

HIRING A CONSULTANT

Based upon our experience and comments from clients, we hope that the following suggestions will prove helpful when hiring consultants:

- Employ an independent firm that offers non-biased perspectives. For example, would a public sector trade organization ever recommend a private sector solution?
- Does the consultant offer real-world experience that is applicable to the engagement? For example: has the consultant ever run the type of program being reviewed; has the consultant ever negotiated a labor agreement; has the consultant ever submitted a bid; can the consultant offer references from similar types of programs? All too often persons with narrow experiences attempt to call themselves consultants offering a broad range of services.
- Avoid firms that sell products as well as consulting services. The most common example of this is computer hardware/software sales persons that claim to offer efficiency studies. Guess what their solution to inefficiency is going to be?
- Always check references. Was past work performed on time? Were expectations met? Would previous clients hire the consultant again? Was there company support in the event of illness, etc?
- Get firm quotes for the work to be performed, and set a cap on expenses.

The right consultant can be a true resource for your organization. Call the consultants at **TAS** today. We offer the experience, the references, and the results... consulting services are all we offer, and we deliver!

THE NEXT STEP

Contact **TAS** at 1-800-233-3251 to discuss your specific needs and to request a written proposal.

TAS

Serving school districts, agencies, associations, and higher education throughout the United States.

Offices in New York and Florida,
serving the U.S.

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BID/RFP PROCESS MANAGEMENT

TAS

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ABOUT TAS

TAS is a full service student transportation consulting and advisory firm. Since 1987, the consultants of Transportation Advisory Services (**TAS**) have performed a wide range of transportation studies for over 500 school districts and agencies in twenty-one states, including overall district-operated efficiency reviews; assistance in district-contractor relationships; labor negotiation recommendations; shared service studies; program cost analysis; management review and development; alternative transportation methodology; cost control; operations/routing review; and bid process management.

TAS has developed a roster of highly respected "on-staff" and "as-needed" consultants to offer our clients the finest advisory services available. **TAS** consultants offer real world, practical experience. We are committed to listening to our client needs ... recommending creative justifiable solutions ... and assisting in the implementation of any program changes. Throughout our studies, we keep an eye on the demographic, political and financial basis of the district in order to ensure that the result of our engagement is a successful student transportation program.

SCOPE

We provide a complete package to assist the district in bidding, or issuing RFP's, for its transportation program. This includes preparation of specifications, solicitation of bidders/proposers, organization of pre-bid conference, bid/proposal opening, bid/proposal evaluations, and award recommendations.

The complete service includes the following:

- **BID/RFP SPECIFICATIONS - TAS** will prepare, for review by your school attorney and insurance consultant, complete specifications that are designed to provide the District with a transportation program that will meet your needs in the years ahead, at the lowest possible cost. An

important element of our specification development is the inclusion of appropriate language which is designed to offer the District the operating procedures that are necessary to meet the District's requirements while ensuring that the program can be competitively bid by contractors.

- **BIDDER/PROPOSER SOLICITATION - TAS** will assist in publicizing the opportunity within the contracting industry in order to create quality competition, thereby reducing the District's costs. Our industry contacts and experience are second to none!
- **PRE-BID/PROPOSAL CONFERENCE - TAS** will schedule and conduct a pre-bid/proposal conference with prospective firms.
- **BID OPENING AND REVIEW - TAS** will assist with the bid opening and analysis which will result in a specific recommendation about the award of the contract(s).

BENEFITS

Because of the increasing complexity of today's student transportation programs, and the significant increase in competition among contractors, proper specifications are critical to the long-term quality of your program.

Here are some tips on how to tighten up those specifications:

- Clearly define exactly what services you expect contractors to provide. For example, specify the length of run; define who is performing the routing; and detail the bus sizes you desire.
- Include provisions to give you the ability to enforce performance without having to prove default. Think about daily, or per occurrence, financial penalties if certain requirements are not met.

- Provide very specific insurance requirements and have this language reviewed by the District's insurance agent or broker.
- Design the pricing structure to allow the District to increase/decrease mileage or the number of vehicles without rebidding the program. Spend some time brainstorming potential changes to the program to see if the specs are flexible enough to handle such program changes.
- Define various terms and phrases at the beginning of the specifications, and consistently use these terms throughout the documents.
- Although restrictive clauses may not be allowed, be sure to ask for information on references, resources the firm will make available, facility locations, and so on.
- Be very specific about the basis of the award. How will the District determine the lowest responsible bidder or best proposal? If it is not clear, include a detailed calculation ... For Bid Analysis Purposes Only ... that establishes the basis to which all bids will be compared.
- If the contract is for a multi-year program, be sure to specify how the price will increase after the first year. Will you ask for specific quotes for each year? Will CPI be used?
- Determine what type of bonding (bid and/or performance) that the contractor must supply as part of the program.
- Establish payment methods that will be used for the contract, including the invoicing needs of the District.
- Provide detail on the District and the program including specific school locations, operating hours, annual calendar, and so on.