

Is a 'House Doctor' your Prescription for the Headaches that come with Facility Renovations and Requests for Qualifications?

It has been for the Braintree Public Schools. For over 12 years, Braintree has contracted with a House Doctor architectural firm to engage in design services on an on-call, as needed basis. When the roof began to sag due to heavy snow load, the lock sets needed to be replaced at 4 of the schools, and the roof at the high school had gone beyond its life expectancy, the House Doctor architect was there ready to begin work ... and in the case of the snow load issue, they were there the same day. But how? What the about the state selection process?

To answer that question, let's define a House Doctor Contract in a nutshell. A House Doctor Contract is an arrangement that occurs when a School District hires an architect to assist with various renovation and/or repair projects that are in the pipeline, or that may arise suddenly. A one-time Request for Qualifications (RFQ) is advertised for an architect to conduct House Doctor services for defined period of time (3-5 years) or dollar amount. When that defined period of time has expired, or the dollar amount has been spent, another RFQ can then be advertised, and a new, or the same, architect hired for the subsequent House Doctor Contract.

A House Doctor Contract does not mean that you are required to use that architect for every project that may arise. A project may be advertised and the normal selection procedures may occur at any time, even with a House Doctor contract in place.

If you would like more information, a sample House Doctor RFQ, or additional details on what you should expect from your architect when engaging in a House Doctor Contract, email Tamara Macuch, Director of Operations at tmacuch@habeebarch.com.

Many times Business Managers are expected to be Facility Experts, (although I'm betting that is not what you went to school for!) A House Doctor Architect allows you to have a facilities expert a phone call away, taking the headache from you, and allowing you to focus on your job.

The Benefits of a House Doctor Contract ...

- Saves time and money with the elimination of multiple ads, interviewing and a designer selection process for every project
- Provides an on-call expert to ask questions of at any time for current projects or in general
- 'On-staff' architect in the event of emergency repairs
- Allows one, two or multiple projects to occur under the same contract
- Logical, phased, and prioritized plan for engaging projects
- Ability to complete small and medium size projects more quickly
- Offers flexibility. School District can choose to hire an alternate architect at any time, for any project
- Promotes effective use of the district's / voter's resources