ALTERNATES
Avoid using alternates as an estimating tool

When alternates are eliminated or minimized, the Owner receives a more accurate, more responsive bid.

- Complex alternates that impact multiple scopes of work make document and bid preparation more difficult, especially when used as a substitute for budget or design decisions.
- Removing alternates eliminates much trivial, time-consuming work during production of contract documents and during preparation of the bids.
- Do not use alternates to compare manufacturers, new products, or products of similar characteristics. Instead, these comparisons should be completed by the design team before completing the bid documents.
- Prior to bidding, the Design Professional or construction manager, if applicable, should prepare reasonable estimates and predict probable costs, without using alternates as a “shopping list.”
- If bid documents contain alternates; they should be included in the determination of low bidder. All alternates must also be prioritized by the Owner prior to receipt of bids in order to avoid manipulation during this process. It is recommended that the priority sequence of accepting alternates should be identified publicly by the Owner prior to the opening of bids.
- Selection of alternates should be made by the Owner and the Design Professional for the best interest of the project in line with available funds.
- To make pricing and permitting more accurate, the drawings and specifications should clearly indicate the scope of any alternates.
- Alternates should not be used if the primary intent is to obtain an accounting breakdown of project components. This is better handled by post bid cost breakdowns provided by the low bidder.

REFERENCES:
AIA A701 Instructions to Bidders
Manual of Practice, Construction Specifications Institute
AIA A201 General Conditions
ConsensusDOCS 200 Standard Agreement and General Conditions (Lump Sum)

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