



**Preparing for the Busy
Construction Season**

Tips to Simplify Project Planning and Execution



The spring and summer months are a marathon of construction, repairs and maintenance for owners, contractors and other stakeholders managing facilities and infrastructure assets. These seasons offer longer days, warmer weather and fewer scheduling challenges for decision-makers in all sectors. The flipside, though, is this puts more pressure on procurement officials and facility managers to plan, procure and execute projects in time to capitalize on these ideal conditions. There's no time to waste.

Stakeholders must carefully prepare for the spike in construction activity by identifying their top-priority projects and ensuring each has sufficient funding and support.



The Unique Challenges of Procuring Construction



It takes an incredible amount of time and effort to write Scopes of Work for every project in order to put them out on the street for bids. And one of the biggest hurdles facility and infrastructure owners have is finding qualified contractors to respond to their bids, especially during peak construction months. Even when owners are getting responses to their bids, there's the question of quality – Are these bids accurate, timely and reasonable? No one wants to feel taken advantage of, especially when budgets and timelines are tight.



A lot of work goes into making a construction project successful, long before the first crew shows up. Traditional competitive bidding for all projects is extremely time-consuming and costly. And for smaller projects, there can be an extremely disproportionate procurement burden relative to job size and scope, particularly if your agency is short-staffed. Coordinating and managing hundreds of projects throughout the year is cumbersome enough, so why add extra pressure to your staff when project timelines are condensed?

3 Prep Tips

1. Define the End Point, But Be Aware of Potential Detours



Defining desired outcomes, setting project benchmarks and communicating clear objectives establish measurable standards of success. These activities also help stakeholders understand how a construction project supports the mission of your organization. Once the desired end has been communicated to stakeholders, you can build a timeframe for project completion.

However, you also need to consider all the other events and activities going on in your community that could impact your projects: Summer classes and sports practices will still happen during school roof repairs. That annual music festival will still come to town, whether or not your highway project is finished. Take stock of the circumstances surrounding your projects, including arrangements and accommodations that must be made for groups that use your facilities during construction and any external events that might delay work.

As we all know, even the best-planned projects carry some risk: The contractor might not hit your deadlines. Seasonal storms could disrupt a project. As construction owner, you must be ready to adjust. You can do that by building a list of potential risks months before the project begins and creating contingency plans for each risk. You may not need any of those contingencies. But if you have them, you'll be ready to respond when things go awry.

3 Prep Tips

2. Review Your Scopes of Work for Clarity

It's easy to spend so much time in the details of a project that you get too close to it. This tunnel vision can make it difficult to clearly articulate plans and needs to colleagues and vendors. Seeing paperwork with fresh eyes is incredibly difficult — especially after several rounds of review — but it's also necessary, specifically when it comes to the Scope of Work. A clear Scope of Work reduces disputes and miscommunications, resulting in projects that move seamlessly along your timeline.

When developing a Scope of Work, it's important to sweat the small stuff and consider every single task. If an action is mandatory, the statement of work should use the words "shall" or "must." You may also include photographs, drawings and additional visual aides to create clarity and prevent confusion. It is better to over-explain than to leave open the possibility of a misunderstanding. Do everything in your power to ensure your Scope of Work leads the reader to one specific conclusion, leaving no room for interpretation. Ambiguity is your enemy, and the best weapon against it is specificity.

3 Prep Tips

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Scope of Work Example

Roof Replacement and HVAC Renovations

This project involves demolition and disposal of the existing roof and installing new roof as per documents, and the HVAC renovations described on drawings provided by client. Proposal is based on issued plans and specs. All work will be done during regular business hours, in accordance with NESHAP, EPA, OSHA, Federal and State regulation.

1. Dispose of the existing roof.
2. Install coated fiberglass base ply.
3. Polyisocyanurate insulation as specified in approved adhesive.
4. 1/8" tapered Polyisocyanurate board.
5. 1/4" Glass faced gypsum roof board.
6. New fully adhered single ply roof assembly.
7. Remove existing three units and reinstall them after raising the curbs.
8. Raise gas pipes as necessary.
9. Remove and replace existing screen panels around AC units.
10. Removal of one rooftop unit.
11. Furnish and install (2) rooftop units as described on plans.
12. Demolish and replace ducts as required.
13. Provide site security for after hours work.
14. Perform additional electric and mechanical work as described on documents provided by client.
15. Clean up and haul off all debris properly and safely.

3 Prep Tips

3. Explore Various Project Delivery Methods

Once you have defined the project Scope of Work, you'll need to determine the appropriate delivery method. When choosing a method, consider the important factors of cost, time, project complexity and your desired level of involvement. There is no perfect, one-size-fits-all approach to construction projects. Some delivery methods work better with certain types of projects than others. Each method has advantages and disadvantages, but the approach selected can have a major impact on the success of a project. Here are a few project delivery methods to consider:

Traditional Bidding

With the most common approach — also referred to as Design-Bid-Build — the owner hires an architect or engineer to design the project and prepare the drawings and specifications. Two contracts are typically drawn up: one between the owner and the architect or engineer, and another between the owner and the contractor. This method is ideal for large-scale projects and if you have a several months' time to solicit bids.

Design-Build

In this delivery method, the owner enters into a contract with one provider to design and build the project. The owner develops the overall project specifications and requirements, requests proposals from firms or teams and usually follows a best value type of selection process to choose the entity that will be responsible to design and build the project. One of the advantages of the Design-Build process is that the project can be phased. It is often used for large or complex projects or when an accelerated, phased schedule is beneficial.

Construction Manager at Risk

Also referred to as CM at Risk, this procurement method lets the owner choose a construction manager, and the parties agree to a guaranteed maximum price for the work. The construction manager engages the necessary contractors and manages the entire project to completion. CM at Risk provides a single point of responsibility for construction and is ideal for large-scale projects on a shorter timeline.

Job Order Contracting

With Job Order Contracting (JOC), multiple projects can be completed over the duration of one long-term contract, as opposed to the single-project contracts used in the three previous methods. Owners take bids from contractors at the beginning of the contract and then access their services at any time during the contract term. The JOC method is perfect for a variety of construction projects, including repairs, renovations and maintenance work, especially when short timelines or fixed budgets are involved. JOC, however, isn't typically an ideal choice for complex, new construction.

Explore What Types of Projects Are Perfect for JOC

George Washington University

George Washington University (GW) recognized that the highly trafficked Mitchell Hall corridors needed urgent upgrades and decided to use some of its deferred maintenance budget to make necessary improvements before the fall semester. With less than 45 days before the new fall semester began and the hall fully occupied by summer program students, GW turned to Job Order Contracting for this time sensitive project. The awarded JOC contractor was able to complete the renovations to all nine floors, which included replacing fluorescent lighting with energy-efficient LED lighting, upgrading interior finishes and unexpected mold remediation, in just 35 days.

City of Miami, FL

Officials from the City of Miami Office of Capital Improvements (OCI) wanted to install a monument commemorating the Cuban exiles who braved danger and sacrificed their lives during the Bay of Pigs Invasion at a city park. City leaders identified the project in March, after receiving funding from the Miami Forever Bond. Eager for work to begin as soon as possible and familiar with the process, officials turned to Gordian's Job Order Contracting. The project was completed over the summer, and the city came together to honor both Bay of Pigs survivors and the fallen.

Hawaii Department of Education

In late June of 2023, Hawaii Department of Education (HIDOE) officials were notified of a new middle school student who uses a wheelchair. The department quickly conducted an accounting of all sidewalks and discovered the sidewalks surrounding Waialua High and Intermediate School were too narrow to accommodate a wheelchair when classroom doors were open. School leaders took immediate action to rectify the situation and provide the incoming student every opportunity to succeed by accessing a Gordian JOC program to widen the sidewalks before the end of summer break. Not only did the project wrap up on time, it also came in \$11,000 under budget.

When Resources are Tight, Look to Alternatives

Job Order Contracting solutions are available through cooperative purchasing networks. Agencies can procure construction services just like they buy other supplies.

[Explore how you can benefit from the speed, efficiency and power of group buying.](#)

The procurement process can be a major bottleneck in the construction timeline. JOC's single solicitation eliminates the need to bid each project separately, making it a powerful sourcing option to pull out of your procurement toolbox during the busy season.

By establishing competitively awarded contracts up front, work can begin as soon as a project is identified.

How it works:



Job Order Contracts provide agencies the ability to accomplish a substantial number of individual construction projects through a competitively-awarded contract.



Contractors bid an Adjustment Factor to be applied to a catalog of tasks with preset unit prices developed using local labor, material and equipment rates.



Job Order Contracts are generally awarded to the lowest responsive, responsible bidder(s). Once a contract is awarded, the agency can have the contractor perform a variety of projects.



The contractor is paid the preset unit price X the quantity ordered X the competitively bid Adjustment Factor. No negotiation required.

Forming Collaborative Partnership with Contractors

When working on a condensed timeline, you can't afford to lose a moment to negotiations or delays. Ideally, the contractors working on your project would be engaged and motivated to provide high quality work. The Job Order Contracting process can help make sure they are. With JOC, contractors are driven to provide quality projects, because their performance is tied to their opportunity for future work.

The JOC process fosters relationships between owners and trusted contractors, who will grow to understand the agency's methods, facilities and preferred materials as they continue to accomplish more work. And with a more collaborative, long-term relationship, project planning, scoping and pricing can be done well ahead of the busy season.



Control What You Can Control

As we approach the busy construction season, so much can feel out of your control. The weather may go haywire. Contractors may not be able to deliver their work on schedule. Worse yet, contractors may discover issues hidden in walls or buried under concrete. Such events are out of your hands. What you can control is how you prepare for the busy season. If you have clear direction about what you want to accomplish, create contingency plans and use the right project delivery method for your projects, you'll be well prepared.

“When you need to mobilize quickly and really get moving on a project JOC is an incredible tool.”

Brian Smith, *Procurement Business Processes Manager*
City of Mississauga, Ontario, CA



About Gordian

Gordian is the leading provider of Building Intelligence™ Solutions, delivering unrivaled insights, robust technology and comprehensive expertise that fuel customers' success during every phase of the building lifecycle. Gordian created Job Order Contracting (JOC) and the industry standard RSMeans™ Data. We empower organizations to optimize capital investments, improve project performance and minimize long-term operating expenses.