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Research Brief

TO: Representative Sam Kito
FROM: Roger Withington, Legislative Analyst
DATE: February 24, 2015
RE: Municipalities and Communities Currently Using Qualification-Based Selection Processes in Contracting for Certain Professional Services
LRS Report 15 188

You asked for information regarding the procurement practices of municipalities and communities in Alaska. Specifically, you asked us to determine which municipalities and communities in Alaska are currently using qualification-based selection (QBS) processes, or have QBS ordinances, for contracts for architectural, engineering, landscape architecture, and land surveying services.

Generally, Qualifications Based Selection (QBS) is a procurement method in which the final criteria for selection of a service are qualifications and demonstrated competence. Price and cost are not selection criteria, but they may be considered during contract negotiation.¹ We were unable to locate a comprehensive list of which municipalities and communities in Alaska currently use QBS in their procurement of architectural, engineering, landscape architecture, and land surveying services.² As a result, we searched various online municipal codes, or contacted communities via email, to determine which communities, if any, use such practices.

In Table 1, we identify eight municipalities—Aleutians East Borough, Municipality of Anchorage, Barrow, Bethel, Delta Junction, City of Fairbanks, Fairbanks North Star Borough, and the North Slope Borough—that, pursuant to municipal code, use QBS to procure professional services such as architectural, engineering, landscape architecture, and land surveying services. We also identified eleven communities that exclude the procurement of professional services from the competitive bid requirement set forth in municipal code; and the one community—Juneau—that does not have QBS requirements delineated in code but does use QBS in practice. Please note that this list is not exhaustive, and represents a sample of 20 communities. We attach each of the cited municipal codes.

¹ Associated General Contractors of America, <https://www.agc.org/>.

² Neither Kathie Wasserman, Executive Director of the Alaska Municipal League (907-586-1325), nor Jason Soza, Chief Procurement Officer for the Alaska Department of Administration (907-465-5684), had the information we seek. Lawrence Blood, Acting Director of the Division of Community and Regional Affairs, Alaska Department of Commerce, Community, and Economic Development (907-465-4751), did not respond to our queries.

Table 1: Municipalities and Communities that Use Qualifications Based Selection Criteria to Procure Certain Professional Services or Exclude the Procurement of Certain Professional Services from Competitive Bidding Requirements

Municipality or Community	Citation	Summary
Aleutians East Borough	Aleutians East Borough Municipal Code, §§ 3.02.010 and 3.02.150	Qualification Based Selection
Municipality of Anchorage	Anchorage Code of Ordinances, § 7.20.060	Qualification Based Selection
Barrow	Barrow Municipal Code, § 4.16.100	Qualification Based Selection
Bethel	Bethel Municipal Code, §§ 4.20.030 and 4.20.170	Qualification Based Selection
Delta Junction	City of Delta Junction, Municipal Code of Ordinances, § 1.41.600	Qualification Based Selection
Denali Borough	Denali Borough Code, § 3.35.070	Excluded from competitive bid requirement
City of Fairbanks	Fairbanks Code of Ordinances, § 54-207	Qualification Based Selection
Fairbanks North Star Borough	Fairbanks North Star Borough Code, § 16.55.010	Qualification Based Selection
Gustavus	Gustavus Code of Ordinances, § 4.17.050	Excluded from competitive bid requirement
Haines	Haines Borough Code, § 3.60.170	Excluded from competitive bid requirement
Homer	Homer City Code, § 3.16.060	Excluded from competitive bid requirement
Houston	Houston Municipal Code, §§ 4.10.010 and 4.10.100	Excluded from competitive bid requirement ^(a)
City and Borough of Juneau	Not in code but done in practice ^(b)	Qualification Based Selection
City of Kenai	Kenai Municipal Code, § 7.15.050	Excluded from competitive bid requirement
Kenai Peninsula Borough	Kenai Peninsula Borough Code of Ordinances, § 5.28.250	Excluded from competitive bid requirement
Ketchikan Gateway Borough	Ketchikan Gateway Borough Code, § 11.20.100	Excluded from competitive bid requirement
Kodiak Island Borough	Kodiak Island Borough Code, § 3.30.070	Excluded from competitive bid requirement
Matanuska-Susitna Borough	Matanuska-Susitna Borough Code, §§ 3.08.010 and 3.08.2010	Excluded from competitive bid requirement
North Slope Borough	North Slope Borough Code of Ordinances, §§ 2.36.280 and 2.36.180	Qualification Based Selection
City and Borough of Yakutat	City and Borough of Yakutat Code of Ordinances, § 6.24.170	Excluded from competitive bid requirement
Notes: a) Applicable to contracts under \$20,001. b) Rorie Watt, Director of Public Works/Engineering, City and Borough of Juneau, 907-586-0877.		

We hope this is helpful. If you have questions or need additional information, please let us know.