

CASE STUDY

# Efficient and Intuitive e-Bidding with The University of Alaska Anchorage

## BACKGROUND

After dealing with a solicitation program that was cumbersome and unintuitive, the Facilities Planning and Construction Department at the University of Alaska - Anchorage started looking for a solution that would make their process more efficient and easier for contractors to use.

## SOLUTION

The team now leverages **Bid Express**® for all bids above \$200,000, as well as the occasional RFQ/RFP. With intuitive functionality, time-saving templates, and increased vendor reach, Bid Express addresses the challenges the University was facing.

## RESULTS



**Improved Ease-of-Use**



**Increased Competition & Vendor Audience**



**Subscription Cost Savings**

**“It was more cost-effective, it was more streamlined, it was more user-friendly, and your helpdesk has been extremely helpful for us and our contractors who have reached out for help.”**

**KENT ARIOLA**  
CONTRACTING OFFICER


*To learn more about the University's use of Bid Express, we spoke to Kent Ariola, the Contracting Officer for the Facilities Planning and Construction Department.*

## What led the University to vet other solicitation programs?

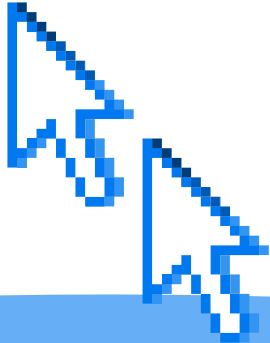
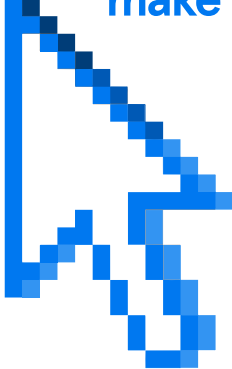
The University of Alaska - Anchorage has been on the forefront of e-bidding for a while now and was already leveraging a solicitation program to accept and track bids electronically.

**The problem?** It wasn't a very user-friendly program, so the team was missing out on the full time-savings potential that e-bidding can offer.

Poor ease-of-use is one thing - but the program that preceded Bid Express also cost more than some alternatives on the market, which was a bridge too far for the University. They began to vet other solutions, and on a recommendation from the Fairbanks campus, started looking at Bid Express.



**“I had a difficult time uploading documents at times – sometimes it would just time out, and with it not being user-friendly, just to upload certain documents you had to make a lot of clicks.”**



**“The implementation process, I thought it was great. Your team was really helpful in that process and if we need any new templates, you guys are very responsive. I think it went really smooth.”**

## Implementing Bid Express

After the University made the decision to use Bid Express for its solicitations, the next step was to template the University's most common solicitation types and get everyone up to speed on how to use the software.

Kent noted that responsiveness and effectiveness of the Bid Express helpdesk is a huge differentiator for the platform, and working with the implementation team was no different.

After a few demos and Q&A sessions, Kent and his team were ready to start using Bid Express and see how it compared - and hopefully, improved on - their previous solicitation platform.

# Bid Express Use Cases

The University uses Bid Express for any major renovation and construction projects above \$200,000 – mostly unit-price contracts where contractors submit a blind bid and compete to have the lowest bid. Lately, the team has also been posting more RFPs and RFQs to the platform as well. **“It’s way easier than sending it out via email and it’s easier to track,”** said Kent.

As the University continues to send out both low-bid solicitations and RFPs/RFQs, Kent said they will begin to leverage more of the RFP-specific features that have been added to Bid Express over the years, such as a weighted scoring and the ability to invite specific vendors to participate on any given proposal.

## The Benefits of Bid Express

The University’s goals in adopting Bid Express were straightforward – save costs, save time, and continue to support their vendors’ needs. How did Bid Express stack up?

### Time Savings

Kent notes that Bid Express is far more user-friendly for both the University and its vendors than the previous software. There are also features that help Kent and his team be more efficient and less stressed during the busiest times of the year.

**“I like the auto-post feature where you can schedule a solicitation. That helps out when I’m juggling multiple solicitations like I was last month... I can get ahead of the curve on my end when it comes to posting the projects.”**

The ability to template common solicitation types is also a time-saver for Kent and his team.

“The previous program didn’t have templates, so the only documents I would upload were the project manual, specs, and drawings, and any addendums that would go out, but

even just uploading those documents took forever. Being able to use the templates on Bid Express, it’s definitely a time-saver.”

### Cost Savings

Cost savings were inherent in the adoption of Bid Express, as it cost less than their previous platform. But as Kent and his team soon discovered, the wide range of bidders on Bid Express meant that they also had an opportunity to save on the project costs as well.

**“I think it’s attracted more, or at least different contractors on our end... From the first couple of bids we put out, we got probably four new contractors that we had never worked with before.”**

Kent thinks that all of these benefits tie together – that the user-friendliness of Bid Express is part of what attracts more potential bidders to the platform. **“Bid Express is more user friendly than**

**our previous solicitation program, and so that, I assume, attracts more vendors... which is great for us, because the more competition we have as a public entity, the better.”**

Several of the contractors who the University hadn’t worked with prior to the adoption of Bid Express ended up being the lowest bidder on their respective projects.

### Help & Support

Experiences with typical helpdesks can range anywhere from lackluster to completely infuriating. Discovering that the Bid Express helpdesk was responsive and well-informed was a huge plus for Kent and his team. Knowing that they can rely on the Bid Express support team not just when they need help, but when their contractors need help, gives everyone some additional peace-of-mind.

**“It was a really pleasant surprise that your helpdesk answers after like the 2nd or 3rd ring, that gives me a sigh of relief. I’m not the expert with the contractor questions on Bid Express, so when a contractor calls your helpdesk, I can rest easy knowing you guys got it.”**



# Bid Better with Bid Express<sup>®</sup>

Amplify the quality and quantity of your bid submissions with the e-bidding platform that streamlines the solicitation process for agencies and vendors everywhere.

- + Minimize discarded low bids with error checks and omission alerts
- + Reduce paper waste from printed bid packets and plans
- + Get instant bid tabs with ranked and exportable results
- + Accept proposals with weighted scoring features and shortlisting



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