



California High-Speed Rail **BRIEFING: March 4, 2026, Agenda Item #4**

TO: Board Chair Richards and Board Members

FROM: Emily Morrison, Chief of Contracting

DATE: March 4, 2025

RE: Informational Only | Release of Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for Architectural & Engineering (A&E) Services, for Indefinite Delivery Indefinite Quantity (IDIQ) Pool Contracts

Summary

The California High-Speed Rail Authority's (Authority) anticipates releasing a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for Architectural & Engineering (A&E) Services to establish Indefinite Delivery Indefinite Quantity (IDIQ) Pool Contracts to support efficient delivery of the project.

The proposed IDIQ will provide an efficient, flexible contracting vehicle to deliver a broad range of A&E services, including planning, design, engineering, advisory, and construction support/project and construction management (PCM) services, as required across program phases and geographic segments.

The Authority will issue a qualifications-based RFQ to pre-qualify firms for award of multiple IDIQ contracts across designated business size pools.

The A&E IDIQ will be funded at the task order level, consistent with the Authority's Program Baseline, with individual task orders to be issued at the Authority's discretion based on the schedule for completing activities to advance the program. Firms will be fully qualified during the RFQ process to perform services within their assigned pool and approved service categories. Task orders will be awarded pursuant to the A&E IDIQ terms and applicable procurement requirements without the need for formal evaluation at the task order level.

The A&E IDIQ structure provides the Authority with the most flexibility to scale services, manage risk, and respond efficiently to evolving program demands, while promoting competition and meaningful small business participation.

Background

The Authority is responsible for planning, designing, building, and operating the first high-speed rail system in the nation, linking California's major population centers. The Authority aims to complete the

Early Operating Segment, Merced - Fresno – Bakersfield, within its schedule window of 2030-2033.

As the construction of numerous facilities, stations, and infrastructure projects is anticipated and/or underway, timely access to A&E services for design, environmental, and construction support/PCM services is crucial. Procuring stand-alone A&E contracts would result in unnecessary risk, cost, and time when a more efficient alternative is available through the issuance of IDIQ Pool Contracts, wherein qualified, responsible A&E firms would have already been qualified and approved through this RFQ procurement process.

The Authority subsequently issued a Request for Expressions of Interest (RFEI) HSR No. 25-02 on November 13, 2025, to assess industry capacity and inform the structure of the forthcoming procurement. The response period concluded on December 19, 2025.

In response to the RFEI, the Authority received 197 unique responses. Approximately two-thirds of respondents identified as Small Businesses, demonstrating broad capability across core rail engineering, architectural design, construction support/PCM, and design support services.

Thirty (30) firms identified as large businesses and there was a strong representation amongst those respondents in system-wide design, integration, and major PCM services.

There was also marked interest from businesses identifying as neither small nor large businesses, with twelve (12) firms responding to the RFEI and self-identifying as intermediate-sized. Although the Authority had initially not contemplated the inclusion of medium-sized businesses in this effort, the resultant data from the RFEI, combined with firm discussions during in-person industry events, signaled the need for establishment of an intermediate works pool.

Overall, the RFEI results reflected strong multi-discipline capacity, robust market interest and meaningful participation from specialty providers, and sufficient market depth to support a multi-award, pool-based A&E IDIQ contracting structure.

The RFEI data supports a flexible, scalable A&E IDIQ contract approach that balances competition, small business access, and delivery risk. The proposed structure is grounded in market realities and designed to protect schedule, performance, and public accountability, providing a sound basis for issuance of the multiple award RFQ.

The resultant IDIQ contracts would create three pools of qualified A&E consultants for Minor Works, Intermediate Works, and Major Works, with each pool capable of quickly mobilizing to provide A&E service projects of various size and complexity.

Prior Board Action

The A&E IDIQ was previously presented to the Board during the October 9, 2025 Board meeting. This additional informational item serves only to update the Board regarding market research results, the

resultant procurement strategy, and the anticipated procurement schedule. No Board action is required at this time.

Discussion

The A&E IDIQ is a foundational element of the Authority's overall delivery strategy, operating in close coordination with other major program contracts, including the Track and Systems Construction Contract (TSCC) and the Repair and Construction Multiple Award Task Order Contracts (MATOC). It will provide the Authority with the flexibility to align its efforts, fill technical and advisory gaps, and respond efficiently to evolving program needs while maintaining schedule, cost, and performance discipline across the program.

Scope of Work

The proposed A&E IDIQ contracting vehicle will supply a flexible vehicle through which the Authority can procure a broad range of professional services, on an as-needed basis, in support of the high-speed rail program.

The Authority intends to award the IDIQ master contract to three (3) pools of qualified A&E consultants demonstrating the organizational capacity to perform the Work as more fully defined under resultant Task Orders:

1. Minor Works,
2. Intermediate Works, and
3. Major Works

This three-pool structure will create opportunities for firms of varying sizes, while ensuring the Authority has access to the right resources for small and large projects, as well as those projects that fall somewhere in between in terms of complexity, risk, and scope.

The Authority intends to establish pools of sufficient depth to support timely project delivery while reserving the right to implement On/Off Ramp measures to ensure competition.

Meeting Small Business Requirements

The procurement and resulting contracts are subject to Small Business (SB) and Disabled Veteran Business Enterprise (DVBE) goals in compliance with the Authority's Small Business Program and applicable laws. The agreement between the Authority and the consultant will include the Authority's current Small and Disadvantaged Business Program goals.

As previously reported to the Board, on October 3, 2025, the U.S. Department of Transportation (U.S. DOT) issued an Interim Final Rule (IFR) making significant changes to its DBE program (49 CFR Part 26), effective immediately. The Authority and its consultants will comply with all applicable U.S. DOT and/or the Federal Railroad Administration's (FRA) modifications to the federal DBE program. Accordingly, to the extent necessary for compliance purposes, the DBE contract requirements are included in the resulting A&E IDIQ contracts but are currently paused, and subject to revision. As such, DBE participation goals are not scored in this RFQ.

Contract Term and Budget

The aggregate term for the A&E IDIQ contracts, including all task orders, shall not exceed an initial duration of five (5) years. As provided in the RFQ, the Authority is seeking to enter into a minimum of 5 contracts for the Minor Works pool, 5-7 contracts for the Intermediate Works pool, and 3-5 contracts for the Major Works pool. This will allow the Authority to have the requisite capacity for A&E services to meet the needs of the program.

For the resulting A&E IDIQ contracts, there is no not-to-exceed (NTE) value because the RFQ is intended to secure organizational delivery capacity, rather than acquire a predetermined quantity of services. The solicitation will use the A&E contracting method where statements of qualifications (SOQs) are submitted and selection is based on qualifications. Costs are not a factor in the selection for the contracts, but fair and reasonable fees and costs will be negotiated with the firms deemed to be most highly qualified for the Work, prior to executing task orders.

The solicitation process will be governed by Government Code section 4525 et seq., the Authority's A&E regulations (Cal. Code Regs., Title 21, § 10000 et seq.), and the Board's RFQ policy and/or separate Board approval.

On-Ramp/Off-Ramp Procedures

The Authority will ensure that an adequate number of A&E consultants are always available to achieve effective competition on all task orders. The total number of Consultants within the IDIQ pools may fluctuate due to any number of reasons including, but not limited to, competition levels on task orders, failure to deliver quality projects on time and on cost, within budget, unacceptable performance, and the Authority's exercise of the on and off-ramp process.

Procurement Process

The solicitation will be released to the public via Cal eProcure.

Procurement Schedule

The anticipated schedule for this procurement is as follows:

Activity	Date
RFQ advertised on Cal eProcure	March 2026
Virtual Pre-Bid Conference and Small Business Informational Workshop	March 2026
Statement of Qualifications (SOQ) Due	Q2 2026
Evaluation and Notice of Proposed Award Released	Q2 2026
Contract Execution	Q3 2026

Procurement Evaluation Criteria

The RFQ process will be managed by Authority staff. SOQs submitted by Offerors will be reviewed to

ensure that all requisite qualifications and other RFQ requirements are met. The SOQs will be evaluated and scored by an Evaluation Selection Committee (ESC), pursuant to established criteria in the RFQ.

This RFQ approach ensures firms are evaluated based on their ability to successfully perform the types of services for which they are being considered, rather than against a uniform standard. Small business firms, for example, will be evaluated on depth of expertise, qualifications, and reliability for discrete A&E scopes of work, while larger firms will be evaluated on integration capability, risk management, and leadership on complex, system-level A&E services work. Intermediate firms will be assessed on their ability to bridge these roles and deliver multi-discipline A&E services scopes of work.

Miscellaneous Provisions

Organizational Conflict of Interest (OCOI): The RFQ includes language related to potential organizational conflicts of interest to assist firms in disclosing all work and/or relationships that may arise to a conflict. The organizational conflict disclosure form required from each Offeror requires signature under penalty of perjury. The resulting A&E IDIQ contracts will also include the Authority's Conflict of Interest provision, which requires compliance with the Authority's OCOI policy, which was updated in 2023.

Legal Approval

The Authority's Legal Office plays a crucial advisory role in the procurement processes of state agencies, including reviewing documentation for legal sufficiency and providing advice meant to ensure compliance, mitigate risk, and assist the Authority with upholding the integrity of the system. Solicitation and Award documents will be provided for legal review prior to release.

Budget and Fiscal Impact

No funding is needed to establish the A&E IDIQ contract pool. As funding needs arise, the Authority's internal governance process will match Task Orders with available funding consistent with the approved Program Baseline Budget. In the event that a Task Order cost estimate exceeds a Board-approved delegation of authority, the item will be brought to the Board for review and decision.

Recommendations

No recommendation is required. This memorandum is solely informational.

Attachments

- PowerPoint Presentation