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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2026

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A N A C T

RELATING TO PUBLIC PROPERTY AND WORKS -- STATE PURCHASES

Introduced By: Senators Valverde, Gu, Acosta, DiMario, Britto, Lauria, Ujifusa, and  
DiPalma

Date Introduced: March 04, 2026

Referred To: Senate Finance

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Section 37-2-7 of the General Laws in Chapter 37-2 entitled "State  
2 Purchases" is hereby amended to read as follows:

3 **37-2-7. Definitions.**

4 The words defined in this section have the meanings set forth below whenever they appear  
5 in this chapter, unless the context in which they are used clearly requires a different meaning or a  
6 different definition is prescribed for a particular section, group of sections, or provision:

7 (1) "Business" means any corporation, partnership, individual, sole proprietorship, joint  
8 stock company, joint venture, or any other legal entity through which business is conducted.

9 (2) "Change order" means a written authorization signed by the purchasing agent directing  
10 or allowing the contractor to proceed with changes, alterations, or modifications to the terms,  
11 conditions, or scope of work on a previously awarded contract.

12 (3) "Chief purchasing officer" shall mean: (i) For a state agency, the director of the  
13 department of administration, and (ii) For a public agency, the executive director or the chief  
14 operational officer of the agency.

15 (4) "Construction" means the process of building, altering, repairing, improving, or  
16 demolishing any public structures or building, or other public improvements of any kind to any  
17 public real property. It does not include the routine maintenance or repair of existing structures,  
18 buildings, or real property performed by salaried employees of the state of Rhode Island in the  
19 usual course of their jobs.

1 (5) "Contract" means all types of agreements, including grants and orders, for the purchase  
2 or disposal of supplies, services, construction, or any other item. It includes awards; contracts of a  
3 fixed-price, cost, cost-plus-a-fixed-fee, or incentive type; contracts providing for the issuance of  
4 job or task orders; leases; letter contracts; purchase orders; and construction management contracts.  
5 It also includes supplemental agreements with respect to any of the foregoing. "Contract" does not  
6 include labor contracts with employees of state agencies.

7 (6) "Contract amendment" means any written alteration in the specifications, delivery  
8 point, rate of delivery, contract period, price, quantity, or other contract provisions of any existing  
9 contract, whether accomplished by unilateral action in accordance with a contract provision, or by  
10 mutual action of the parties to the contract. It includes bilateral actions, such as supplemental  
11 agreements, and unilateral actions, such as change orders, administrative changes, notices of  
12 termination, and notices of the exercise of a contract option.

13 (7) "Contractor" means any person having a contract with a governmental body.

14 (8) "Data" means recorded information, regardless of form or characteristic.

15 (9) "Designee" means a duly authorized representative of a person holding a superior  
16 position.

17 (10) "Employee" means an individual drawing a salary from a state governmental entity.

18 (11) "State governmental entity" means any entity created as a legislative body or a public  
19 or state agency by the general assembly or constitution of this state, except for municipal, regional,  
20 or county governmental entities.

21 (12) "May" means permissive.

22 (13) "Negotiation" means contracting by either the method set forth in § 37-2-19, 37-2-20,  
23 or 37-2-21.

24 (14) "Person" means any business, individual, organization, or group of individuals.

25 (15) "Procurement" means the purchasing, buying, renting, leasing, or otherwise obtaining  
26 of any supplies, services, or construction. It also includes all functions that pertain to the obtaining  
27 of any supply, service, or construction item, including a description of requirements, selection and  
28 solicitation of sources, preparation, and award of contract, and all phases of contract administration.

29 (16) "Public agency" shall mean the Rhode Island industrial recreational building  
30 authority, the Rhode Island commerce corporation, the Rhode Island industrial facilities  
31 corporation, the Rhode Island refunding bond authority, the Rhode Island housing and mortgage  
32 finance corporation, the Rhode Island resource recovery corporation, the Rhode Island public  
33 transit authority, the Rhode Island student loan authority, the Howard development corporation,  
34 the water resources board corporate, the Rhode Island health and education building corporation,

1 the Rhode Island turnpike and bridge authority, the Blackstone Valley district commission, the  
2 Narragansett Bay water quality management district commission, the Rhode Island  
3 telecommunications authority, the convention center authority, the Channel 36 foundation, the  
4 Rhode Island lottery commission their successors and assigns, any other body corporate and politic  
5 which has been or will be created or established within this state excepting cities and towns, the  
6 university of Rhode Island board of trustees for all purchases that are funded by restricted,  
7 sponsored, or auxiliary monies, and the council on postsecondary education for all purchases that  
8 are funded by restricted, sponsored, or auxiliary monies.

9 (17) "Purchase request" or "purchase requisition" means that document whereby a using  
10 agency requests that a contract be entered into to obtain goods and/or services for a specified need,  
11 and may include, but is not limited to, the technical description of the requested item, delivery  
12 requirements, transportation mode request, criteria for evaluation of proposals, and/or preparation  
13 of suggested sources of supply, and information supplied for the making of any written  
14 determination and finding required by § 37-2-6.

15 (18) "Purchasing agency" means any state governmental entity which is authorized by this  
16 chapter, its implementing regulations, or by way of delegation from the chief purchasing officer to  
17 contract on its own behalf rather than through the central contracting authority of the chief  
18 purchasing officer.

19 (19) "Purchasing agent" means any person authorized by a governmental entity in  
20 accordance with procedures prescribed by regulations, to enter into and administer contracts and  
21 make written determinations and findings with respect to contracts. The term also includes an  
22 authorized representative acting within the limits of authority. "Purchasing agent" also means the  
23 person appointed in accordance with § 37-2-1.

24 (20) "Services" means the rendering, by a contractor, of its time and effort rather than the  
25 furnishing of a specific end product, other than reports that are merely incidental to the required  
26 performance of services. "Services" does not include labor contracts with employees of state  
27 agencies.

28 (21) "Shall" means imperative.

29 (22) "State" means the state of Rhode Island and any of its departments or agencies and  
30 public agencies.

31 (23) "Supplemental agreement" means any contract modification which is accomplished  
32 by the mutual action of the parties.

33 (24) "Supplies" means all property, including, but not limited to, leases of real property,  
34 printing, and insurance, except land or permanent interest in land.

1 (25) "Using agency" means any state governmental entity which utilizes any supplies,  
2 services, or construction purchased under this chapter.

3 (26) As used in § 37-2-59, "architect" or "engineer" services means those professional  
4 services within the scope of practice of architecture, professional engineering, or registered land  
5 surveying pertaining to construction, as defined by the laws of this state. "Consultant" means any  
6 person with whom the state and/or a public agency has a contract which contract provides for the  
7 person to give direction or information as regards a particular area of knowledge in which the  
8 person is a specialist and/or has expertise.

9 (27) For purposes of §§ 37-2-62 — 37-2-70, "directors" means those members of a public  
10 agency appointed pursuant to a statute who comprise the governing authority of the board,  
11 commission, authority, and/or corporation.

12 (28) "State agency" means any department, commission, council, board, bureau,  
13 committee, institution, or other governmental entity of the executive or judicial branch of this state  
14 not otherwise established as a body corporate and politic, and includes, without limitation, the  
15 council on postsecondary education except for purchases which are funded by restricted, sponsored,  
16 or auxiliary moneys, the university of Rhode Island board of trustees except for all purchases which  
17 are funded by restricted, sponsored, or auxiliary monies, and the council on elementary and  
18 secondary education.

19 (29) "Governmental entity" means any department, commission, council, board, bureau,  
20 committee, institution, legislative body, agency, or government corporation of the executive,  
21 legislative, or judicial branches of state, federal, and/or local governments.

22 (30) "Construction management at-risk" or "construction management at-risk services" or  
23 "construction management at-risk delivery method" is a construction method wherein a  
24 construction manager at-risk provides a range of preconstruction services and construction  
25 management services which may include cost estimation and consultation regarding the design of  
26 the building project, the preparation and coordination of bid packages, scheduling, cost control, and  
27 value engineering, acting as the general contractor during the construction, detailing the trade  
28 contractor scope of work, holding the trade contracts and other contracts, evaluating trade  
29 contractors and subcontractors, and providing management and construction services, all at a  
30 guaranteed maximum price, which shall represent the maximum amount to be paid by the using  
31 agency for the building project, including the cost of work, the general conditions, and the fee  
32 payable to the construction management at-risk firm.

33 (31) "Construction manager at-risk" or "construction management at-risk firm" is a person  
34 or business experienced in construction that has the ability to evaluate and to implement drawings

1 and specifications as they affect time, cost and quality of construction and the ability to coordinate  
2 and deliver the construction of the project within a guaranteed maximum price, which shall  
3 represent the maximum amount to be paid by the using agency for the building project, including  
4 the cost of the work, the general conditions, and the fee payable to the construction management  
5 at-risk firm. The construction manager at-risk provides consultation services during the  
6 preconstruction and construction phases of the project. The project engineer, architect, or owner's  
7 program manager may not serve as the construction manager at-risk.

8 (32) "Owner's program manager" shall be an entity engaged to provide project  
9 management services on behalf of a state agency for the construction and supervision of the  
10 construction of a building project. The owner's program manager acts as the owner's agent in all  
11 aspects of the construction project, including, but not limited to, architectural programming,  
12 planning, design, construction, and the selection and procurement of an appropriate construction  
13 delivery method. The owner's program manager shall have at least seven (7) years' experience in  
14 the construction and supervision of construction of buildings of similar size and complexity. The  
15 owner's program manager shall not have been employed during the preceding year by the design  
16 firm, the construction firm, and/or the subcontractors associated with the project.

17 (33) "Food" means:

18 (i) Articles used for food or drink for people or other animals;

19 (ii) Chewing gum; and

20 (iii) Articles used for components of any food or drink article.

21 (34) "Food supplies" means non-durable, consumable items used to store, handle, serve,  
22 package, or present food to include, but not be limited to, disposable paper goods, single-use  
23 serviceware: napkins, cups, lids, plates, bowls, cutlery, trays, deli paper, foil, film wrap, and takeout  
24 containers. "Food supplies" shall not include equipment, appliances, furnishings, and capital items.

25 SECTION 2. Section 37-2-22 of the General Laws in Chapter 37-2 entitled "State  
26 Purchases" is hereby amended to read as follows:

27 **37-2-22. Small purchases.**

28 Procurements, not to exceed an aggregate amount of twenty-five thousand dollars  
29 (\$25,000) for construction and food and food supplies, and ten thousand dollars (\$10,000) for all  
30 other purchases may be made in accordance with small purchase regulations promulgated by the  
31 chief purchasing officer. Procurement requirements shall not be artificially divided so as to  
32 constitute a small purchase under this section.

1 SECTION 3. This act shall take effect upon passage.

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EXPLANATION  
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL  
OF

A N A C T

RELATING TO PUBLIC PROPERTY AND WORKS -- STATE PURCHASES

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1           This act would define food and food supplies for the purposes of Rhode Island general laws  
2 title 37 public property and works chapter 2 state purchases.

3           This act would further allow for the procurement of food and food supplies not exceeding  
4 an aggregate amount of twenty-five thousand dollars (\$25,000) to be made in accordance with  
5 small purchase regulations promulgated by the chief purchasing officer.

6           This act would take effect upon passage.

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