

**26.3 Competitive bids for public improvement contracts.**

1. If the estimated total cost of a public improvement exceeds the competitive bid threshold of one hundred thousand dollars, or the adjusted competitive bid threshold established in section 314.1B, the governmental entity shall advertise for sealed bids for the proposed public improvement by publishing a notice to bidders. The notice to bidders shall be published at least once, not less than four and not more than forty-five days before the date for filing bids, in a newspaper published at least once weekly and having general circulation in the geographic area served by the governmental entity. Additionally, the governmental entity may publish a notice in a relevant contractor organization publication and a relevant contractor plan room service with statewide circulation, provided that a notice is posted on a website sponsored by either a governmental entity or a statewide association that represents the governmental entity.

2. A governmental entity shall have an engineer licensed under chapter 542B, a landscape architect licensed under chapter 544B, or an architect registered under chapter 544A prepare plans and specifications, and calculate the estimated total cost of a proposed public improvement. A governmental entity shall ensure that a sufficient number of paper copies of the project's contract documents, including all drawings, plans, specifications, and estimated total costs of the proposed public improvement are made available for distribution at no charge to prospective bidders, subcontractor bidders, suppliers, and contractor plan room services. If a deposit is required as part of a paper contract documents distribution policy by the public owner, the deposit shall not exceed two hundred fifty dollars per set which shall be refunded upon return of the contract documents within fourteen days after award of the project. If the contract documents are not returned in a timely manner and in a reusable condition, the deposit shall be forfeited. The governmental entity shall reimburse the landscape architect, architect, or professional engineer for the actual costs of preparation and distribution of plans and specifications.

3. Sections 26.4 through 26.13 apply to all competitive bidding pursuant to this section.

2006 Acts, ch 1017, §3, 42, 43; 2007 Acts, ch 144, §3; 2009 Acts, ch 179, §107; 2010 Acts, ch 1184, §90