

Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation Rail Programs Procurement Guidelines July 2026

1. The Grantee is encouraged to obtain quotes from Small, Women, and Minority (SWAM) vendors if available for services under this contract. However, the Grantee is not required to use a SWAM vendor. The Virginia Department of Small Business and Supplier Diversity has a list of SWAM companies through their website vendor search located <https://directory.sbsd.virginia.gov/#/directory>. A quick search can be made from the database on this website using the keyword “Railroad” entered into the NIGP description field under the NIGP Code/Description tab. Of note, DRPT does not maintain this database and has no control over companies listed in the system or displayed by the search. The search engine produces more services than track construction including material suppliers and engineering consultants.

2. The goal of the agency’s process is to encourage competition. For DRPT Grant Projects, the Grantee must use competitive sealed bidding. Negotiation is not part of this type of bidding. The reason negotiation is not permitted is that detailed engineering plans as well as specifications are expected to have been developed clearly defining the construction scope. Therefore, all contractors are bidding from the same set of plans and specifications.

The competitive sealed bidding process is standard for Rail Grant construction projects and cannot be waived due to the public funds involved.

The Grantee shall advertise the project in a newspaper or other mode of publication of general circulation for at least one day; online advertisement is allowable if the site allows access to the general public. The bidding period must remain open for at least 10-days to provide enough time for the bidders to respond. No contractor shall be excluded from bidding. Further review of site conditions is allowable provided all contractors are provided with the same opportunities and information.

3. Once bids have been received, the Grantee shall perform a public bid opening stating the company name; total price; and after all bids are open announcing the apparent low bidder. The Grantee can then review bids to ensure they encompass all aspects of the work. If there is a significant error in the apparent low bid, the contractor is allowed to withdraw their bid. Receiving the bids via a secured company website including passwords and posting the results on the Grantee’s website is considered a permissible alternative. The public bid opening can be in person or online or conference call as long as the information is published. The date/time of public bid opening must be advertised along with the request for bids.

The Grantee shall submit a bid summary and the supporting bid documents from each contractor to DRPT for review prior to awarding the contract to the lowest responsive and responsible bidder. DRPT will respond via email.

The Grantee must award the project to the lowest responsive and responsible bidder, as stated in the Code of Virginia Section 2.2-4301(3)(b)(5). If the Grantee desires to award the contract to multiple bidders using individual divisions of labor, the bid documents must clearly identify these divisions and the Grantee's intent to potentially select multiple bidders.

The Grantee will log into their WebGrants account and create a Notice to Proceed request. Bids and bid summary must be uploaded here. The Notice to Proceed (NTP) is located in the Status Reports component. To create a new NTP, click on the grant, in the Grant Component list click on Status Reports, on the right click on the green bar – Add Status Report, click the down arrow at SubType and choose Notice to Proceed, complete the fields and upload your documents before marking as complete.

4. The Grantee and contractors are encouraged to use iron, steel, and manufactured goods used in the project which are produced in the United States. All material purchases for this project will be subject to the appropriate sales tax as these expenses are not considered exempt. In addition, prevailing wages and benefits identified under the Davis-Bacon Act are not required for state funded projects.