Qualifications-Based Selection (QBS) is the ideal procurement method for the hiring of qualified design professionals. It is the best process to emphasize public safety and client satisfaction.

**QBS Process**

**Does Not Include Cost Proposal**
Like lawyers and doctors, design professionals are procured for best service

**Pick Right Firm for Right Project**
Objective criteria reveals best firm for specific project

**Negotiate a Fair Price**
After collaborating on scope of services with selected firm

**Enjoy Professional Relationship**
QBS creates high satisfaction among clients and professionals—increasing chances of working together again

**What is QBS?**
QBS is a competitive procurement process that requires a project owner to first evaluate design professionals (engineers, land surveyors, architects, etc.) based on their qualifications and their competence. After ranking the firms and identifying the most qualified, only then may the public agency begin to negotiate a fair and reasonable price with the top firm based on the scope of the project. This is different from contractors, who are selected at lowest bid because construction documents already exist on which bids are based.

**What is the QBS Process?**
QBS is required in both federal and California law; it is also considered an international best practice. While there may be some small variations in implementation, QBS does have a uniform, step-by-step procedure to be followed by the soliciting agency:

1. Develop an information packet and issue RFQ/RFP, including a clear schedule of deadlines. Any required cost proposals should be included in a separate, sealed envelope.

2. Review and evaluate responses based on qualifications and invite a short list of firms to interview.

3. Conduct panel interviews.

4. Rank firms based on their qualifications for this project.

5. Begin negotiations for the complete scope of services at a fair and reasonable price with the top firm. If a cost proposal was required, the selected firm’s envelope may be opened to begin negotiations. (If a price cannot be agreed upon, negotiations are closed and the client moves to negotiations with the second ranked firm.)

6. Approve the negotiated agreement and issue a notice to proceed.

7. Return unopened cost proposal envelopes to unselected firms.