

Frequently Asked Questions

Q. What types of projects in Vermont's CWSRF require the utilization of the RFQ process?

A: Any project that utilizes federal funds in fiscal year 2016 and beyond will require documentation of the RFQ procedure. This includes those projects that are interested in qualifying for a subsidy.

Q. How is compliance with the QBS process documented?

A: This process will be documented at the time of the Municipal Loan application. Attached to the loan application, you need to attach the QBS Certification form provided as well as a copy of the advertisement. This certification form will affirm compliance with the RFQ process.

Q: Where should an applicant announce the RFQ?

A: An applicant should publish its announcement on publicly available bidding websites, newspapers, or related infrastructure publications. Additionally, an applicant can choose to send email or written solicitations to select firms. At least once announcement must be issued on a venue available to the public.

Q: How long should the RFQ be advertised?

A: It is up to the applicant, but we recommend at least 30 days.

Q: What criteria are used to evaluate submitted qualification statements?

A: Evaluation and ranking criteria of the qualification statements should be identified in the solicitation. Criteria should be based on demonstrated competence and qualification for the type of services required. An applicant can include, but is not limited to, past performance, specialized experiences, and technical competence in the desired work.

Q: Can cost be used to evaluate the qualification statements submitted?

A: No. Selection must be based on demonstrated competence and qualification only. An applicant should "short list" a minimum of three firms to consider, compare, and hold discussions with.

Q: Are formal interviews required?

A: No, the federal statute states “conduct discussions with a minimum of three firms.”

Q: What happens if there are less than three firms that respond to the advertisement?

A: There must be a good faith effort made to publicly advertise and directly solicit participation. On the QBS Certification form, applicants will need to declare which steps they took to generate firm interest. CWSRF staff will review these declarations and determine whether a good faith effort was made.

Q: Does the QBS process have to be used separately for the plan, design, and construction?

A: It is up to the applicant. To be efficient, it is acceptable to do an RFQ that includes planning, design, and construction.

Q: Do I have to follow the QBS process in order to receive a loan?

A: Yes and no. You must follow the QBS process in order to qualify for loans containing federal funds, which may include subsidy loan. It should be noted that the current IUP allows for the procurement of A/E services with second tier (revolving loan funds) that may be acquired without the WRRDA’s QBS requirements. However, we recommend that all systems put QBS into practice.

Q: My municipality already has a procurement process. Can we use that?

A: Maybe. If you would like to utilize your local procurement process, it would need to be reviewed by department staff to ensure it meets the QBS requirements.

Q: My municipality uses our procurement process to prequalify a number of consultants for our needs. Can we use our existing list?

A: Maybe. In review of your local procurement process, the Department will look for certain qualifying information such as the age of the list (not more than 5 years old) and that the municipality intends to negotiate fee proposals separately from the solicitation and selection process.

Q: Does the QBS/RFQ process apply to contracted services including the work of a subcontractor to the consultant?

A: No. The QBS/RFQ procurement requirements are specific to Architectural and Engineering services only. Examples of these services that are not required to comply with these requirements include asbestos testing services, lead paint testing services, smoke testing, flow monitoring, and CCTV pipe inspection services.