

# By the Numbers

Successful projects result from clear communication and mutually understood expectations. This is most evident in the estimating process. Obtaining a quote for an architectural precast concrete project is easy. Getting the right numbers for your project can be more challenging and the focus of this article.

MAPA precasters are always willing to assist in every stage of the design development process. Get input from a MAPA precaster regarding samples, finishes, colors and textures as well as estimates for cost and schedules.

Provide basic information and ask the right questions from a precaster when seeking prices for your architectural precast project. This will help ensure that pricing is accurate, comparable, and relative to your specific project. Each architectural precast project is unique when it comes to the final look, fit, and finish. These unique characteristics are why you will need very accurate and comparable pricing.

The scope of work, precast specifications, and drawings should provide all the information required to satisfy the project goals. Precasters need the following information to complete their pricing:

- *building location and access*
- *applicable codes (design*

- criteria)*
- *top and bottom of precast elevation*
- *relationship to other building products*
- *building sections*
- *specific panel profiles*
- *reveal locations*
- *finish and color requirements*
- *support methods for the precast*
- *project specific materials and allowable substitutions*
- *designated supplier of field installed hardware*
- *schedule requirements*

This information enables the precaster to more accurately estimate materials and all the elements necessary for architectural precast project. In turn, you will be able to compare alternate systems as well as competitive bids.

Now that you have completely and accurately defined your project, a few additional items will help ensure the best possible design and price. If possible, allow a pre-bid meeting to occur where questions relating to scope and schedule can be answered. This will improve communication and resolve any outstanding questions prior to beginning the estimate.

Precasters are interested in providing customers with the greatest possible quality at the most competitive price. This may lead to a variety of value engineering alternates to explore during the bid phase. Allow them leeway in the bid to suggest such options and to

provide these value-added ideas. This flexibility will allow them to design a system that best fits your project.

Precasters will generally establish a contact person with the General Contractor to coordinate and finalize their bid proposals. When questions arise within the bid packages, they will be sent to the G.C. in written form, and are forwarded to the appropriate parties. Timely responses to these inquiries will help ensure that the precaster has adequate information to determine efficient and competitive pricing. This will also help make the transition from estimate to delivery as smooth as possible.

By providing the information described here and consulting early with a MAPA / PCI manufacturer you are on your way to the most cost-effective results for your project.

Please reference the MAPA website for more articles and information about architectural precast concrete.

■ [www.mapaprecast.org](http://www.mapaprecast.org)