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## **LUNCH AND LEARN**

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**Topic:** What You Need to Know about **QBS**

**Where:** The Convenience of Your Office

**Description:** This presentation discusses the procurement method of **Qualifications Based Selection**: who should use **QBS**, what are the benefits of **QBS**, why it became the law for Colorado and federally funded projects, and how to implement **QBS** to procure A/E services on your projects.

***This free program is recommended for Project Owners, Owner's Representatives, Local and State Government Agencies, Construction Managers/Administrators, Architects, Engineers, Surveyors, Contractors, and all interested parties. Lunch is provided by QBSColorado.***

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*To schedule a program for your organization, kindly contact:*

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## **WHY IS QBS HARD TO UNDERSTAND?**

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BY DICK EUSTIS, PE, CCCA

Why is it so difficult to understand the basic issue of “**Qualifications Based Selection**”? It appears to be a simple concept, compare the qualifications that are necessary for the project with the qualifications of those that want to provide the service and find the most appropriate match. The match of desired qualifications to available qualifications should result in the highest level of confidence in success, the best results and the most satisfied client.

In our other activities we find this type of comparison, common place. If we need surgery, we search for someone that we have confidence is well qualified. If we need an attorney, we look for someone with the right qualifications to meet our needs. Even if we are just looking for someone to service our lawnmower, we match what we need with the available services, we would never go to “*Jiffy Lube*” to change the oil in our walk-behind power mower.

Possibly the reason it is so difficult to convey the value of **QBS** to Public Owners is that some Owners do not understand they are acquiring a “*Professional Service*” and that acquiring a “service” is much different than purchasing a commodity or a very well defined service. Most public entities have well-defined purchasing practices that are easy to follow when buying a commodity such as heating oil, paper for the photocopier or road salt. These purchasing practices do not work when one is acquiring “*Professional Services*”, especially where creativity or the study of alternatives is required.

If a lack of understanding of the services that are to be provided by a “*Design Professional*” is a factor in failure of a public entity to select the **QBS** Process, then we have an educational issue to address. Those of us that provide design services or have years of experience acquiring design service, may not appreciate that our understanding of this issue is not universal. We may be so close to the forest that our view is blocked by the trees.

I remember in my earlier days working with “*Building Committees*” in the selection of design professionals, we used to spend at least one hour prior to the interview process in discussing the “*Role and Responsibilities*” of the designer in the project. At times, it was very surprising how little well educated people knew about the services that were expected to be provided by a design professional or how the design professional was expected to interact with the Committee or the larger community.

**Qualifications Based Selection** of design professionals is a well-tested method that has a long history of success. It has been almost forty years since the Federal Government passed the **Brooks Act** that first established legal requirements to use **QBS**. Even with this long history, many still do not understand why this is important because they may not understand the services that are required to convert a “good idea” into an operating facility.

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## **ACEC/CO EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR MESSAGE**

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BY MARILEN REIMER

As we start the New Year, ACEC/CO looks at what our priorities should be that is in the best interest of our members, their clients and the Citizens of Colorado; promoting **Qualifications Based Selection** is one of them. We hear often from the media of the need to provide value to the taxpayer when an agency looks to construct a new project. **Qualifications Based Selection (QBS)** for engineering and design services is a proven procurement method that delivers projects more efficiently and cost effectively for both the client and taxpayer. Engineering is a highly skilled, multi-disciplined profession whose services directly affect public safety and welfare. Engineering and consulting firms provide technical expertise, innovation and the latest technologies – skills that are the most important factors in enhancing project performance and cost savings. That’s why engineering services are procured under this highly competitive and transparent process that emphasizes qualifications, experience and expertise.

The **QBS** procurement method is governed by the **Brooks Act** (40 U.S.C. 1101-1104) for federally funded projects and the Colorado mini-Brooks Act for state funded projects Colorado Revised Statutes (CRS) 24-30-1401 et. seq.

**Qualifications Based Selection (QBS) lowers the overall cost of projects** through designs that reduce change orders during construction and minimize long-term operations and maintenance costs. By contrast, a low-bid process can ultimately be more time consuming and costly as well as override quality and innovation.

**QBS allows government agencies to deliver projects efficiently** by focusing on qualifications to achieve the agency’s requirements rather than lowest services cost.

Agencies save time and money by eliminating the need to develop a detailed scope of work for bidding. Under **QBS**, the scope of work is finalized with the most qualified consulting engineering firm during negotiation of a fair and reasonable cost. Cost-based selection requires and encourages later scope changes that increase design and construction costs and delay project delivery schedules.

Engineering and design services are a very small percentage of the total project cost, and studies have shown that **QBS** actually saves money during the construction phase of the project, which is where most of the money is spent; such a national study was conducted in 2009. “*An Analysis of Issues Pertaining to Qualifications-Based Selection*” done by Paul S. Chinowsky, PhD of the University of Colorado and Gordon A. Kingsley, PhD of Georgia Institute of Technology provided quantitative support that **QBS**-based projects experienced fewer change orders and construction cost escalation (3% on average) versus the industry standard (10%).

[http://www.qbscolorado.org/pdf/QBS\\_Study\\_Final.pdf](http://www.qbscolorado.org/pdf/QBS_Study_Final.pdf)

For decades through **QBSColorado**, ACEC/CO has worked diligently with the American Institute of Architects/CO and National Society of Professional Engineers/CO to promote and educate agencies and companies about the qualifications based selection (QBS) procedure for procuring design services.

**QBS** allows agencies to provide value to their projects and to protect the health, safety and welfare of the Citizens of Colorado.

For additional resources go to: <http://www.qbscolorado.org/>

To read the **Brooks Act** or Colorado’s mini-Brooks Bill:

[Federal Government Selection of Architects and Engineers](#)

Public Law 92-582

92nd Congress, H.R. 12807

October 27, 1972

[Colorado mini-Brooks Bill](#)

Colorado Revised Statutes (CRS) 24-30-1401 et. seq.

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## **AIA COLORADO HAS A NEW OFFICE**

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As of Monday, February 13, the **AIA Colorado** office will be located at 303 E. 17<sup>th</sup> Ave., Suite 110, Denver, CO 80203.

AIA Colorado sought complete architectural and engineering services including programming, design, cost estimating, construction documents and construction administration for the project. Minimum requirements for the design team included a valid license to practice architecture in Colorado, firm membership in AIA Colorado and professional liability insurance. AIA Colorado is committed to a Qualification-Based Selection process and followed the guidelines established by QBS Colorado throughout the selection process.

This office will serve as the home for the organization until at least 2021. The goal of this relocation was to enable the organization to better serve its members. The new space will provide a 30 percent savings per square foot compared to our current office. The new space will address the needs of members voiced during the 2010 new office options survey to members. It will maintain an urban presence with public visibility while also offering more meeting and event space, more parking availability, and a gallery space to showcase members' work, among other amenities.

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## **QBS COLORADO 2012 BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

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### **QBSCOLORADO**

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