

CASE STUDY

Jackson County Maximizes Reach and Efficiency with Bid Express®

CHALLENGE

Rural Ohio counties often have their advertising exposure limited to vendors in their geographic area. Jackson County sought to reach more bidders throughout Ohio, while also introducing new efficiencies to the bidding process.

SOLUTION

Working with the Mannik & Smith Group (MSG), Jackson County became the 100th local public agency (LPA) in Ohio to implement Bid Express. As a platform for secure, online bidding and procurement, Bid Express helps agencies increase the quantity and quality of received bids.

RESULTS

40-70%

INCREASE IN BIDDERS

By implementing Bid Express on projects ranging from pavement marking to slip repairs, Jackson County was able to reach more bidders, introduce templates to streamline bid set-up, and eliminate in-person bid openings to reduce unnecessary travel and cost.

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BID TEMPLATES
TO IMPROVE EFFICIENCY

“Bid Express gives us the opportunity to reach bidders who might not be looking in the local newspaper for projects in Jackson County.”



DAN BEASLEY
SENIOR CONSTRUCTION ENGINEER,
MANNIK & SMITH GROUP

A brief history of bidding in Ohio

Improving the bidding process has long been a top priority for the Ohio Department of Transportation (Ohio DOT), dating back to their adoption of electronic bidding in 2004.

As an early adopter of e-bidding technology on state projects, Ohio DOT was quick to see the benefits of advertising, receiving, and opening bids in an entirely digital environment. To spread these benefits throughout the state, the Department's Office of Local Programs began piloting the local agency version of Bid Express at bidexpress.com. Their goals were to:

- + Standardize bid forms for federal and state-funded projects for all LPAs to use
- + Encourage LPAs to use an Item Master numbering system so the price for items can be tracked and imported into Appia®
- + Assist LPAs with questions surrounding the legality of receiving bids/responses electronically

Following the pilot program in 2021, dozens of LPAs began implementing Bid Express for both construction project bidding and general procurement. When the COVID-19 pandemic brought an increased need for tools that support remote work and social distancing, that number continued to grow.



Enter Jackson County, lucky number #100

Jackson County is a rural county located in southern Ohio, a 90 minute drive from Columbus and a two hour jaunt from Cincinnati. When Melissa Miller, Jackson County Engineer, would advertise bids in the local newspaper, she wasn't always pleased with the results.

"I have bid projects in the past where I've only got one bid, multiple times," said Miller.

Miller works closely with Dan Beasley, a Senior Construction Engineer from the Mannik & Smith Group, an engineering consultancy. Due to Beasley's background with the Ohio DOT and other LPAs in the state, he was familiar with Bid Express and suggested it to Miller as a way to reach more bidders.



"I shared Bid Express with Melissa as another option to see if she wanted to go electronic, knowing that we could also upload the Bid Express bid items to Appia* for efficiency, but also reach bidders outside the county," said Beasley.

*Appia is a platform for construction project administration and inspection, developed by Infotech. Learn more at infotechinc.com/appia.

Leveraging templates to accommodate funding packages

After making the decision to implement Bid Express, Beasley and Miller decided to leverage the templates created in partnership between Infotech and the Ohio Department of Transportation. The goal of these templates is to streamline bid set-up for various funding types. By the end of onboarding, the Jackson County team was using four templates for local-let, state/federally-funded, state exchange-funded, and Ohio Public Works Commission projects. Not only have these templates improved the efficiency of the bidding process – they’ve had a positive impact on Miller’s mental state:



“I was always worried that there’s something I should be including and maybe I don’t even know to include it. So having those templates available is wonderful.”

Increased project interest statewide

“I have noticed we have had a lot more interest in the projects we’ve bid than I normally get.”

MELISSA MILLER
JACKSON COUNTY ENGINEER

Introducing Bid Express to Jackson County’s bidding process had the desired effect – the county began to receive more bids on projects posted through the platform. Not only did they start receiving bids from contractors across the state, one of them even ended up as the low bid, and will be traveling to Jackson County for a slip repair project. That contractor, though familiar with District 9 (the district where Jackson County is located), had never heard of Jackson County prior to Bid Express.

“We had 9 planholders on the most recent project, and for a pavement marking and a bridge job, we had at least 5 or 6. In the past, we probably had 2 or 3. So we’re looking at a pretty good percentage increase of 40–70% in additional bidders or at least planholders who are interested in the project and downloaded the specifications.”

DAN BEASLEY
SENIOR CONSTRUCTION ENGINEER
MANNIK & SMITH GROUP

Eliminating unnecessary travel + cost

By leveraging Bid Express tools for security and electronic communications, Miller and Beasley are saving the county from unnecessary expenditures. How? At the highest level, e-Bidding increases competition for available jobs, and increased competition drives prices down. More specifically, Bid Express’ secure, digital lockbox technology enables the county to host entirely remote bid openings. That means vendors don’t have to travel to the Commissioner’s meeting to hear bid results.

“In this day and age, bidders want efficiency too,” explained Beasley. “Bid Express really does make the process as efficient as possible... they all get notified of who the low bidder is, without the unnecessary travel. If we can prevent that or eliminate some of that cost, as a byproduct, it comes right over to the locals and saves them money on bids.”

Working with Infotech

When an agency starts using Bid Express, they often have a lot of questions, from the best ways to communicate with vendors to streamlining bid set-up via templates and SmartForms. Beasley and Miller were positive about their experience with the Infotech support team, both during onboarding and throughout their continued use of Bid Express.

“The support from Infotech has been great in creating those templates and actually being able to come back to them and make sure we make it as easy as possible for the LPA. Making sure we dot the T’s and cross the I’s. You double check a draft and think it’s a final, and then you go back to Infotech support and say ‘hey, I want to make sure here.’ The support has been great here and I want to make sure we comment on that.”

DAN BEASLEY
SENIOR CONSTRUCTION ENGINEER, MANNIK & SMITH GROUP



Bid Better with Bid Express

Amplify the quality and quantity of your bid submissions with the e-Bidding platform that streamlines the letting 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 online bid tabs with ranked and exportable results