

Qualifications, Standards, and Best Practices that Promote Quality and Safety

A community entering into a public-private partnership has an opportunity to ensure that its partner holds the technical, financial, and managerial qualifications that will serve to protect the community's interests and financial investment—as well as increase the competitiveness of any grant application to the state that is part of the effort. The types of considerations communities can include in their selection processes for purposes of ensuring safety and quality include:

Technical capabilities. Bidders should be required to demonstrate that they use staff skilled and experienced in each project discipline:

- Excavation
- Restoration
- Microtrenching
- Directional drilling
- Splicing
- Aerial placement
- Pulling fiber through conduit
- Detailed engineering design (requiring professional engineering certification in the state)
- Permitting—including right-of-way, environmental, and historic
- Project management
- Logistics

Managerial capabilities. In the managerial area, bidders should be required to demonstrate that they have executive and technical leadership, with people who have successfully led projects of similar scale and technical challenge.

Safety. Bidders should also demonstrate their track record and commitments regarding worker and public safety. For example, they should explain that they comply with standards and frameworks such as ISO 18001 and ISO 45001 (occupational health and safety management systems) and ISO 45005 (work in a pandemic). They should demonstrate a program of in-house or external safety training (such as OSHA 10 and OSHA 30), including training specific to the processes and technologies they use. Safety training and certification should cover general construction safety as well as specialty areas, including:

- Confined space
- Traffic control
- High voltage
- Work on aerial utility lines
- Bucket truck operation

Further, bidders should be required to provide their compliance track record and records of incidents, as well as the methodology for collecting the data. Ideally, the community would know of any violations of the Occupational Safety and Health Act and other federal laws designed to protect workers and the public.