

Ohio's Qualifications-Based Selection Law

(as amended by Sub. H.B. 153, 129th Ohio General Assembly, effective Sept. 28, 2011)

Sec. 153.65. As used in sections 153.65 to 153.73 of the Revised Code:

(A)(1) "Public authority" means the state, a state institution of higher education as defined in section 3345.011 of the Revised Code, a county, township, municipal corporation, school district, or other political subdivision, or any public agency, authority, board, commission, instrumentality, or special purpose district of the state or of a political subdivision.

(2) "Public authority" does not include the Ohio turnpike commission.

(B) "Professional design firm" means any person legally engaged in rendering professional design services.

(C) "Professional design services" means services within the scope of practice of an architect or landscape architect registered under Chapter 4703. of the Revised Code or a professional engineer or surveyor registered under Chapter 4733. of the Revised Code.

(D) "Qualifications" means all of the following:

(1) (a) For a professional design firm, competence to perform the required professional design services as indicated by the technical training, education, and experience of the firm's personnel, especially the technical training, education, and experience of the employees within the firm who would be assigned to perform the services;

(b) For a design-build firm, competence to perform the required design-build services as indicated by the technical training, education, and experience of the design-build firm's personnel and key consultants, especially the technical training, education, and experience of the employees and consultants of the design-build firm who would be assigned to perform the services, including the proposed architect or engineer of record.

(2) Ability of the firm in terms of its workload and the availability of qualified personnel, equipment, and facilities to perform the required professional design services or design-build services competently and expeditiously;

(3) Past performance of the firm as reflected by the evaluations of previous clients with respect to such factors as control of costs, quality of work, and meeting of deadlines;

(4) Any other relevant factors as determined by the public authority;

(5) With respect to a design-build firm, compliance with sections 4703.182, 4703.332, and 4733.16 of the Revised Code, including the use of a licensed design professional for all design services.

(E) "Design-build contract" means a contract between a public authority and another person that obligates the person to provide design-build services.

(F) "Design-build firm" means a person capable of providing design-build services.

(G) “Design-build services” means services that form an integrated delivery system for which a person is responsible to a public authority for both the design and construction, demolition, alteration, repair, or reconstruction of a public improvement.

(H) “Architect or engineer of record” means the architect or engineer that serves as the final signatory on the plans and specifications for the design-build project.

(I) “Criteria architect or engineer” means the architect or engineer retained by a public authority to prepare conceptual plans and specifications, to assist the public authority in connection with the establishment of the design criteria for a design-build project, and, if requested by the public authority, to serve as the representative of the public authority and provide, during the design-build project, other design and construction administration services on behalf of the public authority, including but not limited to, confirming that the design prepared by the design-build firm reflects the original design intent established in the design criteria package.

(J) “Open book pricing method” means a method in which a design-build firm provides the public authority, at the public authority’s request, all books, records, documents, contracts, subcontracts, purchase orders, and other data in its possession pertaining to the bidding, pricing, or performance of a contract for design-build services awarded to the design-build firm.

Sec. 153.66. (A) Each public authority planning to contract for professional design services or design-build services shall encourage professional design firms and design-build firms to submit a statement of qualifications and update the statements at regular intervals.

(B) Notwithstanding any contrary requirements in sections 153.65 to 153.70 of the Revised Code, for every design-build contract, each public authority planning to contract for design-build services shall evaluate the statements of qualifications submitted by design-build firms for the project, including the qualifications of the design-build firm’s proposed architect or engineer of record, in consultation with the criteria architect or engineer before selecting a design-build firm pursuant to section 153.693 of the Revised Code.

Sec. 153.67. Each public authority planning to contract for professional design services or design-build services shall publicly announce all contracts available from it for such services. The announcements shall:

(A) Be made in a uniform and consistent manner and shall be made sufficiently in advance of the time that responses must be received from qualified professional design firms or design-build firms for the firms to have an adequate opportunity to submit a statement of interest in the project;

(B) Include a general description of the project, a statement of the specific professional design services or design-build services required, and a description of the qualifications required for the project;

(C) Indicate how qualified professional design firms or design-build firms may submit statements of qualifications in order to be considered for a contract to design or design-build the project;

(D) Be sent to any of the following that the public authority considers appropriate:

(1) Design-build firms, including contractors or other entities that seek to perform the work as a

design-build firm;

- (2) Architect, landscape architect, engineer, and surveyor associations;
- (3) The news media;
- (4) Any publications or other public media, including electronic media.

Sec. 153.68. Any public authority planning to contract for professional design services may institute prequalification requirements for professional design firms seeking to provide services to the public authority and may require that each prequalified firm maintain a current statement of qualifications on file with the public authority. The prequalification requirements shall be based on factors such as those set out in division (D) of section 153.65 of the Revised Code.

Sec. 153.69. For every professional design services contract, each public authority planning to contract for professional design services shall evaluate the statements of qualifications submitted by professional design firms specifically regarding the project, and may hold discussions with individual firms to explore further the firms' statements of qualifications, the scope and nature of the services the firms would provide, and the various technical approaches the firms may take toward the project. Following this evaluation, the public authority shall:

(A) Select and rank no fewer than three firms which it considers to be the most qualified to provide the required professional design services, except when the public authority determines in writing that fewer than three qualified firms are available in which case the public authority shall select and rank those firms;

(B) Negotiate a contract with the firm ranked most qualified to perform the required services at a compensation determined in writing to be fair and reasonable to the public authority. Contract negotiations shall be directed toward:

(1) Ensuring that the professional design firm and the agency have a mutual understanding of the essential requirements involved in providing the required services;

(2) Determining that the firm will make available the necessary personnel, equipment, and facilities to perform the services within the required time;

(3) Agreeing upon compensation which is fair and reasonable, taking into account the estimated value, scope, complexity, and nature of the services.

(C) If a contract is negotiated with the firm ranked to perform the required services most qualified, the public authority shall, if applicable under section 127.16 of the Revised Code, request approval of the board to make expenditures under the contract.

(D) Upon failure to negotiate a contract with the firm ranked most qualified, the public authority shall inform the firm in writing of the termination of negotiations and may enter into negotiations with the firm ranked next most qualified. If negotiations again fail, the same procedure may be followed with each next most qualified firm selected and ranked pursuant to division (A) of this section, in order of ranking, until a contract is negotiated.

(E) Should the public authority fail to negotiate a contract with any of the firms selected pursuant to division (A) of this section, the public authority may select and rank additional firms, based on their qualifications, and negotiations may continue as with the firms selected and ranked initially until a contract is negotiated.

(F) Nothing in this section affects a public authority's right to accept or reject any or all proposals in whole or in part.

Sec. 153.691. No public authority planning to contract for professional design services under section 153.69 of the Revised Code shall require any form of fee estimate, fee proposal, or other estimate or measure of compensation prior to selecting and ranking professional design firms, except in instances when firm are selected and ranked by a state agency from a list of prequalified firms created under section 153.68 of the Revised Code and the state agency's payment of funds for the professional design services has been preapproved by the controlling board.

Sec. 153.692. For every design-build contract, the public authority planning to contract for design-build services shall first obtain the services of a criteria architect or engineer by doing either of the following:

(A) Contracting for the services consistent with sections 153.65 to 153.70 of the Revised Code;

(B) Obtaining the services through an architect or engineer who is an employee of the public authority and notifying the department of administrative services before the services are performed.

Sec. 153.693. (A) For every design-build contract, the public authority planning to contract for design-build services, in consultation with the criteria architect or engineer, shall evaluate the statements of qualifications submitted by design-build firms specifically regarding the project, including the design-build firm's proposed architect or engineer of record. Following this evaluation, the public authority shall:

(1) Select and rank not fewer than three firms which it considers to be the most qualified to provide the required design-build services, except that the public authority shall select and rank fewer than three firms when the public authority determines in writing that fewer than three qualified firms are available;

(2) Provide each selected design-build firm with all of the following:

(a) A description of the project and project delivery;

(b) The design criteria produced by the criteria architect or engineer under section 153.692 of the Revised Code;

(c) A preliminary project schedule;

(d) A description of any preconstruction services;

(e) A description of the proposed design services;

(f) A description of a guaranteed maximum price, including the estimated level of design on which such guaranteed maximum price is based;

(g) The form of the design-build services contract;

(h) A request for a pricing proposal that shall be divided into a design services fee and a preconstruction and design-build services fee. The pricing proposal of each design-build firm shall include at least all of the following:

(i) A list of key personnel and consultants for the project;

(ii) Design concepts adhering to the design criteria produced by the criteria architect or engineer under section 153.692 of the Revised Code;

(iii) The design-build firm's statement of general conditions and estimated contingency requirements;

(iv) A preliminary project schedule.

(3) Evaluate the pricing proposal submitted by each selected firm and, at its discretion, hold discussions with each firm to further investigate its pricing proposal, including the scope and nature of the firm's proposed services and potential technical approaches;

(4) Rank the selected firms based on the public authority's evaluation of the value of each firm's pricing proposal, with such evaluation considering each firm's proposed costs and qualifications;

(5) Enter into contract negotiations for design-build services with the design-build firm whose pricing proposal the public authority determines to be the best value under this section.

(B) In complying with division (A)(5) of this section, contract negotiations shall be directed toward:

(1) Ensuring that the design-build firm and the public authority mutually understand the essential requirements involved in providing the required design-build services, the provisions for the use of contingency funds, and the terms of the contract, including terms related to the possible distribution of savings in the final costs of the project;

(2) Ensuring that the design-build firm shall be able to provide the necessary personnel, equipment, and facilities to perform the design-build services within the time required by the design-build construction contract;

(3) Agreeing upon a procedure and schedule for determining a guaranteed maximum price using an open book pricing method that shall represent the total maximum amount to be paid by the public authority to the design-build firm for the project and that shall include the costs of all work, the cost of its general conditions, the contingency, and the fee payable to the design-build firm.

(C) If the public authority fails to negotiate a contract with the design-build firm whose pricing proposal the public authority determines to be the best value as determined under this section, the public authority shall inform the design-build firm in writing of the termination of negotiations. The public authority may then do the following:

(1) Negotiate a contract with a design-build firm ranked next highest under this section following

the negotiation procedure described in this section;

(2) If negotiations fail with the design-build firm under division (C)(1) of this section, negotiate a contract with the design-build firm ranked next highest under this section following the negotiation procedure described in this section and continue negotiating with the design-build firms selected under this section in the order of their ranking until a contract is negotiated.

(D) If the public authority fails to negotiate a contract with a design-build firm whose pricing proposal the public authority determines to be the best value as determined under this section, it may select additional design-build firms to provide pricing proposals to the public authority pursuant to this section or may select an alternative delivery method for the project.

(E) The public authority may provide a stipend for pricing proposals received from design-build firms.

(F) Nothing in this section affects a public authority's right to accept or reject any or all proposals in whole or in part.

Sec. 153.694. If a professional design firm selected as the criteria architect or engineer creates the preliminary criteria and design criteria for a project and provides professional design services to a public authority to assist that public authority in evaluating the design-build requirements provided to the public authority by a design-build firm pursuant to section 153.692 of the Revised Code, that professional design firm shall not provide any design-build services pursuant to the design-build contract under section 153.693 of the Revised Code for the project for which the professional design firm was selected as the criteria architect or engineer.

Sec. 153.70. (A) Except for any person providing professional design services of a research or training nature, any person rendering professional design services to a public authority or to a design-build firm, including a criteria architect or engineer and person performing architect or engineer of record services, shall have and maintain, or be covered by, during the period the services are rendered, a professional liability insurance policy or policies with a company or companies that are authorized to do business in this state and that afford professional liability coverage for the professional design services rendered. The insurance shall be in amount considered sufficient by the public authority. At the public authority's discretion, the design-build firm shall carry contractor's professional liability insurance and any other insurance the public authority considers appropriate.

(B) The requirement for professional liability insurance set forth in division (A) of this section may be waived by the public authority for good cause, or the public authority may allow the person providing the professional design services to provide other assurances of financial responsibility.

(C) Before construction begins pursuant to a contract for design-build services with a design-build firm, the design-build firm shall provide a surety bond to the public authority in accordance with rules adopted by the director of administrative services under Chapter 119. of the Revised Code.

Sec. 153.71. Any public authority planning to contract for professional design services or design-build services may adopt, amend, or rescind rules, in accordance with Chapter 119. of the Revised Code, to

implement sections 153.66 to 153.70 of the Revised Code. Sections 153.66 to 153.70 of the Revised Code do not apply to either of the following:

(A) Any project with an estimated professional design fee of less than fifty thousand dollars if both of the following requirements are met:

(1) The public authority selects a single design professional or firm from among those that have submitted a current statement of qualifications within the immediately preceding year, as provided under section 153.68 of the Revised Code, based on the public authority's determination that the selected design professional or firm is the most qualified to provide the required professional design services;

(2) The public authority and the selected design professional or firm comply with division (B) of section 153.69 of the Revised Code with respect to the negotiation of a contract.

(B) Any project determined in writing by the public authority head to be an emergency requiring immediate action including, but not limited to, any projects requiring multiple contracts let as part of a program requiring a large number of professional design firms of the same type.

Sec. 153.72. A design-build firm contracted for design-build services by a public authority may do either of the following:

(A) Perform design, construction, demolition, alteration, repair, or reconstruction work pursuant to such contract;

(B) Perform professional design services when contracted by a public authority for design-build services even if the design-build firm is not a professional design firm.

Sec. 153.73. The requirements set forth in sections 153.65 to 153.72 of the Revised Code for the bidding, selection, and award of a contract for professional design services or design-build services by a public authority prevail in the event of any conflict with any other provision of this chapter.