

(2) [(i) The contracts shall be in excess of the amounts specified for the counties set forth in this paragraph.

- (ii) Allegany County—\$5,000
- (iii) Carroll County—\$3,500
- (iv) Charles County—\$5,000
- (v) Frederick County—\$15,000
- (vi) Garrett County—\$5,000
- (vii) Harford County—\$1,000
- (viii) Kent County—\$5,000
- (ix) St. Mary's County—\$5,000
- (x) Somerset County—\$4,000
- (xi) Talbot County—\$1,000
- (xii) Worcester County—\$2,500

(3)] The provisions of PARAGRAPH (1) OF this subsection are not applicable in Charles and Somerset Counties with regard solely to contracting for the services of an architectural and/or engineering firm for design and/or consultation purposes. With regard to contracting for other county work these provisions are applicable.

[(4)](3) The provisions of PARAGRAPH (1) OF this subsection are not applicable in Frederick County with regard solely to contracting for the services of an architectural, engineering, or consultant firm for design or consultation purposes. In Frederick County, contracts for architectural and engineering services costing more than [\$5,000] \$15,000, shall be awarded on a competitive basis which shall consist of either sealed competitive bids or competitive negotiation. "Competitive negotiation" means a process that includes the submission of written technical and price proposals from two or more sources and a written evaluation of those proposals in accordance with evaluation criteria.

[(5) The provisions of this subsection do not apply in Calvert County. In Calvert County, competitive bidding shall be required for contracts in excess of the amount specified in the Code of Public Local Laws of Calvert County.]

EXPLANATION: Article 25, § 24 is amended to provide an increased uniform threshold amount above which county contracts must be competitively bid. The \$15,000 figure is consistent with the decision of the General Assembly to alter the threshold for certain contracts entered into by the county boards of education. See Chapter 391, Acts of 1993. This section does not apply to charter counties and, to the extent that the \$15,000 figure is higher than an