



The American Institute of Architects | Tennessee Chapter | [aiatn.org](http://aiatn.org)



## Qualifications-Based Selection Procurement

Protecting Taxpayers and Public Vertical Infrastructure

Tennessee's Proven Process for Selecting Architects and Engineers Qualifications-Based Selection (QBS) is the procurement method Tennessee requires for selecting architects and engineers for public projects. Under the Tennessee Code Annotated (T.C.A.) Title 12, Chapter 4, Section 107, government entities are required to use QBS when procuring design services, rather than choosing the lowest bidder.

QBS ensures state and local government agencies select the most qualified professionals based on experience, expertise, and ability to deliver a high-quality project for buildings such as schools, libraries and government buildings.

- QBS protects Tennesseans and safeguards public investments.
- QBS ensures fair, transparent, and merit-based selection of professionals.
- Any weakening QBS opens the door to costly mistakes and public safety risks.

### How It Works:

- Public entities evaluate firms based on qualifications— not price.
- The most qualified firm is selected.
- Only then are fees negotiated fairly and transparently.

## QBS is Critical for Tennessee

### Protects Public Health, Safety, and Welfare

The design of public facilities directly impacts the safety of Tennesseans. QBS ensures that licensed professionals with the right expertise lead projects that meet building codes, safety standards, and functional requirements.

### Encourages Innovation and High-Quality Design

Design typically accounts for just 5–10% of a project's cost but influences up to 80% of the project's lifecycle costs (maintenance, energy use, operations). QBS ensures wise investment of taxpayer- dollars by avoiding costly design flaws, change orders, and rework.

### Prevents Waste and Cost Overruns

Selecting the lowest bid for complex design work often results in hidden costs, change orders, and schedule delays. QBS prioritizes getting it right the first time.