



## Ten Tips to Help Communities Hire an Engineer

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- 1. Know what your project is before you begin. Communities should develop a detailed project summary that specifically states what the problem is that needs to be solved, a narrative describing their existing facilities, and ideas the community has for solving the problem (i.e. potential sites where infrastructure could be located, type of infrastructure preferred, etc.).**
- 2. Establish a qualified engineer selection committee who will review qualifications, conduct interviews, and recommend a firm to the legislative body. Use existing community resource people in your area. These could include the sanitary engineer for your county, local community and economic development staff, a contractor or person who understands water and/or wastewater projects that resides in your community, your local water/wastewater superintendent, your village administrator, members of the board of public affairs, your CEO, your CFO, or members of your legislative body who have experience with water and/or wastewater projects.**
- 3. Develop a unique RFQ that challenges engineering firms to do some work in order to meet the requirements of the RFQ. Don't just use the same RFQ sample that engineers are used to or you will get the same information they send to all clients. An example might be to challenge engineers to provide a one page summary of recommendations as part of their qualifications on how to solve the problem you are seeking engineering services for in the first place.**
- 4. Request in the RFQ that engineering firms provide to you a list of all water/wastewater projects they have worked on in the past 5 years. This approach is more effective than asking for three references because you will have a list of all their projects not just the projects that were successful.**
- 5. Insist that engineers meet with village officials (village administrator, water or wastewater superintendent, etc.) and conduct a preliminary tour of the community and project site before submitting their qualifications.**

- 6. Develop a list of interview questions that focuses on the type of project you need to complete. Don't just use interview questions that engineers hear at each interview they attend. Be creative and ask questions that will challenge engineers to think "on their feet". Communities must remember that at no time during the RFQ or interview process are they allowed to ask about the cost of services. The Ohio Design Professional Selection Law clearly states that costs for services cannot be discussed until firms have been evaluated and ranked accordingly using Qualifications-Based Selection criteria.**
- 7. Don't try to interview too many firms and make sure you provide adequate time for the interviews. Generally, 3-5 firms should be the maximum number of firms that a community interviews. Conduct the interviews consecutively in one day and allow enough time to successfully determine if each firm has what you are looking for. Interviews should be no less than 30 minutes each and should be scheduled to allow for a brief presentation by each firm followed by questions from the community.**
- 8. Make it clear to engineering firms that you want the project manager that would be working on your project to attend the interview. It is very important that communities get a feel for what the project manager is like, his/her demeanor, does he/she listen to you during the interview, etc. The most important mental question during the interview should be "can we work as a team with this person (the project manager)".**
- 9. Advertise the RFQ as much as possible. Send the RFQ to a large newspaper not just your local newspaper. Use the F.W. Dodge to advertise your RFQ. Talk with the communities around you and ask them who they have worked with in the past and send the RFQ to those engineering firms. Send the RFQ to firms that have visited with your local officials in the past. Get a list of engineers from the Consulting Engineers Council of Ohio and select firms near your area to send the RFQ to.**
- 10. Communities should remember that they are not required to enter into contract with the firm that is ranked the highest after the interviews are conducted. If a community cannot reach an agreement with the highest ranked firm in regards to the cost of their services; they need to remember that the law states that they can negotiate with the second ranked firm, then the third ranked firm, etc. until the community is able to negotiate a fair price with a firm. If the community cannot reach an agreement with any of the firms interviewed, they must begin the entire process over.**