

# **WEST VIRGINIA LEGISLATURE**

## **2025 REGULAR SESSION**

### **Introduced**

## **House Bill 2636**

By Delegates Barnhart, Stephens, Shamblin, and  
Ferrell

[Introduced February 20, 2025; referred to the  
Committee on Government Organization]

1 A BILL to amend and reenact §5-22-1 of the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, relating to  
2 government construction contracts; providing preference to local contractors; providing the  
3 municipal council authority to award bids to other than lowest bidder in certain  
4 circumstance; and clarifies when a municipality can reject a bid.

*Be it enacted by the Legislature of West Virginia:*

## **ARTICLE 22. GOVERNMENT CONSTRUCTION CONTRACTS.**

**§5-22-1. Bidding required; government construction contracts to go to lowest qualified  
responsible bidder; procedures to be followed in awarding government  
construction projects; penalties for violation of procedures and requirements  
debarment; exceptions.**

1 (a) This section and the requirements in this section may be referred to as the West  
2 Virginia Fairness in Competitive Bidding Act.

3 (b) As used in this section:

4 (1) "Lowest qualified responsible bidder" means the bidder that bids the lowest price and  
5 that meets, at a minimum, all the following requirements in connection with the bidder's response  
6 to the bid solicitation. The bidder shall certify that it:

7 (A) Is ready, able, and willing to timely furnish the labor and materials required to complete  
8 the contract;

9 (B) Is in compliance with all applicable laws of the State of West Virginia; and

10 (C) Has supplied a valid bid bond or other surety authorized or approved by the contracting  
11 public entity.

12 (2) "The state and its subdivisions" means the State of West Virginia, every political  
13 subdivision thereof, every administrative entity that includes such a subdivision, all municipalities,  
14 and all county boards of education.

15 (3) "State spending unit" means a department, agency, or institution of the state  
16 government for which an appropriation is requested, or to which an appropriation is made by the

17 Legislature.

18 (4) "Alternates" means any additive options or alternative designs included in a solicitation  
19 for competitive bids that are different from and priced separately from what is included in a base  
20 bid.

21 (5) "Construction project" means a specifically identified scope of work involving the act,  
22 trade, or process of building, erecting, constructing, adding, repairing, remodeling, rehabilitating,  
23 reconstructing, altering, converting, improving, expanding, or demolishing of a building, structure,  
24 facility, road, or highway. Repair and maintenance of existing public improvements that are  
25 recurring or ongoing in nature and that are not fully identified or known at any one time shall be  
26 considered a construction project and procured according to this article on an open-ended basis,  
27 so long as the work to be performed under the contract falls into a generally accepted single class,  
28 or type, and bidders are notified of the open-ended nature of the work in the solicitation: *Provided*,  
29 That no open-ended repair or maintenance contract may exceed \$500,000.

30 (c) The state and its subdivisions shall, except as provided in this section, solicit  
31 competitive bids for every construction project exceeding \$25,000 in total cost.

32 (1) If a solicitation contains a request for any alternates, the alternates shall be listed  
33 numerically in the order of preference in the solicitation.

34 (2) A vendor who has been debarred pursuant to §5A-3-33b through §5A-3-33f of this  
35 code, may not bid on or be awarded a contract under this section.

36 (d) All bids submitted pursuant to this chapter shall include a valid bid bond or other surety  
37 as approved by the State of West Virginia or its subdivisions.

38 (e) Following the solicitation of bids, the construction contract shall be awarded to the  
39 lowest qualified responsible bidder who shall furnish a sufficient performance and payment bond.  
40 The state and its subdivisions may reject all bids and solicit new bids on the project.

41 (f) Any solicitation of bids shall include no more than five alternates. Alternates, if accepted,  
42 shall be accepted in the order in which they are listed on the bid form. Any unaccepted alternate

contained within a bid shall expire 90 days after the date of the opening of bids for review.

Determination of the lowest qualified responsible bidder shall be based on the sum of the base bid and any alternates accepted.

(g) The apparent low bidder on a contract valued at more than \$250,000 for the construction, alteration, decoration, painting, or improvement of a new or existing building or structure with a state spending unit shall submit a list of all subcontractors who will perform more than \$25,000 worth of work on the project including labor and materials. This section does not apply to other construction projects such as highway, mine reclamation, water, or sewer projects. The list shall include the names of the bidders and the license numbers as required by §30-42-1 *et seq.* of this code. This information shall be provided to the state spending unit within one business day of the opening of bids for review prior to the awarding of a construction contract. If the apparent low bidder fails to submit the subcontractor list, the spending unit shall promptly request by telephone and electronic mail that the low bidder and second low bidder provide the subcontractor list within one business day of the request. Failure to submit the subcontractor list within one business day of receiving the request shall result in disqualification of the bid. A subcontractor list may not be required if the bidder provides notice in the bid submission or in response to a request for a subcontractor list that no subcontractors who will perform more than \$25,000 worth of work will be used to complete the project.

(h) Written approval must be obtained from the state spending unit before any subcontractor substitution is permitted. Substitutions are not permitted unless:

(1) The subcontractor listed in the original bid has filed for bankruptcy;

(2) The state spending unit refuses to approve a subcontractor in the original bid because the subcontractor is under a debarment pursuant to §5A-3-33d of this code or a suspension under §5A-3-32 of this code; or

(3) The contractor certifies in writing that the subcontractor listed in the original bill fails, is unable, or refuses to perform the subcontract.

(i) The contracting public entity may not award the contract to a bidder which fails to meet the minimum requirements set out in this section. As to a prospective low bidder which the contracting public entity determines not to have met one or more of the requirements of this section or other requirements as determined by the public entity in the written bid solicitation, prior to the time a contract award is made, the contracting public entity shall document in writing and in reasonable detail the basis for the determination and shall place the writing in the bid file. After the award of a bid under this section, the bid file of the contracting public agency and all bids submitted in response to the bid solicitation shall be open and available for public inspection.

(j) The contracting public entity shall not award a contract pursuant to this section to any bidder that is known to be in default on any monetary obligation owed to the state or a political subdivision of the state, including, but not limited to, obligations related to payroll taxes, property taxes, sales and use taxes, fire service fees, or other fines or fees. Any governmental entity may submit to the Division of Purchasing information which identifies vendors that qualify as being in default on a monetary obligation to the entity. The contracting public entity shall take reasonable steps to verify whether the lowest qualified bidder is in default pursuant to this subsection prior to awarding a contract.

(k) A public official or other person who individually or together with others knowingly makes an award of a contract under this section in violation of the procedures and requirements of this section is subject to the penalties set forth in §5A-3-29 of this code.

(l) No officer or employee of this state or of a public agency, public authority, public corporation, or other public entity and no person acting or purporting to act on behalf of an officer or employee or public entity may require that a performance bond, payment bond, or surety bond required or permitted by this section be obtained from a particular surety company, agent, broker, or producer.

(m) All bids shall be open in accordance with the provisions of §5-22-2 of this code, except design-build projects which are governed by §5-22A-1 *et seq.* of this code and are exempt from

these provisions.

(n) Nothing in this section applies to:

(1) Work performed on construction or repair projects by regular full-time employees of the state or its subdivisions;

(2) Prevent students enrolled in vocational educational schools from being utilized in construction or repair projects when the use is a part of the student's training program;

(3) Emergency repairs to building components, systems, and public infrastructure. For the purpose of this subdivision, the term "emergency repairs" means repairs that if not made immediately will seriously impair the use of building components, systems, and public infrastructure or cause danger to persons using the building components, systems, and public infrastructure; and

(4) A situation where the state or subdivision thereof reaches an agreement with volunteers, or a volunteer group, in which the governmental body will provide construction or repair materials, architectural, engineering, technical, or other professional services, and the volunteers will provide the necessary labor without charge to, or liability upon, the governmental body.

(o) Notwithstanding any provision of this code to the contrary, preference may be given in construction projects of a municipality to local contractors within 10 miles of the municipality and may be chosen over the lower bids at the discretion of the municipal council. A municipality may reject a bid and cause a construction project to be rebid if the municipal council, in its discretion, determines that a vendor lacks the capability to fully perform the contract requirements or lack the integrity and reliability which will assure good-faith performance.

NOTE: The purpose of this bill is to keep jobs local and reinvest in the community by allowing local contractors within 10 miles of the city to be chosen over the lowest bidder and if the lowest bidder is deemed not reputable, to require a rebid.

Strike-throughs indicate language that would be stricken from a heading or the present law and underscoring indicates new language that would be added.