

WEST VIRGINIA LEGISLATURE

2026 REGULAR SESSION

Introduced

House Bill 4549

By Delegates Shamblin, Flanigan, Pritt, Dean,
Stephens, Heckert, Worrell, Clark, Browning, Willis,
and Roop

[Introduced January 19, 2026; 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 public construction contracts; providing definitions; granting political subdivisions the
3 authority to hire the lowest responsible bidder; and providing that political subdivisions may
4 enter into project labor agreements.

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

7 (2) "Construction project" means a specifically identified scope of work involving the act,
8 trade, or process of building, erecting, constructing, adding, repairing, remodeling, rehabilitating,
9 reconstructing, altering, converting, improving, expanding, or demolishing of a building, structure,
10 facility, road, or highway. Repair and maintenance of existing public improvements that are
11 recurring or ongoing in nature and that are not fully identified or known at any one time shall be
12 considered a construction project and procured according to this article on an open-ended basis,
13 so long as the work to be performed under the contract falls into a generally accepted single class,
14 or type, and bidders are notified of the open-ended nature of the work in the solicitation: *Provided*,
15 That no open-ended repair or maintenance contract may exceed \$500,000. A construction project
16 does not include a design-build project as set forth in §5-22A-1 *et seq.* of this code or a

17 construction management at-risk project as set forth in §5-22B-1 *et seq.* of this code.

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

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

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

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

26 (4) "Lowest responsible bidder" means a bidder on the contract whose proposal responds
27 to the bid specifications in all material respects and contains no irregularities or deviations from the
28 specifications which would affect the amount of the bid or otherwise provide the bidder with a
29 competitive advantage, and whose financial condition, experience, conduct and performance on
30 previous contracts, facilities, and management skills, support the bidder's ability to execute the
31 contract properly.

32 (5) "Project labor agreement" means is a pre-hire collective bargaining agreement with one
33 or more labor unions that establishes the terms and conditions of employment for a specific
34 construction project.

35 (4) (5) (6) "The state and/or its subdivisions" means the state of West Virginia, every
36 political subdivision thereof, every administrative entity that includes such a subdivision, all
37 municipalities, and all county boards of education.

38 (5) (6) (7) "State spending unit" means a department, agency, or institution of the state
39 government for which an appropriation is requested, or to which an appropriation is made by the
40 Legislature.

41 (c) The state and its subdivisions shall, except as provided in this section, solicit
42 competitive bids for every construction project exceeding \$50,000 in total cost.

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

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

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

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

52 (f) Any solicitation of bids shall include no more than five alternates. Alternates, if accepted,
53 shall be accepted in the order in which they are listed on the bid form. Any unaccepted alternate
54 contained within a bid shall expire 90 days after the date of the opening of bids for review.

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

57 (g) (1) The apparent low bidder on a contract valued at more than \$250,000 for the
58 construction, alteration, decoration, painting, or improvement of a new or existing building or
59 structure with a state spending unit shall submit a list of all subcontractors who will perform more
60 than \$25,000 worth of work on the project including labor and materials. This section does not
61 apply to other construction projects such as highway, mine reclamation, water, or sewer projects.
62 The list shall include the names of the bidders and the license numbers as required by §30-42-1 et
63 seq. of this code. This information shall be provided to the state spending unit within one business
64 day of the opening of bids for review prior to the awarding of a construction contract. If the
65 apparent low bidder fails to submit the subcontractor list, the state spending unit shall promptly
66 request by telephone and electronic mail that the low bidder and second low bidder provide the
67 subcontractor list within one business day of the request. Failure to submit the subcontractor list
68 within one business day of receiving the request shall result in disqualification of the bid. A

69 subcontractor list may not be required if the bidder provides notice in the bid submission or in
70 response to a request for a subcontractor list that no subcontractors who will perform more than
71 \$25,000 worth of work will be used to complete the project.

72 (2) Political subdivisions shall have the legal authority to set regulations and ordinances
73 surrounding the bidding of public construction projects, so that the project is awarded to the lowest
74 responsible bidder, as opposed to the lowest bidder.

75 (3) Political subdivision may enter into project labor agreements with contractors doing
76 work on public construction projects.

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

79 (1) The subcontractor listed in the original bid has filed for bankruptcy;
80 (2) The state spending unit refuses to approve a subcontractor in the original bid because
81 the subcontractor is under a debarment pursuant to §5A-3-33d of this code or a suspension under
82 §5A-3-32 of this code; or
83 (3) The contractor certifies in writing that the subcontractor listed in the original bill fails, is
84 unable, or refuses to perform the subcontract.

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

93 (j) The contracting public entity shall not award a contract pursuant to this section to any
94 bidder that is known to be in default on any monetary obligation owed to the state or a political

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

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

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

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

112 (n) Nothing in this section applies to:

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

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

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

121 infrastructure; and

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

NOTE: The purpose of this bill is to provide political subdivisions the authority to hire the lowest responsible bidder enter into project labor agreements.

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