at a fair and reasonable cost.

Engineering and design related services are defined in 23 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 172 to include program management, construction management, preliminary engineering, design engineering, surveying mapping, or architectural related services with respect to a highway construction project. These services also include professional services of an architectural or engineering nature, as defined by State law, which are required to or may logically or justifiably be performed or approved by a person licensed, registered, or certified to provide the services with respect to a highway construction project. Contracts for these services that are paid with Federal-aid highway program (FAHP) funding will be awarded following these selection procedures.

The federal laws and regulations that govern the procurement of engineering and design related services with FAHP funds are:

- 23 United States Code (U.S.C.) 106 “Project approval and oversight”
- 23 U.S.C. 112 “Letting of contracts”
- 23 U.S.C. 114(a) “Construction Work In General”
- 23 U.S.C. 302 “State transportation department”
- 23 U.S.C. 315 “Rules, regulations, and recommendations”
- 23 U.S.C. 402 “Highway safety programs”
- 40 U.S.C. Chapter 11 – Selection of Architects and Engineers, §§1101 *et seq.*, commonly called the “Brooks Act”
- 2 CFR Part 200 “Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards”
- 23 CFR Part 172 “Procurement, Management, and Administration of Engineering and Design Related Services”
- 48 CFR Part 31 “Contract Cost Principles and Procedures”
- 49 CFR Part 1.48(b) “The Federal Highway Administrator is delegated authority to administer the following provisions of title 23, Highways, U.S.C.”

In accordance with the above federal laws and regulations, the Arkansas Department of Transportation (Department) has approved these procedures for use by

the Local Agency for the “competitive negotiation” (qualifications-based selection) method of procurement as defined in 23 CFR §172.7, Procurement Methods and Procedures that complies with the Brooks Act (40 U.S.C. §§1101, *et seq.*).

The Local Agency will use these procedures for Federal-aid contracts and may elect to use them for non-Federal-aid contracts.

## **Section II – Advertisement for Letters of Interest**

The Local Agency may employ a consultant engineering firm when a need exists for engineering services, and it is in the Local Agency’s best interest to employ an engineer or engineering firm.

As a minimum, the Local Agency will advertise in a statewide newspaper, the Department’s website and the Local Agency’s website (if available), advising that consultant engineering services are being sought. In addition, the Local Agency may advertise in appropriate national trade magazines or websites for specialized services.

Interested firms must furnish:

1. A cover letter with the firm’s response including primary contact information.
2. The firm’s completed Architect-Engineer Qualifications Standard Form (SF) 330 Parts I and II (48 CFR §53.236-2(b)). (SF 330 is available on the Department’s website.)  
[http://arkansashighways.com/consultant\\_services/advertisements/advertisements.aspx](http://arkansashighways.com/consultant_services/advertisements/advertisements.aspx)
3. A current copy of the firm’s equal employment opportunity policy required per Arkansas Code Annotated (Ark. Code Ann.) §19-11-104.
4. The firm’s current copy (within 12 months) of the Department and Finance and Administration (DFA) Illegal Immigrant Contractor Disclosure Form (Ark. Code Ann. §19-11-105).  
<https://www.ark.org/dfa/immigrant/index.php/user/welcome>

Advertisements may be for either a specific single project; a group of projects; or for an on-call or indefinite delivery/indefinite quantity (IDIQ) for an established contract period (not to exceed 5 years), to be determined at a later date with specific task orders issued for each project. (23 CFR §172.9(a))

When advertising a specific project, the advertisement will describe the work in general terms allowing firms to evaluate their interest in performing the desired services.

When advertising a group of projects, a general description of work will be furnished. Firms will be asked to specify the projects they are interested in performing. When the Local Agency decides to proceed with a certain project, those firms having expressed interest in that project will be considered for selection.

When advertising for an on-call / IDIQ projects with later specified task orders, the advertisement will include a general description of work for the project task and the number of consultants anticipated to be selected.

If a solicitation fails to yield three qualified respondents, then the Local Agency may proceed with evaluation and selection if the Local Agency and the Department determines that the solicitation did not contain conditions or requirements that arbitrarily limited competition. Alternatively, the Local Agency may pursue procurement following the noncompetitive method when competition is determined to be inadequate and it is determined to not be feasible or practical to re-compete under a new solicitation. (23 CFR §172.7(a)(1)(iv)(D))

Solicitations will include language to comply with state procurement laws, rules, and regulations including but not limited to Ethical Standards (Ark. Code Ann. §19-11-708), Employee and Relative Disclosure, and Equal Opportunity Policy.

Interested firms are advised that in order to comply with state and federal requirements that the Local Agency will verify suspension and debarment actions and eligibility status of consultants in accordance with 2 CFR Part 1200 and 2 CFR Part 180.

Ark. Code Ann. §§19-11-701 through 19-11-714 addresses ethics and conflicts of interest. Federal regulations about conflicts of interest are described in 2 CFR §200.112, 23 CFR §1.33, and provisions of 23 CFR §172.7(4). No Local Agency employee may participate in selection, award or administration of a contract in which the Local Agency employee or any member of his or her immediate family has a financial, prospective financial, or other interest. Additionally, in accordance with Ark. Code Ann. §19-11-704(b) it is a breach of ethical standards for any person, including potential consultants, or parties to subagreements to engage in any conduct or behavior with other consultants, contractors, cities, counties, state agencies, or metropolitan/local planning organizations that may influence any public employee to breach the standards of ethical conduct provided by state and federal laws.

### **Section III – Selection Committee**

The Local Agency will designate a Selection Committee (Committee) to evaluate and analyze the letters of interest (LOI) and proposals.

## **Section IV – Evaluation of Letters of Interest**

The Committee will evaluate each consultant firm based on the criteria provided in the detailed LOIs in general as follows:

| No. | Evaluation Factors for LOIs   | Maximum Points Possible |
|-----|---|-------------------------|
| 1   | Professional staff including the education, experience, number of personnel available, and any partnerships with sub-consultants              | 10                      |
| 2   | General and professional reputation, including responsiveness to civil rights and equal employment opportunity requirements and opportunities | 10                      |
| 3   | *Past work performance  | 10                      |
| 4   | Experience with projects of a similar nature as those advertised  | 10                      |
|     | Total Points for LOI  | 40                      |

\*Past performance or evaluations from other clients will be considered when the firm has not worked for the Local Agency previously.

Following their review, the Committee will prepare a short list (minimum of three) of the top ranked engineering firms and recommend that these firms submit detailed proposals for further evaluation.

## **Section V – Request for Proposal**

The Local Agency will prepare a scope of work statement and request proposals from the engineering firms on the short list. For projects with FHWA oversight, which are identified by FHWA as Projects of Division Interest (PoDI) projects, the Local Agency will forward the scope of work statement to the Department and FHWA for review and approval before soliciting request for proposals (RFPs). A Local Agency's scope of work will typically include the following:

1. A detailed purpose and description of the work,
2. Services that will be furnished by the Local Agency,
3. Services that will be furnished by the consultant,
4. Deliverables to be provided,
5. Project conditions of the work,
6. Schedule for performance of the work,
7. Special conditions of the work including applicable standards, specifications, and policies, and
8. Assurance of participation of certified Disadvantaged Business Enterprises (DBE) in Federal-aid projects as Department goals for the Project are established.

The short-listed firms should submit proposals that contain the following:

1. A cover letter with primary contact information,
2. A detailed work plan that identifies the major tasks of work,
3. A list of major concerns associated with completing the work,
4. A detailed work schedule for specific projects as requested,
5. A manpower estimate for specific projects as requested, and
6. Updated Standard Form 330 Parts I and II, if necessary.

The Committee will review the proposals with particular attention to the five (5) listed evaluation factors for the proposals and will also consider the results determined in Section IV. The evaluation factors and their relative importance will be listed in the RFP if any of the factors are different from the list below.

| No. | Evaluation Factors for Proposals   | Maximum Points Possible |
|-----|--|-------------------------|
| 1   | Obvious indication that the scope of work is clearly understood                          | 20                      |
| 2   | Comprehensive, coherent, and detailed work plan  | 20                      |
| 3   | Realistic work schedule when applicable  | 10                      |
| 4   | Proposed working office location, need for a local office, and any local representative* | 5                       |
| 5   | Identification of sub-consultants and responsiveness to DBE goals and opportunities      | 5                       |
| 6   | Total Points for LOI   | 40                      |
|     | Total Points for Proposals   | 100                     |

\*Locality preference shall not be based on political or jurisdictional boundaries and may be applied on a project-by-project basis for contracts where a need has been established for a consultant to provide a local presence, a local presence will add value to the quality and efficiency of the project, and application of this criteria leaves an appropriate number of qualified consultants, given the nature and size of the project. (Consultants indicating that it will satisfy this factor in some manner, such as establishing a local project office, shall be considered to have satisfied this factor.)

Based on these evaluation factors, the Committee will rank the consultants based on the total score and submit the list to the Local Agency who will either:

1. Select one (1) firm to enter negotiations with; or
2. Select
  - a. Multiple firms for an IDIQ contract; or
  - b. Three or more firms to interview (a firm may present additional information concerning their proposal at the interview). After the interviews, the Committee will re-evaluate the firms based on the interview and the same evaluation factors as noted previously. The ranking list will be submitted to the Local Agency for review and final selection.

The Local Agency's contract file will contain records of the rankings and supporting data; however, the rankings will not be public information. Copies of the LOI advertisement, the rankings, and supporting data shall be submitted to the Department.

Notification must be provided to all responding consultants of the final selection of the most qualified consultant including the ranking of the top three consultants on projects where only one consultant is selected.

## **Section VI – Negotiation and Contract Preparation**

Once a firm is selected for negotiation for a specific job or a group of projects, it will prepare a draft contract including a cost estimate for the project(s). The other firms on the short list will be advised of the firm selected, subject to successful negotiations. Prior to receipt or review of the draft contract and cost estimate, the Local Agency shall prepare a detailed independent estimate with an appropriate breakdown of the work or labor hours, types or classifications of labor required, other direct cost and consultant's fixed fee for the defined scope of work. The independent estimate shall serve as the basis for negotiation to ensure a fair and reasonable cost is obtained.

More than one firm may be selected for an on-call or IDIQ contract. The contract will establish a maximum ceiling price for work issued under the contract as well as an expiration date not to exceed 5 years, per 23 CFR Part 172. Individual task order cost estimates will be negotiated when issued.

The selected firm will prepare a draft contract based on a sample contract furnished by the Department. In accordance with the principles of 23 CFR 172, the draft contract must include an overhead rate that is approved by the Department. If the contract exceeds \$250,000, in accordance with the Department's Indirect Cost Rate Audit Requirements, the indirect cost rate shall be verified through an audit performed by a certified public accountant on behalf of the consultant. If the contract is less than \$250,000, and at least one of these conditions applies:

1. When there is insufficient knowledge of the consultant's accounting system
2. When there is previous unfavorable experience regarding the reliability of the consultant's accounting system
3. When the contract involves procurement of new equipment or supplies for which cost experience is lacking

then the Consultant shall provide the indirect cost rate verified through an audit performed by a certified public accountant on behalf of the consultant. The certified audit shall be provided by the selected firm prior to the submission of the final draft contract.

Pursuant to this requirement, the Department will notify the Local Agency if an audit by a certified public accountant for the selected firm is necessary. The certified audit needs to be provided by the selected firm prior to the submission of the final draft contract.

The Local Agency will review the draft contract proposal and either approve it as submitted or enter into negotiations with the selected firm to establish a contract and contract ceiling price that the Local Agency deems is fair and reasonable. If a satisfactory contract cannot be negotiated with the selected firm, negotiations will be

formally terminated. The Local Agency will then enter into negotiations with the second ranked firm. If negotiations with that firm fail, the Local Agency will formally terminate those negotiations and begin to negotiate with the third ranked firm, and so on. If the Local Agency cannot negotiate a satisfactory contract with any of the firms on the short list, the Local Agency shall either:

1. Request proposals from additional firms who have submitted LOIs and are considered competent and qualified; evaluate and rank the firms based on the criteria described in Section V; and continue the negotiation process, or
2. Terminate all negotiations and begin the selection process again, or
3. Pursue procurement following the noncompetitive method when competition is determined to be inadequate and it is determined to not be feasible or practical to re-compete under a new solicitation. (23 CFR §172.7(a)(1)(iv)(D))

When the Local Agency and the consultant agree the negotiated contract is fair and reasonable, the consultant will prepare a final draft and submit it to the Local Agency and the Department for review. After review and a determination that it is acceptable, the consultant will sign the contract. The Local Agency will then execute the contract. The contract will subsequently be submitted to the Department for final review and approval including funding. When approved, copies of the signed contract will be distributed within the Local Agency and to the consultant.

For projects with FHWA oversight and for on-call or IDIQ contracts where the consultant performs a management role utilizing federal funds, the Department will forward the initial and final drafts of the contract to FHWA for review and comment. The FHWA approves the final executed contract by stamp and signature and retains a copy.

After the Local Agency executes an on-call or IDIQ contract, it will assign specific projects by task order for the duration of the contract period. The consultant will prepare each task order based on the scope of work furnished by the Local Agency. The task order will include a manpower estimate and cost. The Local Agency will review the task order and approve it as submitted or negotiate with the consultant to establish a task order and task order amount that the Local Agency deems is fair and reasonable. After review and a determination that the task order is acceptable, the consultant will sign the task order. The Local Agency will then execute the task order. The task order will subsequently be submitted to the Department for final review and approval including funding. When approved, copies of the signed task order will be distributed within the Local Agency and to the consultant.

For PoDI projects, the Department will forward the initial and final drafts of the task order to FHWA for review, comment, and approval. Upon FHWA approval, the final task order is executed.

## **Section VII – Monitoring the Contract**

The Local Agency may designate staff members as key liaisons for specific projects or for technical matters during the administration of the contract period.

The Local Agency will:

1. Maintain the contract files,
2. Arrange and attend periodic progress meetings,
3. Coordinate reviews and approval actions with other agencies when necessary,
4. Review progress payments,
5. Coordinate questions from the consultant,
6. Negotiate any change or amendment to the contract and submit to the Department for review and approval, and
7. Prepare an evaluation of the consultant's performance after completion of the contract. A copy of the evaluation shall be submitted to the Department.

## **Section VIII – Consultant Liability**

The Local Agency will include a contract requirement that the consultant will warrant that all services and work products provided as part of the contract are performed in accordance to the prevailing industry standards, including standards of conduct and care, format and content, meet the satisfaction of the Local Agency, and conform to the requirements of the Agreement. This warrant is effective regardless of the degree of inspection and acceptance by the Local Agency or others.

If the consultant is required to correct or re-perform any work or services, the work will be performed at no cost to the Local Agency, and any work or services corrected or re-performed by the consultant shall also be warranted that it is free from defects in workmanship in accordance with industry standards. If the consultant fails or refuses to correct or re-perform, the Local Agency may, by contract or otherwise, correct or replace the deficient items or services with similar work or services, and charge the cost to the consultant or make an equitable adjustment in the consultant's reimbursement.

Acceptance is an act of an authorized representative of the Local Agency by which the Local Agency approves specific services, as partial or complete performance of the contract. Correction is the elimination of a defect.