

Article 8.

Public Contracts.

§ 143-128. Requirements for certain building contracts.

(a) Preparation of specifications. – Every officer, board, department, commission or commissions charged with responsibility of preparation of specifications or awarding or entering into contracts for the erection, construction, alteration or repair of any buildings for the State, or for any county, municipality, or other public body, shall have prepared separate specifications for each of the following subdivisions or branches of work to be performed:

- (1) Heating, ventilating, air conditioning and accessories (separately or combined into one conductive system), refrigeration for cold storage (where the cold storage cooling load is 15 tons or more of refrigeration), and all related work.
- (2) Plumbing and gas fittings and accessories, and all related work.
- (3) Electrical wiring and installations, and all related work.
- (4) General work not included in subdivisions (1), (2), and (3) of this subsection relating to the erection, construction, alteration, or repair of any building.

Specifications for contracts that will be bid under the separate-prime system or dual bidding system shall be drawn as to permit separate and independent bidding upon each of the subdivisions of work enumerated in this subsection. The above enumeration of subdivisions or branches of work shall not be construed to prevent any officer, board, department, commission or commissions from preparing additional separate specifications for any other category of work.

(a1) Construction methods. – The State, a county, municipality, or other public body shall award contracts to erect, construct, alter, or repair buildings pursuant to any of the following methods:

- (1) Separate-prime bidding.
- (2) Single-prime bidding.
- (3) Dual bidding pursuant to subsection (d1) of this section.
- (4) Construction management at risk contracts pursuant to G.S. 143-128.1.
- (5) Alternative contracting methods authorized pursuant to G.S. 143-135.26(9).
- (6) Design-build contracts pursuant to G.S. 143-128.1A.
- (7) Design-build bridging contracts pursuant to G.S. 143-128.1B.
- (8) Public-private partnership construction contracts pursuant to G.S. 143-128.1C.

(a2) Repealed by Session Laws 2012-142, s. 9.4(g), effective July 1, 2012.

(b) Separate-prime contracts. – When the State, county, municipality, or other public body uses the separate-prime contract system, it shall accept bids for each subdivision of work for which specifications are required to be prepared under subsection (a) of this section and shall award the respective work specified separately to responsible and reliable persons, firms or corporations regularly engaged in their respective lines of work. When the estimated cost of work to be performed in any single subdivision or branch for which separate bids are required by this subsection is less than twenty-five thousand dollars (\$25,000), the same may be included in the contract for one of the other subdivisions or branches of the work, irrespective of total project cost. The contracts shall be awarded to the lowest responsible, responsive bidders, taking into consideration quality, performance, the time specified in the bids for performance of the contract, and compliance with G.S. 143-128.2. Bids may also be accepted from and awards made to separate contractors for other categories of work.

Each separate contractor shall be directly liable to the State of North Carolina, or to the county, municipality, or other public body and to the other separate contractors for the full performance of

all duties and obligations due respectively under the terms of the separate contracts and in accordance with the plans and specifications, which shall specifically set forth the duties and obligations of each separate contractor. For the purpose of this section, "separate contractor" means any person, firm or corporation who shall enter into a contract with the State, or with any county, municipality, or other public entity to erect, construct, alter or repair any building or buildings, or parts of any building or buildings.

(c) Repealed by Session Laws 2001-496, s. 3, effective January 1, 2001.

(d) Single-prime contracts. – All bidders in a single-prime project shall identify on their bid the contractors they have selected for the subdivisions or branches of work for:

- (1) Heating, ventilating, and air conditioning;
- (2) Plumbing;
- (3) Electrical; and
- (4) General.

The contract shall be awarded to the lowest responsible, responsive bidder, taking into consideration quality, performance, the time specified in the bids for performance of the contract, and compliance with G.S. 143-128.2. A contractor whose bid is accepted shall not substitute any person as subcontractor in the place of the subcontractor listed in the original bid, except (i) if the listed subcontractor's bid is later determined by the contractor to be nonresponsive or nonresponsive or the listed subcontractor refuses to enter into a contract for the complete performance of the bid work, or (ii) with the approval of the awarding authority for good cause shown by the contractor. The terms, conditions, and requirements of each contract between the contractor and a subcontractor performing work under a subdivision or branch of work listed in this subsection shall incorporate by reference the terms, conditions, and requirements of the contract between the contractor and the State, county, municipality, or other public body.

When contracts are awarded pursuant to this section, the public body shall make available to subcontractors the dispute resolution process as provided for in subsection (f1) of this section.

(d1) Dual bidding. – The State, a county, municipality, or other public entity may accept bids to erect, construct, alter, or repair a building under both the single-prime and separate-prime contracting systems and shall award the contract to the lowest responsible, responsive bidder under the single-prime system or to the lowest responsible, responsive bidder under the separate-prime system, taking into consideration quality, performance, compliance with G.S. 143-128.2, and time specified in the bids to perform the contract. In determining the system under which the contract will be awarded to the lowest responsible, responsive bidder, the public entity may consider cost of construction oversight, time for completion, and other factors it considers appropriate. The bids received as separate-prime bids shall be received, but not opened, one hour prior to the deadline for the submission of single-prime bids. The amount of a bid submitted by a subcontractor to the general contractor under the single-prime system shall not exceed the amount bid, if any, for the same work by that subcontractor to the public entity under the separate-prime system. The provisions of subsection (b) of this section shall apply to separate-prime contracts awarded pursuant to this section and the provisions of subsection (d) of this section shall apply to single-prime contracts awarded pursuant to this section.

(e) Project expediter; scheduling; public body to resolve project disputes. – The State, county, municipality, or other public body may, if specified in the bid documents, provide for assignment of responsibility for expediting the work on a project to a single responsible and reliable person, firm or corporation, which may be a prime contractor. In executing this responsibility, the designated project expediter may recommend to the State, county, municipality,

or other public body whether payment to a contractor should be approved. The project expediter, if required by the contract documents, shall be responsible for preparing the project schedule and shall allow all contractors and subcontractors performing any of the branches of work listed in subsection (d) of this section equal input into the preparation of the initial schedule. Whenever separate contracts are awarded and separate contractors engaged for a project pursuant to this section, the public body may provide in the contract documents for resolution of project disputes through alternative dispute resolution processes as provided for in subsection (f1) of this section.

(f) Repealed by Session Laws 2001-496, s. 3, effective January 1, 2001.

(f1) Dispute resolution. – A public entity shall use the dispute resolution process adopted by the State Building Commission pursuant to G.S. 143-135.26(11), or shall adopt another dispute resolution process, which shall include mediation, to be used as an alternative to the dispute resolution process adopted by the State Building Commission. This dispute resolution process will be available to all the parties involved in the public entity's construction project including the public entity, the architect, the construction manager, the contractors, and the first-tier and lower-tier subcontractors and shall be available for any issues arising out of the contract or construction process. The public entity may set a reasonable threshold, not to exceed fifteen thousand dollars (\$15,000), concerning the amount in controversy that must be at issue before a party may require other parties to participate in the dispute resolution process. The public entity may require that the costs of the process be divided between the parties to the dispute with at least one-third of the cost to be paid by the public entity, if the public entity is a party to the dispute. The public entity may require in its contracts that a party participate in mediation concerning a dispute as a precondition to initiating litigation concerning the dispute.

(g) Exceptions. – This section shall not apply to:

- (1) The purchase and erection of prefabricated or relocatable buildings or portions thereof, except that portion of the work which must be performed at the construction site.
- (2) The erection, construction, alteration, or repair of a building when the cost thereof is three hundred thousand dollars (\$300,000) or less.
- (3) The erection, construction, alteration, or repair of a building by The University of North Carolina or its constituent institutions when the cost thereof is five hundred thousand dollars (\$500,000) or less.

Notwithstanding the other provisions of this subsection, subsection (f1) of this section shall apply to any erection, construction, alteration, or repair of a building by a public entity. (1925, c. 141, s. 2; 1929, c. 339, s. 2; 1931, c. 46; 1943, c. 387; 1945, c. 851; 1949, c. 1137, s. 1; 1963, c. 406, ss. 2-7; 1967, c. 860; 1973, c. 1419; 1977, c. 620; 1987 (Reg. Sess., 1988), c. 1108, ss. 4, 5; 1989, c. 480, s. 1; 1995, c. 358, s. 4; c. 367, ss. 1, 4, 5; c. 509, s. 79; 1998-137, s. 1; 1998-193, s. 1; 2001-496, ss. 3, 13; 2002-159, s. 42; 2007-322, s. 3; 2012-142, s. 9.4(g); 2013-401, s. 3.)

§ 143-128.1. Construction management at risk contracts.

(a) For purposes of this section and G.S. 143-64.31:

- (1) "Construction management services" means services provided by a construction manager, which may include preparation and coordination of bid packages, scheduling, cost control, value engineering, evaluation, preconstruction services, and construction administration.
- (2) "Construction management at risk services" means services provided by a person, corporation, or entity that (i) provides construction management

services for a project throughout the preconstruction and construction phases, (ii) who is licensed as a general contractor, and (iii) who guarantees the cost of the project.

(3) "Construction manager at risk" means a person, corporation, or entity that provides construction management at risk services.

(4) "First-tier subcontractor" means a subcontractor who contracts directly with the construction manager at risk.

(b) The construction manager at risk shall be selected in accordance with Article 3D of this Chapter. Design services for a project shall be performed by a licensed architect or engineer. The public owner shall contract directly with the architect or engineer. The public owner shall make a good-faith effort to comply with G.S. 143-128.2, G.S. 143-128.4, and to recruit and select small business entities when selecting a construction manager at risk.

(c) The construction manager at risk shall contract directly with the public entity for all construction; shall publicly advertise as prescribed in G.S. 143-129; and shall prequalify and accept bids from first-tier subcontractors for all construction work under this section. The construction manager at risk shall use the prequalification process determined by the public entity in accordance with G.S. 143-135.8, provided that public entity and the construction manager at risk shall jointly develop the assessment tool and criteria for that specific project, which must include the prequalification scoring values and minimum required score for prequalification on that project. The public entity shall require the construction manager at risk to submit its plan for compliance with G.S. 143-128.2 for approval by the public entity prior to soliciting bids for the project's first-tier subcontractors. A construction manager at risk and first-tier subcontractors shall make a good faith effort to comply with G.S. 143-128.2, G.S. 143-128.4, and to recruit and select small business entities. A construction manager at risk may perform a portion of the work only if (i) bidding produces no responsible, responsive bidder for that portion of the work, the lowest responsible, responsive bidder will not execute a contract for the bid portion of the work, or the subcontractor defaults and a prequalified replacement cannot be obtained in a timely manner, and (ii) the public entity approves of the construction manager at risk's performance of the work. All bids shall be opened publicly, and once they are opened, shall be public records under Chapter 132 of the General Statutes. The construction manager at risk shall act as the fiduciary of the public entity in handling and opening bids. The construction manager at risk shall award the contract to the lowest responsible, responsive bidder, taking into consideration quality, performance, the time specified in the bids for performance of the contract, the cost of construction oversight, time for completion, compliance with G.S. 143-128.2, and other factors deemed appropriate by the public entity and advertised as part of the bid solicitation. The public entity may require the selection of a different first-tier subcontractor for any portion of the work, consistent with this section, provided that the construction manager at risk is compensated for any additional cost incurred.

When contracts are awarded pursuant to this section, the public entity shall provide for a dispute resolution procedure as provided in G.S. 143-128(f1).

(d) The construction manager at risk shall provide a performance and payment bond to the public entity in accordance with the provisions of Article 3 of Chapter 44A of the General Statutes.

(e) Construction management at risk services may be used by the public entity only after the public entity has concluded that construction management at risk services is in the best interest of the project, and the public entity has compared the advantages and disadvantages of using the construction management at risk method for a given project in lieu of the delivery methods

identified in G.S. 143-128(a1)(1) through G.S. 143-128(a1)(3). The public entity may not delegate this determination. (2001-496, s. 2; 2013-401, s. 5; 2014-42, s. 2.)

§ 143-128.1A. Design-build contracts.

(a) Definitions for purposes of this section [are as follows]:

- (1) Design-builder. – As defined in G.S. 143-128.1B.
- (1g) Design professional. – As defined in G.S. 143-128.1B.
- (1p) First-tier subcontractor. – As defined in G.S. 143-128.1B.
- (2) Governmental entity. – As defined in G.S. 143-128.1B.
- (3) Licensed contractor. – As defined in G.S. 143-128.1B.
- (4) Licensed subcontractor. – A person or entity, not including design professionals or employees of the design-builder, that will be performing work under the design-builder and whose scope of work proposed for the project requires that it be licensed in accordance with Article 2 or Article 4 of Chapter 87 of the General Statutes.
- (5) Unlicensed subcontractor. – A person or entity, not including design professionals or employees of the design-builder, that will be performing work under the design-builder and whose scope of work proposed for the project does not require that it be licensed in accordance with Article 2 or Article 4 of Chapter 87 of the General Statutes.

(b) A governmental entity shall establish in writing the criteria used for determining the circumstances under which the design-build method is appropriate for a project, and such criteria shall, at a minimum, address all of the following:

- (1) The extent to which the governmental entity can adequately and thoroughly define the project requirements prior to the issuance of the request for qualifications for a design-builder.
- (2) The time constraints for the delivery of the project.
- (3) The ability to ensure that a quality project can be delivered.
- (4) The capability of the governmental entity to manage and oversee the project, including the availability of experienced staff or outside consultants who are experienced with the design-build method of project delivery.
- (5) A good-faith effort to comply with G.S. 143-128.2, G.S. 143-128.4, and to recruit and select small business entities. The governmental entity shall not limit or otherwise preclude any respondent from submitting a response so long as the respondent, itself or through its proposed team, is properly licensed and qualified to perform the work defined by the public notice issued under subsection (c) of this section.
- (6) The criteria utilized by the governmental entity, including a comparison of the advantages and disadvantages of using the design-build delivery method for a given project in lieu of the delivery methods identified in subdivisions (1), (2), and (4) of G.S. 143-128(a1).

(c) A governmental entity shall issue a public notice of the request for qualifications that includes, at a minimum, general information on each of the following:

- (1) The project site.
- (2) The project scope.
- (3) The anticipated project budget.

- (4) The project schedule.
- (5) The criteria to be considered for selection and the weighting of the qualifications criteria.
- (6) Notice of any rules, ordinances, or goals established by the governmental entity, including goals for minority- and women-owned business participation and small business participation.
- (7) Other information provided by the owner to potential design-builders in submitting qualifications for the project.
- (8) A statement directing each design-builder to submit in its response to the request for qualifications an explanation of its project team selection. The governmental entity may specify which one of the following project team selection options shall be used or, if not specified, the response shall consist of either of the following project team selection options:
 - a. A list of the licensed contractors, licensed subcontractors, and design professionals whom the design-builder proposes to use for the project's design and construction. If this project team selection option is used, the design-builder may self-perform some or all of the work with employees of the design-builder and, without bidding, also enter into negotiated subcontracts to perform some or all of the work with subcontractors, including, but not exclusively with, those identified in the list. In submitting its list, the design-builder may, but is not required to, include one or more unlicensed subcontractors the design-builder proposes to use. If this project team selection option is used, the design-builder may, at its election and with or without the use of negotiated subcontracts, accept bids for the selection of one or more of its first-tier subcontractors.
 - b. A list of the licensed contractors and design professionals whom the design-builder proposes to use for the project's design and construction and an outline of the strategy the design-builder plans to use for open subcontractor selection based upon the provisions of Article 8 of Chapter 143 of the General Statutes. If this project team selection option is used, the design-builder may also self-perform some of the work with employees of the design-builder, but shall not enter into negotiated contracts with first-tier subcontractors.

(d) Following evaluation of the qualifications of the design-builders, the three most highly qualified design-builders shall be ranked. If after the solicitation for design-builders not as many as three responses have been received from qualified design-builders, the governmental entity shall again solicit for design-builders. If as a result of such second solicitation not as many as three responses are received, the governmental entity may then begin negotiations with the highest-ranked design-builder under G.S. 143-64.31 even though fewer than three responses were received. If the governmental entity deems it appropriate, the governmental entity may invite some or all responders to interview with the governmental entity.

(e) The design-builder shall be selected in accordance with Article 3D of this Chapter. Each design-builder shall certify, in the response to the request for qualifications in subsection (c) of this section, to the governmental entity that each design professional who is a member of the

design-build team, including subconsultants, was selected based upon demonstrated competence and qualifications in the manner provided by G.S. 143-64.31.

(f) The design-builder shall provide a performance and payment bond to the governmental entity in accordance with the provisions of Article 3 of Chapter 44A of the General Statutes. The design-builder shall obtain written approval from the governmental entity prior to changing key personnel as listed in sub-subdivision (c)(8)a. or (c)(8)b. of this section after the contract has been awarded. For purposes of this subsection, "key personnel" shall mean either of the following:

- (1) For the project team selection option under sub-subdivision (c)(8)a. of this section, the licensed contractors, licensed subcontractors, and design professionals identified in the response to the request for qualifications.
- (2) For the project team selection option under sub-subdivision (c)(8)b. of this section, the licensed contractors and design professionals identified in the response to the request for qualifications. (2013-401, s. 4; 2014-42, s. 7; 2022-1, s. 2(a).)

§ 143-128.1B. Design-build bridging contracts.

(a) Definitions for purposes of this section [are as follows]:

- (1) Costs of the subcontractor work. – The sum total amount of all first-tier subcontract packages bid or proposed to be bid under subsection (f) of this section.
- (1a) Design-build bridging. – A design and construction delivery process whereby a governmental entity contracts for design criteria services under a separate agreement from the construction phase services of the design-builder.
- (2) Design-builder. – An appropriately licensed person, corporation, or entity that, under a single contract, offers to provide or provides design services and general contracting services where services within the scope of the practice of professional engineering or architecture are performed respectively by a licensed engineer or licensed architect and where services within the scope of the practice of general contracting are performed by a licensed general contractor.
- (3) Design criteria. – The requirements for a public project expressed in drawings and specifications sufficient to allow the design-builder to make a responsive bid proposal.
- (4) Design professional. – Any professional licensed under Chapters 83A, 89A, or 89C of the General Statutes.
- (5) First-tier subcontractor. – A subcontractor who contracts directly with the design-builder, excluding design professionals.
- (5g) General conditions. – A specific list compiled by the government entity that identifies items for which the design-builder is to be compensated but are not ascribable to any particular on-site construction activity. This term shall not include either of the following:
 - a. Construction work to be bid pursuant to subsection (f) of this section.
 - b. Design services of a design professional.
- (6) Governmental entity. – Every officer, board, department, commission, or commissions charged with responsibility of preparation of specifications or awarding or entering into contracts for the erection, construction, alteration, or

repair of any buildings for the State or for any county, municipality, or other public body.

- (7) Licensed contractor. – A person or entity whose scope of work proposed for the project requires that it be licensed in accordance with the provisions of Article 1 of Chapter 87 of the General Statutes.

(b) A governmental entity shall establish in writing the criteria used for determining the circumstances under which engaging a design criteria design professional is appropriate for a project, and such criteria shall, at a minimum, address all of the following:

- (1) The extent to which the governmental entity can adequately and thoroughly define the project requirements prior to the issuance of the request for proposals for a design-builder.
- (2) The time constraints for the delivery of the project.
- (3) The ability to ensure that a quality project can be delivered.
- (4) The capability of the governmental entity to manage and oversee the project, including the availability of experienced staff or outside consultants who are experienced with the design-build method of project delivery.
- (5) A good-faith effort to comply with G.S. 143-128.2, G.S. 143-128.4, and to recruit and select small business entities. The governmental entity shall not limit or otherwise preclude any respondent from submitting a response so long as the respondent, itself or through its proposed team, is properly licensed and qualified to perform the work defined by the public notice issued under subsection (d) of this section.
- (6) The criteria utilized by the governmental entity, including a comparison of the advantages and disadvantages of using the design-build delivery method for a given project in lieu of the delivery methods identified in subdivisions (1), (2), and (4) of G.S. 143-128(a1).

(b1) The governmental entity, as a criterion in subsection (b) of this section, shall not require the design-builder to provide the costs of the subcontractor work in the design criteria package.

(c) On or before entering into a contract for design-build services under this section, the governmental entity shall select or designate a staff design professional, or a design professional who is independent of the design-builder, to act as its design criteria design professional as its representative for the procurement process and for the duration of the design and construction. If the design professional is not a full-time employee of the governmental entity, the governmental entity shall select the design professional on the basis of demonstrated competence and qualifications as provided by G.S. 143-64.31. The design criteria design professional shall develop design criteria in consultation with the governmental entity. The design criteria design professional shall not be eligible to submit a response to the request for proposals nor provide design input to a design-build response to the request for proposals. The design criteria design professional shall prepare a design criteria package equal to thirty-five percent (35%) of the completed design documentation for the entire construction project. The design criteria package shall not require the design-builder to include the costs of the subcontractor work in its response and shall include all of the following:

- (1) Programmatic needs, interior space requirements, intended space utilization, and other capacity requirements.
- (2) Information on the physical characteristics of the site, such as a topographic survey.

- (3) Material quality standards or performance criteria.
 - (4) Special material requirements.
 - (5) Provisions for utilities.
 - (6) Parking requirements.
 - (7) The type, size, and location of adjacent structures.
 - (8) Preliminary or conceptual drawings and specifications sufficient in detail to allow the design-builder to make a proposal which is responsive to the request for proposals.
 - (9) Notice of any ordinances, rules, or goals adopted by the governmental entity.
 - (10) The list of general conditions prepared by the governmental entity for which the design-builder is to provide a fixed fee in accordance with sub-subdivision (10)a. of subsection (d) of this section. For this purpose, as examples, general conditions could include without exclusion the following: on-site construction office and storage trailers; electrical and other utility services during construction; on-site construction superintendent, construction supervisors, and clerical staff; trash collection; security; and other temporary measures. Unless expressly dictated by the contract, the inclusion or exclusion of any particular item in the list shall not be construed to control the means and methods used by the design-builder or eliminate any discretion on whether to use a given item in the prosecution of the work. The inclusion or exclusion of any particular item in the list shall have no bearing on the actual amounts for which the design-builder is to be compensated under the executed contract documents.
 - (11) The form of the contract to be entered into by the successful design-builder to whom the project is awarded pursuant to subsection (e) of this section. The form of the contract may, upon discretion of the governmental entity, allow for multiple phases, termination for convenience and rights arising therefrom, and the subsequent setting of guaranteed maximum prices.
 - (12) A statement directing each design-builder to submit in its response to the request for qualifications an explanation of its proposed plan for its good-faith compliance with G.S. 143-128.2.
- (d) A governmental entity shall issue a public notice of the request for proposals that includes, at a minimum, general information on each of the following:
- (1) The project site.
 - (2) The project scope.
 - (3) The anticipated project budget.
 - (4) The project schedule.
 - (5) The criteria to be considered for selection and the weighting of the selection criteria.
 - (6) Notice of any rules, ordinances, or goals established by the governmental entity, including goals for minority- and women-owned business participation and small business entities.
 - (7) The thirty-five percent (35%) design criteria package prepared by the design criteria design professional.
 - (8) Other information provided by the owner to design-builders in submitting responses to the request for proposals for the project.

- (9) A statement providing that each design-builder shall submit in its request for proposal response an explanation of its project team selection, which shall consist of a list of the licensed contractor and design professionals whom the design-builder proposes to use for the project's design and construction.
- (10) A statement providing that each design-builder shall submit in a separate sealed envelope, contemporaneously with the response to the request for proposals, the design-builder's fixed fees, excluding the costs of the subcontractor work, for designing and constructing the project in accordance with requirements set forth by the government entity's criteria and the terms and conditions set forth in the form of the contract under subdivision (11) of subsection (c) of this section for each of the following, listed separately by item:
 - a. The general conditions identified in the request for proposal.
 - b. The general construction services not otherwise provided for in this subdivision.
 - c. The design-builder's design services necessary to complete the project.

(e) Following evaluation of the qualifications of the design-builders, the governmental entity shall rank the design-builders who have provided responses, grouping the top three without ordinal ranking. If after the solicitation for design-builders not as many as three responses have been received from qualified design-builders, the governmental entity shall again solicit for design-builders. If as a result of such second solicitation not as many as three responses are received, the governmental entity may then make its selection. From the grouping of the top three design-builders, the governmental entity shall select the design-builder who is the lowest responsive, responsible bidder based on the cumulative amount of fees provided in accordance with subdivision (d)(10) of this section and taking into consideration quality, performance, and the time specified in the proposals for the performance of the contract. Each design-builder shall certify to the governmental entity that each design professional who is a member of the design-build team, including subconsultants, was selected based upon demonstrated competence and qualifications in the manner provided by G.S. 143-64.31.

(f) The design-builder shall accept bids based upon the provisions of this Article from first-tier subcontractors for all construction work under this section.

(g) The design-builder shall provide a performance and payment bond to the governmental entity in accordance with the provisions of Article 3 of Chapter 44A of the General Statutes. The design-builder shall obtain written approval from the governmental entity prior to changing key personnel, as listed under subdivision (d)(9) of this section, after the contract has been awarded. (2013-401, s. 4; 2014-42, s. 6; 2022-1, s. 2(b).)

§ 143-128.1C. Public-private partnership construction contracts.

- (a) Definitions for purposes of this section:
 - (1) Construction contract. – Any contract entered into between a private developer and a contractor for the design, construction, reconstruction, alteration, or repair of any building or other work or improvement required for a private developer to satisfy its obligations under a development contract.
 - (2) Contractor. – Any person who has entered into a construction contract with a private developer under this section.
 - (3) Design-builder. – Defined in G.S. 143-128.1B.

- (4) Development contract. – Any contract between a governmental entity and a private developer under this section and, as part of the contract, the private developer is required to provide at least fifty percent (50%) of the financing for the total cost necessary to deliver the capital improvement project, whether through lease or ownership, for the governmental entity. For purposes of determining whether the private developer is providing the minimum percentage of the total financing costs, the calculation shall not include any payment made by a public entity or proceeds of financing arrangements by a private entity where the source of repayment is a public entity.
- (5) Governmental entity. – Defined in G.S. 143-128.1B.
- (6) Labor or materials. – Includes all materials furnished or labor performed in the performance of the work required by a construction contract whether or not the labor or materials enter into or become a component part of the improvement and shall include gas, power, light, heat, oil, gasoline, telephone services, and rental of equipment or the reasonable value of the use of equipment directly utilized in the performance of the work required by a construction contract.
- (7) Private developer. – Any person who has entered into a development contract with a governmental entity under this section.
- (8) Public-private project. – A capital improvement project undertaken for the benefit of a governmental entity and a private developer pursuant to a development contract that includes construction of a public facility or other improvements, including paving, grading, utilities, infrastructure, reconstruction, or repair, and may include both public and private facilities.
- (9) State entity. – The State and every agency, authority, institution, board, commission, bureau, council, department, division, officer, or employee of the State. The term does not include a unit of local government as defined in G.S. 159-7.
- (10) State-supported financing arrangement. – Any installment financing arrangement, lease-purchase arrangement, arrangement under which funds are to be paid in the future based upon the availability of an asset or funds for payment, or any similar arrangement in the nature of a financing, under which a State entity agrees to make payments to acquire or obtain ownership or beneficial use of a capital asset for the State entity or any other State entity for a term, including renewal options, of greater than one year. Any arrangement that results in the identification of a portion of a lease payment, installment payment, or similar scheduled payment thereunder by a State entity as "interest" for purposes of federal income taxation shall automatically be a State-supported financing arrangement for purposes of this section. A true operating lease is not a State-supported financing arrangement.
- (11) Subcontractor. – Any person who has contracted to furnish labor, services, or materials to, or who has performed labor or services for, a contractor or another subcontractor in connection with a development contract.

(b) If the governmental entity determines in writing that it has a critical need for a capital improvement project, the governmental entity may acquire, construct, own, lease as lessor or lessee, and operate or participate in the acquisition, construction, ownership, leasing, and operation of a public-private project, or of specific facilities within such a project, including the making of

loans and grants from funds available to the governmental entity for these purposes. If the governmental entity is a public body under Article 33C of this Chapter, the determination shall occur during an open meeting of that public body. The governmental entity may enter into development contracts with private developers with respect to acquiring, constructing, owning, leasing, or operating a project under this section. If the development contract is entered into by a governmental entity that is a unit of local government as defined in G.S. 159-7, and the unit must finance all or part of its portion of the cost of the project, then the amount financed by the unit is subject to approval by the Local Government Commission as provided in Chapter 159 of the General Statutes. Approval must be secured prior to the execution of the development contract. The development contract shall specify the following:

- (1) The property interest of the governmental entity and all other participants in the development of the project.
- (2) The responsibilities of the governmental entity and all other participants in the development of the project.
- (3) The responsibilities of the governmental entity and all other participants with respect to financing of the project.
- (4) The responsibilities to put forth a good-faith effort to comply with G.S. 143-128.2, G.S. 143-128.4, and to recruit and select small business entities.

(c) The development contract may provide that the private developer shall be responsible for any or all of the following:

- (1) Construction of the entire public-private project.
- (2) Reconstruction or repair of the public-private project or any part thereof subsequent to construction of the project.
- (3) Construction of any addition to the public-private project.
- (4) Renovation of the public-private project or any part thereof.
- (5) Purchase of apparatus, supplies, materials, or equipment for the public-private project whether during or subsequent to the initial equipping of the project.
- (6) A good-faith effort to comply with G.S. 143-128.2, G.S. 143-128.4, and to recruit and select small business entities.

(d) The development contract may also provide that the governmental entity and private developer shall use the same contractor or contractors in constructing a portion of or the entire public-private project. If the development contract provides that the governmental entity and private developer shall use the same contractor, the development contract shall include provisions deemed appropriate by the governmental entity to assure that the public facility or facilities included in or added to the public-private project are constructed, reconstructed, repaired, or renovated at a reasonable price and that the apparatus, supplies, materials, and equipment purchased for the public facility or facilities included in the public-private project are purchased at a reasonable price. For public-private partnerships using the design-build project delivery method, the provisions of G.S. 143-128.1A shall apply.

(e) A private developer and its contractors shall make a good-faith effort to comply with G.S. 143-128.2, G.S. 143-128.4, and to recruit and select small business entities.

(f) A private developer may perform a portion of the construction or design work only if both of the following criteria apply:

- (1) A previously engaged contractor defaults, and a qualified replacement cannot be obtained after a good-faith effort has been made in a timely manner.

- (2) The governmental entity approves the private developer to perform the work.
- (g) The following bonding provisions apply to any development contract entered into under this section:
- (1) A payment bond shall be required for any development contract as follows: A payment bond in the amount of one hundred percent (100%) of the total anticipated amount of the construction contracts to be entered into between the private developer and the contractors to design or construct the improvements required by the development contract. The payment bond shall be conditioned upon the prompt payment for all labor or materials for which the private developer or one or more of its contractors or those contractors' subcontractors are liable. The payment bond shall be solely for the protection of the persons furnishing materials or performing labor or services for which the private developer or its contractors or subcontractors are liable. The total anticipated amount of the construction contracts shall be stated in the development contract and certified by the private developer as being a good-faith projection of its total costs for designing and constructing the improvements required by the development contract. The payment bond shall be executed by one or more surety companies legally authorized to do business in the State of North Carolina and shall become effective upon the awarding of the development contract. The development contract may provide for the requirement of a performance bond.
- (2) a. Subject to the provisions of this subsection, any claimant who has performed labor or furnished materials in the prosecution of the work required by any contract for which a payment bond has been given pursuant to the provisions of this subsection, and who has not been paid in full therefor before the expiration of 90 days after the day on which the claimant performed the last labor or furnished the last materials for which that claimant claims payment, may bring an action on the payment bond in that claimant's own name to recover any amount due to that claimant for the labor or materials and may prosecute the action to final judgment and have execution on the judgment.
- b. Any claimant who has a direct contractual relationship with any contractor or any subcontractor but has no contractual relationship, express or implied, with the private developer may bring an action on the payment bond only if that claimant has given written notice of claim on the payment bond to the private developer within 120 days from the date on which the claimant performed the last of the labor or furnished the last of the materials for which that claimant claims payment, in which that claimant states with substantial accuracy the amount claimed and the name of the person for whom the work was performed or to whom the material was furnished.
- c. The notice required by sub-subdivision b. of this subdivision shall be served by certified mail or by signature confirmation as provided by the United States Postal Service, postage prepaid, in an envelope addressed to the private developer at any place where that private developer's office is regularly maintained for the transaction of business or in any

manner provided by law for the service of summons. The claimants' service of a claim of lien on real property or a claim of lien on funds as funds as allowed by Article 2 of Chapter 44A of the General Statutes on the private developer shall be deemed, nonexclusively, as adequate notice under this section.

- (3) Every action on a payment bond as provided in this subsection shall be brought in a court of appropriate jurisdiction in a county where the development contract or any part thereof is to be or has been performed. Except as provided in G.S. 44A-16(c), no action on a payment bond shall be commenced after one year from the day on which the last of the labor was performed or material was furnished by the claimant.
- (4) No surety shall be liable under a payment bond for a total amount greater than the face amount of the payment bond. A judgment against any surety may be reduced or set aside upon motion by the surety and a showing that the total amount of claims paid and judgments previously rendered under the payment bond, together with the amount of the judgment to be reduced or set aside, exceeds the face amount of the bond.
- (5) No act of or agreement between the governmental entity, a private developer, or a surety shall reduce the period of time for giving notice under sub-subdivision (2)b. of this subsection or commencing action under subdivision (3) of this subsection or otherwise reduce or limit the liability of the private developer or surety as prescribed in this subsection. Every bond given by a private developer pursuant to this subsection shall be conclusively presumed to have been given in accordance with the provisions of this subsection, whether or not the bond is drawn as to conform to this subsection. The provisions of this subsection shall be conclusively presumed to have been written into every bond given pursuant to this subsection.
- (6) Any person entitled to bring an action or any defendant in an action on a payment bond shall have a right to require the governmental entity or the private developer to certify and furnish a copy of the payment bond, the development contract, and any construction contracts covered by the bond. It shall be the duty of the private developer or the governmental entity to give any such person a certified copy of the payment bond and the construction contract upon not less than 10 days' notice and request. The governmental entity or private developer may require a reasonable payment for the actual cost of furnishing the certified copy. A copy of any payment bond, development contract, and any construction contracts covered by the bond certified by the governmental entity or private developer shall constitute prima facie evidence of the contents, execution, and delivery of the bond, development contract, and construction contracts.
- (7) A payment bond form containing the following provisions shall comply with this subsection:
 - a. The date the bond is executed.
 - b. The name of the principal.
 - c. The name of the surety.
 - d. The governmental entity.
 - e. The development contract number.

- f. All of the following:
 - 1. "KNOW ALL MEN BY THESE PRESENTS, That we, the PRINCIPAL and SURETY above named, are held and firmly bound unto the above named [governmental entity], hereinafter called [governmental entity], in the penal sum of the amount stated above, for the payment of which sum well and truly to be made, we bind ourselves, our heirs, executors, administrators, and successors, jointly and severally, firmly by these presents."
 - 2. "THE CONDITION OF THIS OBLIGATION IS SUCH, that whereas the Principal entered into a certain development contract with [governmental entity], numbered as shown above and hereto attached."
 - 3. "NOW THEREFORE, if the Principal shall promptly make payment to all persons supplying labor and material in the prosecution of the construction or design work provided for in the development contract, and any and all duly authorized modifications of the contract that may hereafter be made, notice of which modifications to the surety being hereby waived, then this obligation to be void; otherwise to remain in full force and virtue."
 - 4. "IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the above bounden parties have executed this instrument under their several seals on the date indicated above, the name and corporate seal of each corporate party being hereto affixed and these presents duly signed by its undersigned representative, pursuant to authority of its governing body." Appropriate places for execution by the surety and principal shall be provided.
- (8) In any suit brought or defended under the provisions of this subsection, the presiding judge may allow reasonable attorneys' fees to the attorney representing the prevailing party. Attorneys' fees under this subdivision are to be taxed as part of the court costs and shall be payable by the losing party upon a finding that there was an unreasonable refusal by the losing party to fully resolve the matter which constituted the basis of the suit or the basis of the defense. For purposes of this subdivision, the term "prevailing party" means a party plaintiff or third-party plaintiff who obtains a judgment of at least fifty percent (50%) of the monetary amount sought in a claim or a party defendant or third-party defendant against whom a claim is asserted which results in a judgment of less than fifty percent (50%) of the amount sought in the claim defended. Notwithstanding the provisions of this subdivision, if an offer of judgment is served in accordance with G.S. 1A-1, Rule 68, a "prevailing party" is an offeree who obtains judgment in an amount more favorable than the last offer or is an offeror against whom judgment is rendered in an amount less favorable than the last offer.
- (9) The obligations and lien rights set forth in Article 2 of Chapter 44A of the General Statutes shall apply to a project awarded under this section to the extent of any property interests held by the private developer in the project. For

purposes of applying the provisions of Article 2 of Chapter 44A of the General Statutes, the private developer shall be deemed the owner to the extent of that private developer's ownership interest. This subdivision shall not be construed as making the provisions of Article 2 of Chapter 44A of the General Statutes apply to governmental entities or public buildings to the extent of any property interest held by the governmental entity in the building.

(h) The governmental entity shall determine its programming requirements for facilities to be constructed under this section and shall determine the form in which private developers may submit their qualifications. The governmental entity shall advertise a notice for interested private developers to submit qualifications in a newspaper having general circulation within the county in which the governmental entity is located. Prior to the submission of qualifications, the governmental entity shall make available, in whatever form it deems appropriate, the programming requirements for facilities included in the public-private project. Any private developer submitting qualifications shall include the following:

- (1) Evidence of financial stability. However, "trade secrets" as that term is defined in G.S. 66-152(3) shall be exempt from disclosure under Chapter 132 of the General Statutes.
- (2) Experience with similar projects.
- (3) Explanation of project team selection by either listing of licensed contractors, licensed subcontractors, and licensed design professionals whom the private developer proposes to use for the project's design and construction or a statement outlining a strategy for open contractor and subcontractor selection based upon the provisions of this Article.
- (4) Statement of availability to undertake the public-private project and projected time line for project completion.
- (5) Any other information required by the governmental entity.

(i) Based upon the qualifications package submitted by the private developers and any other information required by the governmental entity, the governmental entity may select one or more private developers with whom to negotiate the terms and conditions of a contract to perform the public-private project. The governmental entity shall advertise the terms of the proposed contract to be entered into by the governmental entity in a newspaper having general circulation within the county in which the governmental entity is located at least 30 days prior to entering into the development contract. If the governmental entity is a public body under Article 33C of this Chapter, the development contract shall be considered in an open meeting of that public body following a public hearing on the proposed development contract. Notice of the public hearing shall be published in the same notice as the advertisement of the terms under this subsection.

(j) The governmental entity shall make available a summary of the development contract terms which shall include a statement of how to obtain a copy of the complete development contract.

(k) Leases and other agreements entered into under this section are subject to approval as follows:

- (1) If a capital lease or operating lease is entered into by a unit of local government as defined in G.S. 159-7, that capital lease or operating lease is subject to approval by the local government commission under Article 8 of Chapter 159 of the General Statutes if it meets the standards set out in G.S. 159-148(a)(1), 159-148(a)(2), and 159-148(a)(3), 159-148(a)(4) or 159-153. For purposes of

determining whether the standards set out in G.S. 159-148(a)(3) have been met, only the five hundred thousand dollar (\$500,000) threshold applies.

- (2) If a capital lease or other agreement entered into by a State entity constitutes a State-supported financing arrangement and requires payments thereunder that are payable, whether directly or indirectly, and whether or not subject to the appropriation of funds for such payment, by payments from the General Fund of the State or other funds and accounts of the State that are funded from the general revenues and other taxes and fees of the State or State entities, not including taxes and fees that are required to be deposited to the Highway Fund or Highway Trust Fund to be used to make payments under capital leases or other agreements for projects covered under Article 14B of Chapter 136 of the General Statutes, that capital lease or other agreement shall be subject to the approval procedures required for special indebtedness by G.S. 142-83 and G.S. 142-84. This requirement shall not apply to any arrangement where bonds or other obligations are issued or incurred by a State entity to carry out a financing program authorized by the General Assembly under which such bonds or other obligations are payable from monies derived from specified, limited, nontax sources, so long as the payments under that arrangement by a State entity are limited to the sources authorized by the General Assembly.

(l) A capital lease or operating lease entered into under this section may not contain any provision with respect to the assignment of specific students or students from a specific area to any specific school.

(m) This section shall not apply to any contract or other agreement between or among The University of North Carolina or one of its constituent institutions, a private, nonprofit corporation established under Part 2B of Article 1 of Chapter 116 of the General Statutes, or any private foundation, private association, or private club created for the primary purpose of financial support to The University of North Carolina or one of its constituent institutions. (2013-401, s. 4; 2015-241, s. 31.11(a); 2021-58, s. 2(a).)

§ 143-128.2. Minority business participation goals.

(a) The State shall have a verifiable ten percent (10%) goal for participation by minority businesses in the total value of work for each State building project, including building projects done by a private entity on a facility to be leased or purchased by the State. A local government unit or other public or private entity that receives State appropriations for a building project or other State grant funds for a building project, including a building project done by a private entity on a facility to be leased or purchased by the local government unit, where the project cost is one hundred thousand dollars (\$100,000) or more, shall have a verifiable ten percent (10%) goal for participation by minority businesses in the total value of the work; provided, however, a local government unit may apply a different verifiable goal that was adopted prior to December 1, 2001, if the local government unit had and continues to have a sufficiently strong basis in evidence to justify the use of that goal. On State building projects and building projects subject to the State goal requirement, the Secretary shall identify the appropriate percentage goal, based on adequate data, for each category of minority business as defined in G.S. 143-128.2(g)(1) based on the specific contract type.

Except as otherwise provided for in this subsection, each city, county, or other local public entity shall adopt, after a notice and public hearing, an appropriate verifiable percentage goal for participation by minority businesses in the total value of work for building projects.

Each entity required to have verifiable percentage goals under this subsection shall make a good faith effort to recruit minority participation in accordance with this section or G.S. 143-131(b), as applicable.

(b) A public entity shall establish prior to solicitation of bids the good faith efforts that it will take to make it feasible for minority businesses to submit successful bids or proposals for the contracts for building projects. Public entities shall make good faith efforts as set forth in subsection (e) of this section. Public entities shall require contractors to make good faith efforts pursuant to subsection (f) of this section. Each first-tier subcontractor on a construction management at risk project shall comply with the requirements applicable to contractors under this subsection.

(c) Each bidder, which shall mean first-tier subcontractor for construction manager at risk projects for purposes of this subsection, on a project bid under any of the methods authorized under G.S. 143-128(a1) shall identify on its bid the minority businesses that it will use on the project and an affidavit listing the good faith efforts it has made pursuant to subsection (f) of this section and the total dollar value of the bid that will be performed by the minority businesses. A contractor, including a first-tier subcontractor on a construction manager at risk project, that performs all of the work under a contract with its own workforce may submit an affidavit to that effect in lieu of the affidavit otherwise required under this subsection. The apparent lowest responsible, responsive bidder shall also file the following:

- (1) Within the time specified in the bid documents, either:
 - a. An affidavit that includes a description of the portion of work to be executed by minority businesses, expressed as a percentage of the total contract price, which is equal to or more than the applicable goal. An affidavit under this sub-subdivision shall give rise to a presumption that the bidder has made the required good faith or effort; or
 - b. Documentation of its good faith effort to meet the goal. The documentation must include evidence of all good faith efforts that were implemented, including any advertisements, solicitations, and evidence of other specific actions demonstrating recruitment and selection of minority businesses for participation in the contract.
- (2) Within 30 days after award of the contract, a list of all identified subcontractors that the contractor will use on the project.

Failure to file a required affidavit or documentation that demonstrates that the contractor made the required good faith effort is grounds for rejection of the bid.

(d) No subcontractor who is identified and listed pursuant to subsection (c) of this section may be replaced with a different subcontractor except:

- (1) If the subcontractor's bid is later determined by the contractor or construction manager at risk to be nonresponsible or nonresponsive, or the listed subcontractor refuses to enter into a contract for the complete performance of the bid work, or
- (2) With the approval of the public entity for good cause.

Good faith efforts as set forth in G.S. 143-131(b) shall apply to the selection of a substitute subcontractor. Prior to substituting a subcontractor, the contractor shall identify the substitute subcontractor and inform the public entity of its good faith efforts pursuant to G.S. 143-131(b).

(e) Before awarding a contract, a public entity shall do the following:

- (1) Develop and implement a minority business participation outreach plan to identify minority businesses that can perform public building projects and to implement outreach efforts to encourage minority business participation in these projects to include education, recruitment, and interaction between minority businesses and nonminority businesses.
- (2) Attend the scheduled prebid conference.
- (3) At least 10 days prior to the scheduled day of bid opening, notify minority businesses that have requested notices from the public entity for public construction or repair work and minority businesses that otherwise indicated to the Office of Historically Underutilized Businesses an interest in the type of work being bid or the potential contracting opportunities listed in the proposal. The notification shall include the following:
 - a. A description of the work for which the bid is being solicited.
 - b. The date, time, and location where bids are to be submitted.
 - c. The name of the individual within the public entity who will be available to answer questions about the project.
 - d. Where bid documents may be reviewed.
 - e. Any special requirements that may exist.
- (4) Utilize other media, as appropriate, likely to inform potential minority businesses of the bid being sought.

(f) A public entity shall require bidders to undertake the following good faith efforts to the extent required by the Secretary on projects subject to this section. The Secretary shall adopt rules establishing points to be awarded for taking each effort and the minimum number of points required, depending on project size, cost, type, and other factors considered relevant by the Secretary. In establishing the point system, the Secretary may not require a contractor to earn more than fifty (50) points, and the Secretary must assign each of the efforts listed in subdivisions (1) through (10) of this subsection at least 10 points. The public entity may require that additional good faith efforts be taken, as indicated in its bid specifications. Good faith efforts include:

- (1) Contacting minority businesses that reasonably could have been expected to submit a quote and that were known to the contractor or available on State or local government maintained lists at least 10 days before the bid or proposal date and notifying them of the nature and scope of the work to be performed.
- (2) Making the construction plans, specifications and requirements available for review by prospective minority businesses, or providing these documents to them at least 10 days before the bid or proposals are due.
- (3) Breaking down or combining elements of work into economically feasible units to facilitate minority participation.
- (4) Working with minority trade, community, or contractor organizations identified by the Office of Historically Underutilized Businesses and included in the bid documents that provide assistance in recruitment of minority businesses.
- (5) Attending any prebid meetings scheduled by the public owner.

- (6) Providing assistance in getting required bonding or insurance or providing alternatives to bonding or insurance for subcontractors.
 - (7) Negotiating in good faith with interested minority businesses and not rejecting them as unqualified without sound reasons based on their capabilities. Any rejection of a minority business based on lack of qualification should have the reasons documented in writing.
 - (8) Providing assistance to an otherwise qualified minority business in need of equipment, loan capital, lines of credit, or joint pay agreements to secure loans, supplies, or letters of credit, including waiving credit that is ordinarily required. Assisting minority businesses in obtaining the same unit pricing with the bidder's suppliers in order to help minority businesses in establishing credit.
 - (9) Negotiating joint venture and partnership arrangements with minority businesses in order to increase opportunities for minority business participation on a public construction or repair project when possible.
 - (10) Providing quick pay agreements and policies to enable minority contractors and suppliers to meet cash-flow demands.
- (g) As used in this section:
- (1) The term "minority business" means a business:
 - a. In which at least fifty-one percent (51%) is owned by one or more minority persons or socially and economically disadvantaged individuals, or in the case of a corporation, in which at least fifty-one percent (51%) of the stock is owned by one or more minority persons or socially and economically disadvantaged individuals; and
 - b. Of which the management and daily business operations are controlled by one or more of the minority persons or socially and economically disadvantaged individuals who own it.
 - (2) The term "minority person" means a person who is a citizen or lawful permanent resident of the United States and who is:
 - a. Black, that is, a person having origins in any of the black racial groups in Africa;
 - b. Hispanic, that is, a person of Spanish or Portuguese culture with origins in Mexico, South or Central America, or the Caribbean Islands, regardless of race;
 - c. Asian American, that is, a person having origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia and Asia, the Indian subcontinent, or the Pacific Islands;
 - d. American Indian, that is, a person having origins in any of the original Indian peoples of North America; or
 - e. Female.
 - (3) The term "socially and economically disadvantaged individual" means the same as defined in 15 U.S.C. 637.

(h) The State, counties, municipalities, and all other public bodies shall award public building contracts, including those awarded under G.S. 143-128.1, 143-129, and 143-131, without regard to race, religion, color, creed, national origin, sex, age, or handicapping condition, as defined in G.S. 168A-3. Nothing in this section shall be construed to require contractors or awarding authorities to award contracts or subcontracts to or to make purchases of materials or

equipment from minority-business contractors or minority-business subcontractors who do not submit the lowest responsible, responsive bid or bids.

(i) Notwithstanding G.S. 132-3 and G.S. 121-5, all public records created pursuant to this section shall be maintained by the public entity for a period of not less than three years from the date of the completion of the building project.

(j) Except as provided in subsections (a), (g), (h) and (i) of this section, this section shall only apply to building projects costing three hundred thousand dollars (\$300,000) or more. This section shall not apply to the purchase and erection of prefabricated or relocatable buildings or portions thereof, except that portion of the work which must be performed at the construction site. (2001-496, s. 3.1.)

§ 143-128.3. Minority business participation administration.

(a) All public entities subject to G.S. 143-128.2 shall report to the Department of Administration, Office of Historically Underutilized Business, the following with respect to each building project:

- (1) The verifiable percentage goal.
- (2) The type and total dollar value of the project, minority business utilization by minority business category, trade, total dollar value of contracts awarded to each minority group for each project, the applicable good faith effort guidelines or rules used to recruit minority business participation, and good faith documentation accepted by the public entity from the successful bidder.
- (3) The utilization of minority businesses under the various construction methods under G.S. 143-128(a1).

The reports shall be in the format and contain the data prescribed by the Secretary of Administration. The University of North Carolina and the State Board of Community Colleges shall report quarterly and all other public entities shall report semiannually. The Secretary of the Department of Administration shall make reports every six months to the Joint Legislative Committee on Governmental Operations and the Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on General Government on information reported pursuant to this subsection.

(b) A public entity that has been notified by the Secretary of its failure to comply with G.S. 143-128.2 on a project shall develop a plan of compliance that addresses the deficiencies identified by the Secretary. The corrective plan shall apply to the current project or to subsequent projects under G.S. 143-128, as appropriate, provided that the plan must be implemented, at a minimum, on the current project to the extent feasible. If the public entity, after notification from the Secretary, fails to file a corrective plan, or if the public entity does not implement the corrective plan in accordance with its terms, the Secretary shall require one or both of the following:

- (1) That the public entity consult with the Department of Administration, Office of Historically Underutilized Businesses on the development of a new corrective plan, subject to the approval of the Department and the Attorney General. The public entity may designate a representative to appear on its behalf, provided that the representative has managerial responsibility for the construction project.
- (2) That the public entity not bid another contract under G.S. 143-128 without prior review by the Department and the Attorney General of a good faith compliance plan developed pursuant to subdivision (1) of this subsection. The public entity shall be subject to the review and approval of its good faith compliance plan

under this subdivision with respect to any projects bid pursuant to G.S. 143-128 during a period of time determined by the Secretary, not to exceed one year.

A public entity aggrieved by the decision of the Secretary may file a contested case proceeding under Chapter 150B of the General Statutes.

(c) The Secretary shall study and recommend to the Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on General Government and other State agencies ways to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the State capital facilities development, minority business participation program and good faith efforts in utilizing minority businesses as set forth in G.S. 143-128.2, and other appropriate good faith efforts that may result in the increased utilization of minority businesses.

(d) The Secretary shall appoint an advisory board to develop recommendations to improve the recruitment and utilization of minority businesses. The Secretary, with the input of its advisory board, shall review the State's programs for promoting the recruitment and utilization of minority businesses involved in State capital projects and shall recommend to the Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on General Government, the State Construction Office, The University of North Carolina, and the community colleges system changes in the terms and conditions of State laws, rules, and policies that will enhance opportunities for utilization of minority businesses on these projects. The Secretary shall provide guidance to these agencies on identifying types of projects likely to attract increased participation by minority businesses and breaking down or combining elements of work into economically feasible units to facilitate minority business participation.

(e) The Secretary shall adopt rules for State entities, The University of North Carolina, and community colleges and shall adopt guidelines for local government units to implement the provisions of G.S. 143-128.2.

(e1) Repealed by Session Laws 2007-392, s. 3, effective October 1, 2007.

(f) The Secretary shall provide the following information to the Attorney General:

- (1) Failure by a public entity to report data to the Secretary in accordance with this section.
- (2) Upon the request of the Attorney General, any data or other information collected under this section.
- (3) False statements knowingly provided in any affidavit or documentation under G.S. 143-128.2 to the State or other public entity. Public entities shall provide to the Secretary information concerning any false information knowingly provided to the public entity pursuant to G.S. 143-128.2.

(g) Annually, on or before September 1, beginning September 1, 2022, the Secretary shall report findings and recommendations, as required under this section, to the Joint Legislative Committee on Governmental Operations and the Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on General Government and shall post the report findings and recommendations on the Department's website. (2001-496, s. 3.6; 2005-270, s. 2; 2007-392, s. 3; 2021-180, s. 37.1(c).)

§ 143-128.4. Historically underutilized business defined; statewide uniform certification.

(a) As used in this Chapter, the term "historically underutilized business" means a business that meets all of the following conditions:

- (1) At least fifty-one percent (51%) of the business is owned by one or more persons who are members of at least one of the groups set forth in subsection (b) of this section, or in the case of a corporation, at least fifty-one percent (51%) of

the stock is owned by one or more persons who are members of at least one of the groups set forth in subsection (b) of this section.

- (2) The management and daily business operations are controlled by one or more owners of the business who are members of at least one of the groups set forth in subsection (b) of this section.

(a1) As used in this Chapter, the term "minority business" means a historically underutilized business.

(b) To qualify as a historically underutilized business under this section, a business must be owned and controlled as set forth in subsection (a) of this section by one or more citizens or lawful permanent residents of the United States who are members of one or more of the following groups:

- (1) Black. – A person having origins in any of the black racial groups of Africa.
- (2) Hispanic. – A person of Spanish or Portuguese culture having origins in Mexico, South or Central America, or the Caribbean islands, regardless of race.
- (3) Asian American. – A person having origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia, Asia, Indian continent, or Pacific islands.
- (4) American Indian. – A person having origins in any of the original Indian peoples of North America.
- (5) Female.
- (6) Disabled. – A person with a disability as defined in G.S. 168-1 or G.S. 168A-3.
- (7) Disadvantaged. – A person who is socially and economically disadvantaged as defined in 15 U.S.C. § 637.

(c) In addition to the powers and duties provided in G.S. 143-49, the Secretary of Administration shall have the power, authority, and duty to:

- (1) Develop and administer a statewide uniform program for: (i) the certification of a historically underutilized business, as defined in this section, for use by State departments, agencies, and institutions, and political subdivisions of the State; and (ii) the creation and maintenance of a database of the businesses certified as historically underutilized businesses.
- (2) Adopt rules and procedures for the statewide uniform certification of historically underutilized businesses.
- (3) Provide for the certification of all businesses designated as historically underutilized businesses to be used by State departments, agencies, and institutions, and political subdivisions of the State.

(d) The Secretary of Administration shall seek input from State departments, agencies, and institutions, political subdivisions of the State, and any other entity deemed appropriate to determine the qualifications and criteria for statewide uniform certification of historically underutilized businesses.

(e) Only businesses certified in accordance with this section shall be considered by State departments, agencies, and institutions, and political subdivisions of the State as historically underutilized businesses for minority business participation purposes under this Chapter. (2005-270, s. 3; 2007-392, s. 4; 2009-243, s. 3.)

§ 143-129. Procedure for letting of public contracts.

(a) Bidding Required. – No construction or repair work requiring the estimated expenditure of public money in an amount equal to or more than five hundred thousand dollars (\$500,000) or purchase of apparatus, supplies, materials, or equipment requiring an estimated

expenditure of public money in an amount equal to or more than ninety thousand dollars (\$90,000) may be performed, nor may any contract be awarded therefor, by any board or governing body of the State, or of any institution of the State government, or of any political subdivision of the State, unless the provisions of this section are complied with; provided that The University of North Carolina and its constituent institutions may award contracts for construction or repair work that requires an estimated expenditure of less than five hundred thousand dollars (\$500,000) without complying with the provisions of this section.

For purchases of apparatus, supplies, materials, or equipment, the governing body of any political subdivision of the State may, subject to any restriction as to dollar amount, or other conditions that the governing body elects to impose, delegate to the manager, school superintendent, chief purchasing official, or other employee the authority to award contracts, reject bids, or readvertise to receive bids on behalf of the unit. Any person to whom authority is delegated under this subsection shall comply with the requirements of this Article that would otherwise apply to the governing body.

(b) Advertisement and Letting of Contracts. – Where the contract is to be let by a board or governing body of the State government or of a State institution, proposals shall be invited by advertisement in a newspaper having general circulation in the State of North Carolina. Where the contract is to be let by a political subdivision of the State, proposals shall be invited by advertisement in a newspaper having general circulation in the political subdivision or by electronic means, or both. A decision to advertise solely by electronic means, whether for particular contracts or generally for all contracts that are subject to this Article, shall be approved by the governing board of the political subdivision of the State at a regular meeting of the board.

The advertisements for bidders required by this section shall appear at a time where at least seven full days shall lapse between the date on which the notice appears and the date of the opening of bids. The advertisement shall: (i) state the time and place where plans and specifications of proposed work or a complete description of the apparatus, supplies, materials, or equipment may be had; (ii) state the time and place for opening of the proposals; and (iii) reserve to the board or governing body the right to reject any or all proposals.

Proposals may be rejected for any reason determined by the board or governing body to be in the best interest of the unit. However, the proposal shall not be rejected for the purpose of evading the provisions of this Article. No board or governing body of the State or political subdivision thereof may assume responsibility for construction or purchase contracts, or guarantee the payments of labor or materials therefor except under provisions of this Article.

All proposals shall be opened in public and the board or governing body shall award the contract to the lowest responsible bidder or bidders, taking into consideration quality, performance and the time specified in the proposals for the performance of the contract.

In the event the lowest responsible bids are in excess of the funds available for the project or purchase, the responsible board or governing body is authorized to enter into negotiations with the lowest responsible bidder above mentioned, making reasonable changes in the plans and specifications as may be necessary to bring the contract price within the funds available, and may award a contract to such bidder upon recommendation of the Department of Administration in the case of the State government or of a State institution or agency, or upon recommendation of the responsible commission, council or board in the case of a subdivision of the State, if such bidder will agree to perform the work or provide the apparatus, supplies, materials, or equipment at the negotiated price within the funds available therefor. If a contract cannot be let under the above conditions, the board or governing body is authorized to readvertise, as herein provided, after

having made such changes in plans and specifications as may be necessary to bring the cost of the project or purchase within the funds available therefor. The procedure above specified may be repeated if necessary in order to secure an acceptable contract within the funds available therefor.

No proposal for construction or repair work may be considered or accepted by said board or governing body unless at the time of its filing the same shall be accompanied by a deposit with said board or governing body of cash, or a cashier's check, or a certified check on some bank or trust company insured by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation in an amount equal to not less than five percent (5%) of the proposal. In lieu of making the cash deposit as above provided, such bidder may file a bid bond executed by a corporate surety licensed under the laws of North Carolina to execute such bonds, conditioned that the surety will upon demand forthwith make payment to the obligee upon said bond if the bidder fails to execute the contract in accordance with the bid bond. This deposit shall be retained if the successful bidder fails to execute the contract within 10 days after the award or fails to give satisfactory surety as required herein.

Bids shall be sealed and the opening of an envelope or package with knowledge that it contains a bid or the disclosure or exhibition of the contents of any bid by anyone without the permission of the bidder prior to the time set for opening in the invitation to bid shall constitute a Class 1 misdemeanor.

(c) Contract Execution and Security. – All contracts to which this section applies shall be executed in writing. The board or governing body shall require the person to whom the award of a contract for construction or repair work is made to furnish bond as required by Article 3 of Chapter 44A; or require a deposit of money, certified check or government securities for the full amount of said contract to secure the faithful performance of the terms of said contract and the payment of all sums due for labor and materials in a manner consistent with Article 3 of Chapter 44A; and the contract shall not be altered except by written agreement of the contractor and the board or governing body. The surety bond or deposit required herein shall be deposited with the board or governing body for which the work is to be performed. When a deposit, other than a surety bond, is made with the board or governing body, the board or governing body assumes all the liabilities, obligations and duties of a surety as provided in Article 3 of Chapter 44A to the extent of said deposit.

The owning agency or the Department of Administration, in contracts involving a State agency, and the owning agency or the governing board, in contracts involving a political subdivision of the State, may reject the bonds of any surety company against which there is pending any unsettled claim or complaint made by a State agency or the owning agency or governing board of any political subdivision of the State arising out of any contract under which State funds, in contracts with the State, or funds of political subdivisions of the State, in contracts with such political subdivision, were expended, provided such claim or complaint has been pending more than 180 days.

(d) Use of Unemployment Relief Labor. – Nothing in this section shall operate so as to require any public agency to enter into a contract which will prevent the use of unemployment relief labor paid for in whole or in part by appropriations or funds furnished by the State or federal government.

(e) Exceptions. – The requirements of this Article do not apply to:

- (1) The purchase, lease, or other acquisition of any apparatus, supplies, materials, or equipment from: (i) the United States of America or any agency thereof; or (ii) any other government unit or agency thereof within the United States. The Secretary of Administration or the governing board of any political subdivision

of the State may designate any officer or employee of the State or political subdivision to enter a bid or bids in its behalf at any sale of apparatus, supplies, materials, equipment, or other property owned by: (i) the United States of America or any agency thereof; or (ii) any other governmental unit or agency thereof within the United States. The Secretary of Administration or the governing board of any political subdivision of the State may authorize the officer or employee to make any partial or down payment or payment in full that may be required by regulations of the governmental unit or agency disposing of the property.

- (2) Cases of special emergency involving the health and safety of the people or their property.
- (3) Purchases made through a competitive bidding group purchasing program, which is a formally organized program that offers competitively obtained purchasing services at discount prices to two or more public agencies.
- (4) Construction or repair work undertaken during the progress of a construction or repair project initially begun pursuant to this section.
- (5) Purchase of gasoline, diesel fuel, alcohol fuel, motor oil, fuel oil, or natural gas. These purchases are subject to G.S. 143-131.
- (6) Purchases of apparatus, supplies, materials, or equipment when: (i) performance or price competition for a product are not available; (ii) a needed product is available from only one source of supply; or (iii) standardization or compatibility is the overriding consideration. Notwithstanding any other provision of this section, the governing board of a political subdivision of the State shall approve the purchases listed in the preceding sentence prior to the award of the contract.

In the case of purchases by hospitals, in addition to the other exceptions in this subsection, the provisions of this Article shall not apply when: (i) a particular medical item or prosthetic appliance is needed; (ii) a particular product is ordered by an attending physician for his patients; (iii) additional products are needed to complete an ongoing job or task; (iv) products are purchased for "over-the-counter" resale; (v) a particular product is needed or desired for experimental, developmental, or research work; or (vi) equipment is already installed, connected, and in service under a lease or other agreement and the governing body of the hospital determines that the equipment should be purchased. The governing body of a hospital shall keep a record of all purchases made pursuant to this subdivision. These records are subject to public inspection.

- (7) Purchases of information technology through contracts established by the Department of Information Technology as provided in Article 15 of Chapter 143B of the General Statutes.
- (8) Guaranteed energy savings contracts, which are governed by Article 3B of Chapter 143 of the General Statutes.
- (9) Purchases from contracts established by the State or any agency of the State, if the contractor is willing to extend to a political subdivision of the State the same or more favorable prices, terms, and conditions as established in the State contract.

- (9a) Purchases of apparatus, supplies, materials, or equipment from contracts established by the United States of America or any federal agency, if the contractor is willing to extend to a political subdivision of the State the same or more favorable prices, terms, and conditions as established in the federal contract.
- (10) Purchase of used apparatus, supplies, materials, or equipment. For purposes of this subdivision, remanufactured, refabricated or demo apparatus, supplies, materials, or equipment are not included in the exception. A demo item is one that is used for demonstration and is sold by the manufacturer or retailer at a discount.
- (11) Contracts by a public entity with a construction manager at risk executed pursuant to G.S. 143-128.1.
- (12) Build-to-suit capital leases with a private developer under G.S. 115C-532.
- (f) Repealed by Session Laws 2001-328, s. 1, effective August 2, 2001.
- (g) Waiver of Bidding for Previously Bid Contracts. – When the governing board of any political subdivision of the State, or the person to whom authority has been delegated under subsection (a) of this section, determines that it is in the best interest of the unit, the requirements of this section may be waived for the purchase of apparatus, supplies, materials, or equipment from any person or entity that has, within the previous 12 months, after having completed a public, formal bid process substantially similar to that required by this Article, contracted to furnish the apparatus, supplies, materials, or equipment to:
 - (1) The United States of America or any federal agency;
 - (2) The State of North Carolina or any agency or political subdivision of the State; or
 - (3) Any other state or any agency or political subdivision of that state, if the person or entity is willing to furnish the items at the same or more favorable prices, terms, and conditions as those provided under the contract with the other unit or agency. Notwithstanding any other provision of this section, any purchase made under this subsection shall be approved by the governing body of the purchasing political subdivision of the State at a regularly scheduled meeting of the governing body no fewer than 10 days after publication of notice that a waiver of the bid procedure will be considered in order to contract with a qualified supplier pursuant to this section. Notice may be published in a newspaper having general circulation in the political subdivision or by electronic means, or both. A decision to publish notice solely by electronic means for a particular contract or for all contracts under this subsection shall be approved by the governing board of the political subdivision. Rules issued by the Secretary of Administration pursuant to G.S. 143-49(6) shall apply with respect to participation in State term contracts.
- (h) Transportation Authority Purchases. – Notwithstanding any other provision of this section, any board or governing body of any regional public transportation authority, hereafter referred to as a "RPTA," created pursuant to Article 26 of Chapter 160A of the General Statutes, or a regional transportation authority, hereafter referred to as a "RTA," created pursuant to Article 27 of Chapter 160A of the General Statutes, may approve the entering into of any contract for the purchase, lease, or other acquisition of any apparatus, supplies, materials, or equipment without

competitive bidding and without meeting the requirements of subsection (b) of this section if the following procurement by competitive proposal (Request for Proposal) method is followed.

The competitive proposal method of procurement is normally conducted with more than one source submitting an offer or proposal. Either a fixed price or cost reimbursement type contract is awarded. This method of procurement is generally used when conditions are not appropriate for the use of sealed bids. If this procurement method is used, all of the following requirements apply:

- (1) Requests for proposals shall be publicized. All evaluation factors shall be identified along with their relative importance.
- (2) Proposals shall be solicited from an adequate number of qualified sources.
- (3) RPTAs or RTAs shall have a method in place for conducting technical evaluations of proposals received and selecting awardees, with the goal of promoting fairness and competition without requiring strict adherence to specifications or price in determining the most advantageous proposal.
- (4) The award may be based upon initial proposals without further discussion or negotiation or, in the discretion of the evaluators, discussions or negotiations may be conducted either with all offerors or with those offerors determined to be within the competitive range, and one or more revised proposals or a best and final offer may be requested of all remaining offerors. The details and deficiencies of an offeror's proposal may not be disclosed to other offerors during any period of negotiation or discussion.
- (5) The award shall be made to the responsible firm whose proposal is most advantageous to the RPTA's or the RTA's program with price and other factors considered.

The contents of the proposals shall not be public records until 14 days before the award of the contract.

The board or governing body of the RPTA or the RTA shall, at the regularly scheduled meeting, by formal motion make findings of fact that the procurement by competitive proposal (Request for Proposals) method of procuring the particular apparatus, supplies, materials, or equipment is the most appropriate acquisition method prior to the issuance of the requests for proposals and shall by formal motion certify that the requirements of this subsection have been followed before approving the contract.

Nothing in this subsection subjects a procurement by competitive proposal under this subsection to G.S. 143-49, 143-52, or 143-53.

RPTAs and RTAs may adopt regulations to implement this subsection.

(i) Procedure for Letting of Public Contracts. – The Department of Transportation ("DOT") and the Department of Administration ("DOA") shall monitor all projects in those agencies that are let without a performance or payment bond to determine the number of defaults on those projects, the cost to complete each defaulted project, and each project's contract price. Beginning March 1, 2011, and annually thereafter, DOT and DOA shall report this information to the Joint Legislative Committee on Governmental Operations.

(j) [Use of E-Verify Required. –] No contract subject to this section may be awarded by any board or governing body of the State, institution of State government, or any political subdivision of the State unless the contractor and the contractor's subcontractors comply with the requirements of Article 2 of Chapter 64 of the General Statutes. (1931, c. 338, s. 1; 1933, c. 50; c. 400, s. 1; 1937, c. 355; 1945, c. 144; 1949, c. 257; 1951, c. 1104, ss. 1, 2; 1953, c. 1268; 1955, c. 1049; 1957, c. 269, s. 3; c. 391; c. 862, ss. 1-4; 1959, c. 392, s. 1; c. 910, s. 1; 1961, c. 1226; 1965, c.

841, s. 2; 1967, c. 860; 1971, c. 847; 1973, c. 1194, s. 2; 1975, c. 879, s. 46; 1977, c. 619, ss. 1, 2; 1979, c. 182, s. 1; 1979, 2nd Sess., c. 1081; 1981, c. 346, s. 1; c. 754, s. 1; 1985, c. 145, ss. 1, 2; 1987, c. 590; 1987 (Reg. Sess., 1988), c. 1108, ss. 7, 8; 1989, c. 350; 1993, c. 539, s. 1007; 1994, Ex. Sess., c. 24, s. 14(c); 1995, c. 367, s. 6; 1997-174, ss. 1-4; 1998-185, s. 1; 1998-217, s. 16; 2001-328, s. 1; 2001-487, s. 88; 2001-496, ss. 4, 5; 2005-227, s. 1; 2006-232, s. 2; 2007-94, s. 1; 2007-322, s. 4; 2007-446, s. 6; 2010-148, s. 1.2; 2011-234, s. 1; 2013-418, s. 2(c); 2015-241, s. 7A.4(s); 2017-81, s. 1; 2021-80, s. 2.8.)

§ 143-129.1. Withdrawal of bid.

A public agency may allow a bidder submitting a bid pursuant to G.S. 143-129 for construction or repair work or for the purchase of apparatus, supplies, materials, or equipment to withdraw his bid from consideration after the bid opening without forfeiture of his bid security if the price bid was based upon a mistake, which constituted a substantial error, provided the bid was submitted in good faith, and the bidder submits credible evidence that the mistake was clerical in nature as opposed to a judgment error, and was actually due to an unintentional and substantial arithmetic error or an unintentional omission of a substantial quantity of work, labor, apparatus, supplies, materials, equipment, or services made directly in the compilation of the bid, which unintentional arithmetic error or unintentional omission can be clearly shown by objective evidence drawn from inspection of the original work papers, documents or materials used in the preparation of the bid sought to be withdrawn. A request to withdraw a bid must be made in writing to the public agency which invited the proposals for the work prior to the award of the contract, but not later than 72 hours after the opening of bids, or for a longer period as may be specified in the instructions to bidders provided prior to the opening of bids.

If a request to withdraw a bid has been made in accordance with the provisions of this section, action on the remaining bids shall be considered, in accordance with North Carolina G.S. 143-129, as though said bid had not been received. Notwithstanding the foregoing, such bid shall be deemed to have been received for the purpose of complying with the requirements of G.S. 143-132. If the work or purchase is relet for bids, under no circumstances may the bidder who has filed a request to withdraw be permitted to rebid the work or purchase.

If a bidder files a request to withdraw his bid, the agency shall promptly hold a hearing thereon. The agency shall give to the withdrawing bidder reasonable notice of the time and place of any such hearing. The bidder, either in person or through counsel, may appear at the hearing and present any additional facts and arguments in support of his request to withdraw his bid. The agency shall issue a written ruling allowing or denying the request to withdraw within five days after the hearing. If the agency finds that the price bid was based upon a mistake of the type described in the first paragraph of this section, then the agency shall issue a ruling permitting the bidder to withdraw without forfeiture of the bidder's security. If the agency finds that the price bid was based upon a mistake not of the type described in the first paragraph of this section, then the agency shall issue a ruling denying the request to withdraw and requiring the forfeiture of the bidder's security. A denial by the agency of the request to withdraw a bid shall have the same effect as if an award had been made to the bidder and a refusal by the bidder to accept had been made, or as if there had been a refusal to enter into the contract, and the bidder's bid deposit or bid bond shall be forfeited.

In the event said ruling denies the request to withdraw the bid, the bidder shall have the right, within 20 days after receipt of said ruling, to contest the matter by the filing of a civil action in any court of competent jurisdiction of the State of North Carolina. The procedure shall be the same as

in all civil actions except all issues of law and fact and every other issue shall be tried de novo by the judge without jury; provided that the matter may be referred in the instances and in the manner provided for by North Carolina G.S. 1A-1, Rule 53, as amended. Notwithstanding the foregoing, if the public agency involved is the Department of Administration, it may follow its normal rules and regulations with respect to contested matters, as opposed to following the administrative procedures set forth herein. If it is finally determined that the bidder did not have the right to withdraw his bid pursuant to the provisions of this section, the bidder's security shall be forfeited. Every bid bond or bid deposit given by a bidder to a public agency pursuant to G.S. 143-129 shall be conclusively presumed to have been given in accordance with this section, whether or not it be so drawn as to conform to this section. This section shall be conclusively presumed to have been written into every bid bond given pursuant to G.S. 143-129.

Neither the agency nor any elected or appointed official, employee, representative or agent of such agency shall incur any liability or surcharge, in the absence of fraud or collusion, by permitting the withdrawal of a bid pursuant to the provisions of this section.

No withdrawal of the bid which would result in the award of the contract on another bid of the same bidder, his partner, or to a corporation or business venture owned by or in which he has an interest shall be permitted. No bidder who is permitted to withdraw a bid shall supply any material or labor to, or perform any subcontract or work agreement for, any person to whom a contract or subcontract is awarded in the performance of the contract for which the withdrawn bid was submitted, without the prior written approval of the agency. Whoever violates the provisions of the foregoing sentence shall be guilty of a Class 1 misdemeanor. (1977, c. 617, s. 1; 1993, c. 539, s. 1008; 1994, Ex. Sess., c. 24, s. 14(c); 2001-328, s. 2.)

§ 143-129.2. Construction, design, and operation of solid waste management and sludge management facilities.

(a) All terms relating to solid waste management and disposal as used in this section shall be defined as set forth in G.S. 130A-290, except that the term "unit of local government" also includes a sanitary district created under Part 2 of Article 2 of Chapter 130A of the General Statutes, an authority created under Article 1 of Chapter 162A of the General Statutes, a metropolitan sewerage district created under Article 5 of Chapter 162A of the General Statutes, and a county water and sewer district created under Article 6 of Chapter 162A of the General Statutes. As used in this section, the term "sludge management facility" means a facility that processes sludge that has been generated by a municipal wastewater treatment plant for final end use or disposal but does not include any component of a wastewater treatment process or facility that generates sludge.

(b) To acknowledge the highly complex and innovative nature of solid waste and sludge management technologies for processing mixed solid waste and sludge generated by water and wastewater treatment facilities, the relatively limited availability of existing and proven proprietary technology involving solid waste and sludge management facilities, the desirability of a single point of responsibility for the development of facilities and the economic and technical utility of contracts for solid waste and sludge management which include in their scope combinations of design, construction, operation, management and maintenance responsibilities over prolonged periods of time and that in some instances it may be beneficial to a unit of local government to award a contract on the basis of factors other than cost alone, including but not limited to facility design, operational experience, system reliability, energy production efficiency, long-term operational costs, compatibility with source separation and other recycling systems,

environmental impact and operational guarantees. Accordingly, and notwithstanding other provisions of this Article or any local law, a contract entered into between a unit of local government and any person pursuant to this section may be awarded in accordance with the following provisions for the award of a contract based upon an evaluation of proposals submitted in response to a request for proposals prepared by or for a unit of local government.

(c) The unit of local government shall require in its request for proposals that each proposal to be submitted shall include all of the following:

- (1) Information relating to the experience of the proposer on the basis of which said proposer purports to be qualified to carry out all work required by a proposed contract; the ability of the proposer to secure adequate financing; and proposals for project staffing, implementation of work tasks, and the carrying out of all responsibilities required by a proposed contract.
- (2) A proposal clearly identifying and specifying all elements of cost which would become charges to the unit of local government, in whatever form, in return for the fulfillment by the proposer of all tasks and responsibilities established by the request for the proposal for the full lifetime of a proposed contract, including, as appropriate, but not limited to, the cost of planning, design, construction, operation, management and/or maintenance of any facility; provided, that the unit of local government may prescribe the form and content of the proposal and that, in any event, the proposer must submit sufficiently detailed information to permit a fair and equitable evaluation of the proposal.
- (3) Any other information as the unit of local government may determine to have a material bearing on its ability to evaluate any proposal in accordance with this section.

(d) Proposals received in response to a request for proposals may be evaluated on the basis of a technical analysis of facility design, operational experience of the technology to be utilized in the proposed facility, system reliability and availability, energy production balance and efficiency, environmental impact and protection, recovery of materials, required staffing level during operation, projection of anticipated revenues from the sale of energy and materials recovered by the facility, net cost to the unit of local government for operation and maintenance of the facility for the duration of time to be established in the request for proposals and upon any other factors and information that the unit of local government determined to have a material bearing on its ability to evaluate any proposal, which factors were set forth in said request for proposal.

(e) The unit of local government may make a contract award to any responsible proposer selected pursuant to this section based upon a determination that the selected proposal is more responsive to the request for proposals and may thereupon negotiate a contract with said proposer for the performance of the services set forth in the request for proposals and the response thereto, the determination shall be deemed to be conclusive. Notwithstanding other provisions of this Article or any local law, a contract may be negotiated and entered into between a unit of local government and any person selected as a responsible proposer hereunder which may provide for, but not be limited to, the following:

- (1) A contract, lease, rental, license, permit or other authorization to design, construct, operate and maintain a solid waste or sludge management facility upon such terms and conditions, for such consideration, and for such duration, not to exceed 40 years, as may be agreed upon by the unit of local government and the person.

- (2) Payment by the unit of local government of a fee or other charge to the person for acceptance, processing, recycling, management and disposal of solid waste or sludge.
- (3) An obligation on the part of a unit of local government to deliver or cause to be delivered to a solid waste or sludge management facility guaranteed quantities of solid wastes or sludge.
- (4) The sale, utilization or disposal of any form of energy, recovered material or residue resulting from the operation of any solid waste or sludge management facility.

(f) Except for authorities created pursuant to Article 22 of Chapter 153A of the General Statutes, the construction work for any facility or structure that is ancillary to a solid waste or sludge management facility and that does not involve storage and processing of solid waste or sludge or the separation, extraction, and recovery of useful or marketable forms of energy and materials from solid waste at a solid waste management facility shall be procured through competitive bidding procedures described by G.S. 143-128 through 143-129.1. Ancillary facilities include but are not limited to roads, water and sewer lines to the facility limits, transfer stations, scale houses, administration buildings, and residue and bypass disposal sites. (1983, c. 795, ss. 4, 8.1; 2005-176, s. 1; 2007-131, s. 3.)

§ 143-129.3. Exemption of General Assembly from certain purchasing requirements.

(a) The Legislative Services Commission may provide that the provisions of G.S. 143-129 and Article 3 of this Chapter do not apply to purchases by the General Assembly of data processing and data communications equipment, supplies, and services. Such exemption may vary according to the type or amount of purchase, and may vary as to whether the exemption is from some or all of those statutory provisions.

(b) The Legislative Services Commission must give specific approval to any purchase in excess of five thousand dollars (\$5,000) made under an exemption provided by subsection (a) of this section. (1989, c. 82.)

§ 143-129.4. Guaranteed energy savings contracts.

The solicitation and evaluation of proposals for guaranteed energy savings contracts, as defined in Part 2 of Article 3B of this Chapter, and the letting of contracts for these proposals are not governed by this Article but instead are governed by the provisions of that Part; except that guaranteed energy savings contracts are subject to the requirements of G.S. 143-128.2 and G.S. 143-135.3. (1993 (Reg. Sess., 1994), c. 775, s. 4; 1995, c. 509, s. 135.2(k); 2001-496, s. 3.3; 2002-161, s. 11.)

§ 143-129.5. Purchases from nonprofit work centers for the blind and severely disabled.

(a) Notwithstanding G.S. 143-129, a city, county, or other governmental entity subject to this Article may purchase goods and services directly from a nonprofit work center for the blind and severely disabled, as defined in G.S. 143-48.

(b) The Secretary of Administration shall, at least annually, canvass nonprofit work centers for the blind and severely disabled for goods and services required by the State government or any of its departments, institutions, or agencies and shall purchase or contract for the purchase, lease, or lease-purchase of those goods and services. The Secretary shall establish and enforce specifications that shall apply to all goods and services to be purchased or leased from nonprofit

work centers for the use of the State government or any of its departments, institutions, or agencies. Except as provided in G.S. 148-134, where one or more sources of supply have been established by contract and certified by the Secretary of Administration to State departments, institutions, and agencies, it shall be the duty of all State departments, institutions, and agencies to make requisition or issue orders on forms to be prescribed by the Secretary of Administration for purchases required by them upon the sources of supply so certified. No State department, institution, or agency shall purchase from any sources other than those certified by the Secretary unless the requisition cannot be fulfilled because of insufficient availability of goods or services required. The Secretary shall, in any contract or lease, require that nonprofit work centers maintain the price of goods or services substantially in accord with that paid by governmental agencies for similar goods or services of equivalent quality. The provisions of G.S. 143-52 shall not apply to purchases made pursuant to this section. However, nothing in this section shall prohibit a nonprofit work center from submitting bids or making offers for contracts under G.S. 143-52.

(c) The Department of Administration shall report annually to the Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on General Government on its administration of the programs described in subsections (a) and (b) of this section. (1995, c. 265, ss. 4, 5; 1999-20, s. 1; 2021-180, s. 20.12(a).)

§ 143-129.6. Exemption for certain training projects of the North Carolina National Guard.

Expenditures, excluding design fees, for a capital project, construction, or repair work (i) that is for training purposes and for a single exercise or undertaking at a National Guard facility; (ii) that has a total cost that does not exceed applicable federal limits; and (iii) that will be funded entirely with federal funds, shall not be subject to this Article. (2014-100, s. 36.8(c).)

§ 143-129.7. Purchase with trade-in of apparatus, supplies, materials, and equipment.

Notwithstanding the provisions of Article 12 of Chapter 160A of the General Statutes, municipalities, counties, and other political subdivisions of the State may include in specifications for the purchase of apparatus, supplies, materials, or equipment an opportunity for bidders to purchase as "trade-in" specified personal property owned by the municipality, county, or other political subdivision, and the awarding authority may award a contract for both the purchase of the apparatus, supplies, materials, or equipment and the sale of trade-in property, taking into consideration the amount offered on the trade-in when applying the criteria for award established in this Article. (1997-174, s. 7.)

§ 143-129.8. Purchase of information technology goods and services.

(a) In recognition of the complex and innovative nature of information technology goods and services and of the desirability of a single point of responsibility for contracts that include combinations of purchase of goods, design, installation, training, operation, maintenance, and related services, a political subdivision of the State may contract for information technology, as defined in G.S. 143B-1320, using the procedure set forth in this section, in addition to or instead of any other procedure available under North Carolina law.

(b) Contracts for information technology may be entered into under a request for proposals procedure that satisfies the following minimum requirements:

- (1) Notice of the request for proposals shall be given in accordance with G.S. 143-129(b).

- (2) Contracts shall be awarded to the person or entity that submits the best overall proposal as determined by the awarding authority. Factors to be considered in awarding contracts shall be identified in the request for proposals.

(c) The awarding authority may use procurement methods set forth in G.S. 143-135.9 in developing and evaluating requests for proposals under this section. The awarding authority may negotiate with any proposer in order to obtain a final contract that best meets the needs of the awarding authority. Negotiations allowed under this section shall not alter the contract beyond the scope of the original request for proposals in a manner that: (i) deprives the proposers or potential proposers of a fair opportunity to compete for the contract; and (ii) would have resulted in the award of the contract to a different person or entity if the alterations had been included in the request for proposals.

(d) Proposals submitted under this section shall not be subject to public inspection until a contract is awarded. (2001-328, s. 3; 2004-199, s. 36(b); 2004-203, s. 10; 2015-241, s. 7A.4(t).)

§ 143-129.8A. Purchase of certain goods and services for the North Carolina Zoological Park.

(a) Exemption. – The North Carolina Zoological Park is a State entity whose primary purpose is the attraction of, interaction with, and education of the public regarding issues of global conservation, ecological preservation, and scientific exploration, and that purpose presents unique challenges requiring greater flexibility and faster responsiveness in meeting the needs of and creating the attractions for the Park. Accordingly, the Department of Natural and Cultural Resources may use the procedure set forth in this section, in addition to or instead of any other procedure available under North Carolina law, to contract with a non-State entity on behalf of the Park for the acquisition of goods and services where: (i) the contract directly results in the generation of revenue for the State of North Carolina or (ii) the use of the acquired goods and services by the Park results in increased revenue or decreased expenditures for the State of North Carolina.

(b) Limitation. – Contracts executed pursuant to the exemption of subsection (a) of this section may be entered into under a request for proposals procedure that satisfies the following minimum requirements:

- (1) Notice of the request for proposals shall be given in accordance with G.S. 143-129(b).
- (2) Contracts shall be awarded to the person or entity that submits the best overall proposal as determined by the awarding authority. Factors to be considered in awarding contracts shall be identified in the request for proposals.

(c) Procurement Methods. – The Department may use procurement methods set forth in G.S. 143-135.9 in developing and evaluating requests for proposals under this section. The Department may negotiate with any proposer in order to obtain a final contract that best meets the needs of the awarding authority. Negotiations allowed under this section shall not alter the contract beyond the scope of the original request for proposals in a manner that: (i) deprives the proposers or potential proposers of a fair opportunity to compete for the contract; and (ii) would have resulted in the award of the contract to a different person or entity if the alterations had been included in the request for proposals.

(d) Promotional Rights. – Subject to the approval of the Department, a non-State entity awarded a contract that results in increased revenue or decreased expenditures for the Park may

advertise, announce, or otherwise publicize the provision of services pursuant to award of the contract. (2009-329, s. 1.1; 2015-241, s. 14.30(yy).)

§ 143-129.9. Alternative competitive bidding methods.

(a) A political subdivision of the State may use any of the following methods to obtain competitive bids for the purchase of apparatus, supplies, materials, or equipment as an alternative to the otherwise applicable requirements in this Article:

- (1) Reverse auction. – For purposes of this section, "reverse auction" means a real-time purchasing process in which bidders compete to provide goods at the lowest selling price in an open and interactive environment. The bidders' prices may be revealed during the reverse auction. A reverse auction may be conducted by the political subdivision or by a third party under contract with the political subdivision. A political subdivision may also conduct a reverse auction through the State electronic procurement system, and compliance with the procedures and requirements of the State's reverse auction process satisfies the political subdivision's obligations under this Article.
- (2) Electronic bidding. – A political subdivision may receive bids electronically in addition to or instead of paper bids. Procedures for receipt of electronic bids for contracts that are subject to the requirements of G.S. 143-129 shall be designed to ensure the security, authenticity, and confidentiality of the bids to at least the same extent as is provided for with sealed paper bids.

(b) The requirements for advertisement of bidding opportunities, timeliness of the receipt of bids, the standard for the award of contracts, and all other requirements in this Article that are not inconsistent with the methods authorized in this section shall apply to contracts awarded under this section.

(c) Reverse auctions shall not be utilized for the purchase or acquisition of construction aggregates, including, but not limited to, crushed stone, sand, and gravel. (2002-107, s. 1.)

§ 143-130. Allowance for convict labor must be specified.

In cases where the board or governing body of a State agency or of any political subdivision of the State may furnish convict or other labor to the contractor, manufacturer, or others entering into contracts for the performance of construction work, installation of apparatus, supplies, materials or equipment, the specifications covering such projects shall carry full information as to what wages shall be paid for such labor or the amount of allowance for same. (1933, c. 400, s. 2; 1967, c. 860.)

§ 143-131. When counties, cities, towns and other subdivisions may let contracts on informal bids.

(a) All contracts for construction or repair work or for the purchase of apparatus, supplies, materials, or equipment, involving the expenditure of public money in the amount of thirty thousand dollars (\$30,000) or more, but less than the limits prescribed in G.S. 143-129, made by any officer, department, board, local school administrative unit, or commission of any county, city, town, or other subdivision of this State shall be made after informal bids have been secured; provided, however, that The University of North Carolina and its constituent institutions shall be required to comply with the provisions of this subsection for all contracts for construction or repair work involving the expenditure of public money in the amount of one hundred thousand dollars (\$100,000) or more, but less than the limits prescribed in G.S. 143-129. All such contracts shall be

awarded to the lowest responsible, responsive bidder, taking into consideration quality, performance, and the time specified in the bids for the performance of the contract. It shall be the duty of any officer, department, board, local school administrative unit, or commission entering into such contract to keep a record of all bids submitted, and such record shall not be subject to public inspection until the contract has been awarded.

(b) All public entities shall solicit minority participation in contracts for the erection, construction, alteration or repair of any building awarded pursuant to this section. The public entity shall maintain a record of contractors solicited and shall document efforts to recruit minority business participation in those contracts. Nothing in this section shall be construed to require formal advertisement of bids. All data, including the type of project, total dollar value of the project, dollar value of minority business participation on each project, and documentation of efforts to recruit minority participation shall be reported to the Department of Administration, Office for Historically Underutilized Business, upon the completion of the project. (1931, c. 338, s. 2; 1957, c. 862, s. 5; 1959, c. 406; 1963, c. 172; 1967, c. 860; 1971, c. 593; 1981, c. 719, s. 1; 1987 (Reg. Sess., 1988), c. 1108, s. 6; 1997-174, s. 5; 2001-496, s. 5.1; 2005-227, s. 2; 2017-81, s. 1; 2022-74, s. 40.9(b).)

§ 143-131.1. Exception for contracts for the purchase of food and supplies for county detention facilities by sheriffs.

(a) A county sheriff's office may contract for the purchase of food and food services supplies for that county's detention facility without being subject to the requirements of G.S. 143-129 and G.S. 143-131(a).

(b) Repealed by Session Laws 2023-45, s. 3, effective June 16, 2023. (2015-156, ss. 1, 2; 2015-157, ss. 1, 2; 2015-158, ss. 1, 2; 2016-20, s. 1; 2016-37, s. 1; 2023-45, s. 3.)

§ 143-132. Minimum number of bids for public contracts.

(a) No contract to which G.S. 143-129 applies for construction or repairs shall be awarded by any board or governing body of the State, or any subdivision thereof, unless at least three competitive bids have been received from reputable and qualified contractors regularly engaged in their respective lines of endeavor; however, this section shall not apply to contracts which are negotiated as provided for in G.S. 143-129 or to contracts for dredging services in the State's coastal waters. Provided that if after advertisement for bids as required by G.S. 143-129, not as many as three competitive bids have been received from reputable and qualified contractors regularly engaged in their respective lines of endeavor, said board or governing body of the State agency or of a county, city, town or other subdivision of the State shall again advertise for bids; and if as a result of such second advertisement, not as many as three competitive bids from reputable and qualified contractors are received, such board or governing body may then let the contract to the lowest responsible bidder submitting a bid for such project, even though only one bid is received.

(b) For purposes of contracts bid in the alternative between the separate-prime and single-prime contracts, pursuant to G.S. 143-128(d1) each single-prime bid shall constitute a competitive bid in each of the four subdivisions or branches of work listed in G.S. 143-128(a), and each full set of separate-prime bids shall constitute a competitive single-prime bid in meeting the requirements of subsection (a) of this section. If there are at least three single-prime bids but there is not at least one full set of separate-prime bids, no separate-prime bids shall be opened.

(c) The State Building Commission shall develop guidelines no later than January 1, 1991, governing the opening of bids pursuant to this Article. These guidelines shall be distributed to all public bodies subject to this Article. The guidelines shall not be subject to the provisions of Chapter 150B of the General Statutes. (1931, c. 291, s. 3; 1951, c. 1104, s. 3; 1959, c. 392, s. 2; 1963, c. 289; 1967, c. 860; 1977, c. 644; 1979, c. 182, s. 2; 1989, c. 480, s. 2; 1989 (Reg. Sess., 1990), c. 1051, s. 4; 1991 (Reg. Sess., 1992), c. 985, s. 1; 1995, c. 358, s. 4; c. 367, ss. 1, 7; 2001-496, s. 9; 2021-92, s. 1.)

§ 143-133. No evasion permitted.

No bill or contract shall be divided for the purpose of evading the provisions of this Article. (1933, c. 400, s. 3; 1967, c. 860.)

§ 143-133.1. Reporting.

(a) Governmental entities that contract with a construction manager at risk, design-builder, or private developer under a public-private partnership shall report to the Secretary of Administration the following information on all projects where a construction manager at risk, design-builder, or private developer under a public-private partnership is utilized:

- (1) A detailed explanation of the reason why the particular construction manager at risk, design-builder, or private developer was selected.
- (2) The terms of the contract with the construction manager at risk, design-builder, or private developer.
- (3) A list of all other firms considered but not selected as the construction manager at risk, design-builder, or private developer.
- (4) A report on the form of bidding utilized by the construction manager at risk, design-builder, or private developer on the project.
- (5) A detailed explanation of why the particular delivery method was used in lieu of the delivery methods identified in G.S. 143-128(a1) subdivisions (1) through (3) and the anticipated benefits to the public entity from using the particular delivery method.

(b) Except as provided in subsection (b1) of this section, the Secretary of Administration shall adopt rules to implement the provisions of this section, including the format and frequency of reporting.

(b1) The Board of Governors of The University of North Carolina shall adopt rules to implement the provisions of this section for The University of North Carolina, including the format and frequency of reporting. The rules shall include that constituent institutions of The University of North Carolina shall report the information required by subsection (a) of this section to the Board of Governors on an annual basis.

(c) A governmental entity letting a contract pursuant to any of the delivery methods identified in subdivisions (a1)(4), (a1)(6), (a1)(7), or (a1)(8) of G.S. 143-128 shall submit the report required by this section no later than 12 months from the date the governmental entity takes beneficial occupancy of the project. In the event that the governmental entity fails to do so, the governmental entity shall be prohibited from utilizing subdivisions (a1)(4), (a1)(6), (a1)(7), or (a1)(8) of G.S. 143-128 until such time as the governmental entity completes the reporting requirement under this this section. Contracts entered into in violation of this prohibition shall not be deemed ultra vires and shall remain valid and fully enforceable. Any person, corporation or entity, however, which has submitted a bid or response to a request for proposals on any

construction project previously advertised by the governmental entity shall be entitled to obtain an injunction against the governmental entity compelling the governmental entity to comply with the reporting requirements of this section and from commencing or continuing a project let in violation of this subdivision until such time as the governmental entity has complied with the reporting requirements of this section. The plaintiff in such cases shall not be entitled to recover monetary damages caused by the governmental entity's failure to comply with this reporting requirements section, and neither the plaintiff nor the defendant shall be allowed to recover attorneys fees except as otherwise allowed by G.S. 1A-11 or G.S. 6-21.5. An action seeking the injunctive relief allowed by this subdivision must be filed within four years from the date that the governmental entity took beneficial occupancy of the project for which the report remains due.

(d) For purposes of this section, the term "governmental entity" shall have the same meaning as in G.S. 143-128.1B(a)(6). (2014-42, ss. 3, 5; 2021-80, s. 2.9.)

§ 143-133.2: Reserved for future codification purposes.

§ 143-133.3. E-verify compliance.

(a) No board or governing body of the State, or of any institution of the State government, or of any political subdivision of the State, may enter into a contract unless the contractor, and the contractor's subcontractors under the contract, comply with the requirements of Article 2 of Chapter 64 of the General Statutes.

(b) A board or governing body of the State, or of any institution of the State government, or of any political subdivision of the State, shall be deemed in compliance with this section if the contract includes a term requiring the contractor, and the contractor's subcontractors, to comply with the requirements of Article 2 of Chapter 64 of the General Statutes.

(c) This section shall not apply to any of the following:

- (1) Expenses related to travel, including transportation and lodging, for employees, officers, agents, or members of State or local boards, commissions, committees, or councils.
- (2) Contracts solely for the purchase of goods, apparatus, supplies, materials, or equipment.
- (3) Contracts let under G.S. 143-129(e)(1), (9), or (9a).
- (4) Contracts let under G.S. 143-129(g). (2015-294, s. 1(a).)

§ 143-133.4: Reserved for future codification purposes.

§ 143-133.5. Public contracts; labor organizations.

(a) It is the intent of the General Assembly that the provisions of this section will provide for more economical, nondiscriminatory, neutral, and efficient procurement of construction-related services by the State and political subdivisions of the State as market participants. The General Assembly finds that providing for fair and open competition best effectuates this intent.

(b) Every officer, board, department, commission, or commissions charged with the responsibility of preparation of specifications or awarding or entering into contracts for the erection, construction, alteration, or repair of any buildings for the State, or for any county, municipality, or other public body subject to this Article shall not in any bid specifications, project agreements, or other controlling documents:

- (1) Require or prohibit a bidder, offeror, contractor, or subcontractor from adhering to an agreement with one or more labor organizations in regard to that project or a related construction project.
- (2) Otherwise discriminate against a bidder, offeror, contractor, or subcontractor for becoming, remaining, refusing to become or remain a signatory to, or for adhering or refusing to adhere to an agreement with one or more labor organizations in regard to that project or a related construction project.

(c) No officer, board, department, commission, or commissions charged with the responsibility of awarding grants or tax incentives, or any county, municipality, or other public body in the award of grants or tax incentives, may award a grant or tax incentive that is conditioned upon a requirement that the awardee include a term described in subsection (b) of this section in a contract document for any construction, improvement, maintenance, or renovation to real property or fixtures that are the subject of the grant or tax incentive.

(d) This section does not prohibit any officer, board, department, commission, or commissions or any county, municipality, or other public body from awarding a contract, grant, or tax incentive to a private owner, bidder, contractor, or subcontractor who enters into or who is party to an agreement with a labor organization if being or becoming a party or adhering to an agreement with a labor organization is not a condition for award of the contract, grant, or tax incentive, and if the State agent, employee, or board or the political subdivision does not discriminate against a private owner, bidder, contractor, or subcontractor in the awarding of that contract, grant, or tax incentive based upon the person's status as being or becoming, or the willingness or refusal to become, a party to an agreement with a labor organization.

(e) This section does not prohibit a contractor or subcontractor from voluntarily entering into or complying with an agreement entered into with one or more labor organizations in regard to a contract with the State or a political subdivision of the State or funded in whole or in part from a grant or tax incentive from the State or political subdivision.

(f) The State or the governing body of a political subdivision may exempt a particular project, contract, subcontract, grant, or tax incentive from the requirements of any or all of the provisions of subsection (b) or (c) of this section if the State or governing body of the political subdivision finds, after public notice and a hearing, that special circumstances require an exemption to avert a significant, documentable threat to public health or safety. A finding of special circumstances under this section shall not be based on the possibility or presence of a labor dispute concerning the use of contractors or subcontractors who are nonsignatories to, or otherwise do not adhere to, agreements with one or more labor organizations, or concerning employees on the project who are not members of or affiliated with a labor organization.

(g) This section does not do either of the following:

- (1) Prohibit employers or other parties from entering into agreements or engaging in any other activity protected by the National Labor Relations Act, 29 U.S.C. §§ 151 to 169.
- (2) Interfere with labor relations of parties that are left unregulated under the National Labor Relations Act, 29 U.S.C. §§ 151 to 169. (2013-267, s. 1.)

§ 143-134. Applicable to Department of Transportation and Department of Adult Correction; exceptions; all contracts subject to review by Attorney General and State Auditor.

(a) This Article applies to the Department of Transportation and the Department of Adult Correction except in the construction of roads, bridges and their approaches; provided however, that whenever the Director of the Budget determines that the repair or construction of a building by the Department of Transportation or by the Department of Adult Correction can be done more economically through use of employees of the Department of Transportation and/or prison inmates than by letting the repair or building construction to contract, the provisions of this Article shall not apply to the repair or construction.

(b) Notwithstanding subsection (a) of this section, the Department of Transportation and the Department of Adult Correction shall: (i) submit all proposed contracts for supplies, materials, printing, equipment, and contractual services that exceed one million dollars (\$1,000,000) to the Attorney General or the Attorney General's designee for review as provided in G.S. 114-8.3; and (ii) include in all contracts to be awarded by the Department of Transportation or the Department of Adult Correction a standard clause providing that the State Auditor and internal auditors of the Department of Transportation or the Department of Adult Correction may audit the records of the contractor during and after the term of the contract to verify accounts and data affecting fees and performance. Neither the Department of Transportation nor the Department of Adult Correction shall award a cost plus percentage of cost agreement or contract for any purpose. (1933, c. 400, s. 3-A; 1955, c. 572; 1957, c. 65, s. 11; 1967, c. 860; c. 996, s. 13; 1973, c. 507, s. 5; 1977, c. 464, s. 34; 2010-194, s. 24; 2011-145, s. 19.1(h); 2011-326, s. 15(y); 2012-83, s. 45; 2013-289, s. 1; 2021-180, s. 19C.9(n).)

§ 143-134.1. Interest on final payments due to prime contractors; payments to subcontractors.

(a) On all public construction contracts which are let by a board or governing body of the State government or any political subdivision thereof, except contracts let by the Department of Transportation pursuant to G.S. 136-28.1, the balance due prime contractors shall be paid in full within 45 days after respective prime contracts of the project have been accepted by the owner, certified by the architect, engineer or designer to be completed in accordance with terms of the plans and specifications, or occupied by the owner and used for the purpose for which the project was constructed, whichever occurs first. However, when the architect or consulting engineer in charge of the project determines that delay in completion of the project in accordance with terms of the plans and specifications is the fault of the contractor, the project may be occupied and used for the purposes for which it was constructed without payment of any interest on amounts withheld past the 45 day limit.

No payment shall be delayed because of the failure of another prime contractor on the project to complete his contract. Should final payment to any prime contractor beyond the date the contracts have been certified to be completed by the designer or architect, accepted by the owner, or occupied by the owner and used for the purposes for which the project was constructed, be delayed by more than 45 days, the prime contractor shall be paid interest, beginning on the 46th day, at the rate of one percent (1%) per month or fraction thereof unless a lower rate is agreed upon on the unpaid balance as may be due. In addition to the above final payment provisions, periodic payments due a prime contractor during construction shall be paid in accordance with the provisions of this section and the payment provisions of the contract documents that do not conflict with this section, or the prime contractor shall be paid interest on any unpaid amount at the rate stipulated above for delayed final payments. The interest shall begin on the date the payment is due and continue until the date on which payment is made. The due date may be established by the

terms of the contract. Funds for payment of the interest on state-owned projects shall be obtained from the current budget of the owning department, institution, or agency. Where a conditional acceptance of a contract exists, and where the owner is retaining a reasonable sum pending correction of the conditions, interest on the reasonable sum shall not apply.

(b) Within seven days of receipt by the prime contractor of each periodic or final payment, the prime contractor shall pay the subcontractor based on work completed or service provided under the subcontract. If any periodic or final payment to the subcontractor is delayed by more than seven days after receipt of periodic or final payment by the prime contractor, the prime contractor shall pay the subcontractor interest, beginning on the eighth day, at the rate of one percent (1%) per month or fraction thereof on the unpaid balance as may be due.

(b1) No retainage on periodic or final payments made by the owner or prime contractor shall be allowed on public construction contracts in which the total project costs are less than one hundred thousand dollars (\$100,000). Retainage on periodic or final payments on public construction contracts in which the total project costs are equal to or greater than one hundred thousand dollars (\$100,000) is allowed as follows:

- (1) The owner shall not retain more than five percent (5%) of any periodic payment due a prime contractor.
- (2) When the project is fifty percent (50%) complete, the owner, with written consent of the surety, shall not retain any further retainage from periodic payments due the contractor if the contractor continues to perform satisfactorily and any nonconforming work identified in writing prior to that time by the architect, engineer, or owner has been corrected by the contractor and accepted by the architect, engineer, or owner. If the owner determines the contractor's performance is unsatisfactory, the owner may reinstate retainage for each subsequent periodic payment application as authorized in this subsection up to the maximum amount of five percent (5%). The project shall be deemed fifty percent (50%) complete when the contractor's gross project invoices, excluding the value of materials stored off-site, equal or exceed fifty percent (50%) of the value of the contract, except the value of materials stored on-site shall not exceed twenty percent (20%) of the contractor's gross project invoices for the purpose of determining whether the project is fifty percent (50%) complete.
- (3) A subcontract on a contract governed by this section may include a provision for the retainage on periodic payments made by the prime contractor to the subcontractor. However, the percentage of the payment retained: (i) shall be paid to the subcontractor under the same terms and conditions as provided in subdivision (2) of this subsection and (ii) subject to subsection (b3) of this section, shall not exceed the percentage of retainage on payments made by the owner to the prime contractor. Subject to subsection (b3) of this section, any percentage of retainage on payments made by the prime contractor to the subcontractor that exceeds the percentage of retainage on payments made by the owner to the prime contractor shall be subject to interest to be paid by the prime contractor to the subcontractor at the rate of one percent (1%) per month or fraction thereof.
- (4) Within 60 days after the submission of a pay request and one of the following occurs, as specified in the contract documents, the owner with written consent of the surety shall release to the contractor all retainage on payments held by the

owner: (i) the owner receives a certificate of substantial completion from the architect, engineer, or designer in charge of the project; or (ii) the owner receives beneficial occupancy or use of the project. However, the owner may retain sufficient funds to secure completion of the project or corrections on any work. If the owner retains funds, the amount retained shall not exceed two and one-half times the estimated value of the work to be completed or corrected. Any reduction in the amount of the retainage on payments shall be with the consent of the contractor's surety.

- (5) The existence of any third-party claims against the contractor or any additive change orders to the construction contract shall not be a basis for delaying the release of any retainage on payments.

(b2) Full payment, less authorized deductions, shall also be made for those trades that have reached one hundred percent (100%) completion of their contract by or before the project is fifty percent (50%) complete if the contractor has performed satisfactorily. However, payment to the early finishing trades is contingent upon the owner's receipt of an approval or certification from the architect of record or applicable engineer that the work performed by the subcontractor is acceptable and in accordance with the contract documents. At that time, the owner shall reduce the retainage for such trades to five-tenths percent (0.5%) of the contract. Payments under this subsection shall be made no later than 60 days following receipt of the subcontractor's request or immediately upon receipt of the surety's consent, whichever occurs later. Early finishing trades under this subsection shall include structural steel, piling, caisson, and demolition. The early finishing trades for which line-item release of retained funds is required shall not be construed to prevent an owner or an owner's representative from identifying any other trades not listed in this subsection that are also allowed line-item release of retained funds. Should the owner or owner's representative identify any other trades to be afforded line-item release of retainage, the trade shall be listed in the original bid documents. Each bid document shall list the inspections required by the owner before accepting the work, and any financial information required by the owner to release payment to the trades, except the failure of the bid documents to contain this information shall not obligate the owner to release the retainage if it has not received the required certification from the architect of record or applicable engineer.

(b3) Notwithstanding subdivisions (2) and (3) of subsection (b1) of this section, and subsection (b2) of this section, following fifty percent (50%) completion of the project, the owner shall be authorized to withhold additional retainage from a subsequent periodic payment, not to exceed five percent (5%) as set forth in subdivision (1) of subsection (b1) of this section, in order to allow the owner to retain two and one-half percent (2.5%) total retainage through the completion of the project. In the event that the owner elects to withhold additional retainage on any periodic payment subsequent to release of retainage pursuant to subsection (b2) of this section, the general contractor may also withhold from the subcontractors remaining on the project sufficient retainage to offset the additional retainage held by the owner, notwithstanding the actual percentage of retainage withheld by the owner of the project as a whole.

(b4) Neither the owner's nor contractor's release of retainage on payments as part of a payment in full on a line-item of work under subsection (b2) of this section shall affect any applicable warranties on work done by the contractor or subcontractor, and the warranties shall not begin to run any earlier than either the owner's receipt of a certificate of substantial completion from the architect, engineer, or designer in charge of the project or the owner receives beneficial occupancy.

(b5) The State or any political subdivision of the State may allow contractors to bid on bonded projects with and without retainage on payments.

(b6) Nothing in subsections (b1), (b2), (b3), and (b4) of this section shall operate to prevent any agency or any political subdivision of the State from complying with the requirements of a federal contract or grant when the requirements of the federal contract or grant conflict with subsections (b1), (b2), (b3), or (b4) of this section. Each bid document must specify when federal preemption of this section shall apply.

(c) Repealed by Session Laws 2007-365, s. 1, effective January 1, 2008.

(d) Nothing in this section shall prevent the prime contractor at the time of application and certification to the owner from withholding application and certification to the owner for payment to the subcontractor for unsatisfactory job progress; defective construction not remedied; disputed work; third party claims filed or reasonable evidence that claim will be filed; failure of subcontractor to make timely payments for labor, equipment, and materials; damage to prime contractor or another subcontractor; reasonable evidence that subcontract cannot be completed for the unpaid balance of the subcontract sum; or a reasonable amount for retainage not to exceed the initial percentage retained by the owner.

(e) Nothing in this section shall prevent the owner from withholding payment to the contractor in addition to the amounts authorized by this section for unsatisfactory job progress, defective construction not remedied, disputed work, or third-party claims filed against the owner or reasonable evidence that a third-party claim will be filed. (1959, c. 1328; 1967, c. 860; 1979, c. 778; 1983, c. 804, ss. 1, 2; 2007-365, s. 1.)

§ 143-134.2. Actions by contractor on behalf of subcontractor.

(a) A contractor may, on behalf of a subcontractor of any tier under the contractor, file an action against an owner regarding a claim arising out of or relating to labor, materials, or services furnished by the subcontractor to the contractor pursuant to a contract between the subcontractor and the contractor for the same project that is the subject of the contract between the contractor and the owner.

(b) In any action filed by a contractor against an owner under subsection (a) of this section, it shall not be a defense that the costs and damages at issue were incurred by a subcontractor and that subcontractor has not been paid for these costs and damages. The owner shall not be required to pay the contractor for the costs and damages incurred by a subcontractor, unless the subcontractor submits proof to the court that the contractor has paid these costs and damages to the subcontractor. (1997-489, s. 1.)

§ 143-134.3. No damage for delay clause.

No contractual language forbidding or limiting compensable damages for delays caused solely by the owner or its agent may be enforced in any construction contract let by any board or governing body of the State, or of any institution of State government, or of any county, city, town, or other political subdivision thereof. For purposes of this section, the phrase "owner or its agent" does not include prime contractors or their subcontractors. (1997-489, s. 1.)

§ 143-135. Limitation of application of Article.

(a) Except for the provisions of G.S. 143-129 requiring bids for the purchase of apparatus, supplies, materials or equipment, this Article shall not apply to any of the following:

- (1) Construction or repair work undertaken by the State (i) when the work is performed by duly elected officers or agents using force account qualified labor on the permanent payroll of the agency concerned and (ii) when either the total cost of the project, including without limitation all direct and indirect costs of labor, services, materials, supplies and equipment, does not exceed one hundred twenty-five thousand dollars (\$125,000) or the total cost of labor on the project does not exceed fifty thousand dollars (\$50,000).
- (2) Construction or repair work undertaken by a subdivision of the State (i) when the work is performed by duly elected officers or agents using force account qualified labor on the permanent payroll of the agency concerned and (ii) when either the total cost of the project, including without limitation all direct and indirect costs of labor, services, materials, supplies and equipment, does not exceed five hundred thousand dollars (\$500,000) or the total cost of labor on the project does not exceed two hundred thousand dollars (\$200,000).
- (3) Construction or repair work undertaken by The University of North Carolina and its constituent institutions (i) when the work is performed by duly elected officers or agents using force account qualified labor on the permanent payroll of the university and (ii) when either the total cost of the project, including, without limitation, all direct and indirect costs of labor, services, materials, supplies, and equipment, does not exceed two hundred thousand dollars (\$200,000) or the total cost of labor on the project does not exceed one hundred thousand dollars (\$100,000).

(b) The force account work undertaken pursuant to this section shall be subject to the approval of the Director of the Budget in the case of State agencies, of the responsible commission, council, or board in the case of subdivisions of the State. Complete and accurate records of the entire cost of such work, including without limitation, all direct and indirect costs of labor, services, materials, supplies and equipment performed and furnished in the prosecution and completion thereof, shall be maintained by such agency, commission, council or board for the inspection by the general public. Construction or repair work undertaken pursuant to this section shall not be divided for the purposes of evading the provisions of this Article. (1933, c. 552, ss. 1, 2; 1949, c. 1137, s. 2; 1951, c. 1104, s. 6; 1967, c. 860; 1975, c. 292, ss. 1, 2; c. 879, s. 46; 1979, 2nd Sess., c. 1248; 1981, c. 860, s. 13; 1995, c. 274, s. 1; 2007-322, s. 5; 2015-276, s. 6.)

§ 143-135.1. State buildings exempt from county and municipal building requirements; consideration of recommendations by counties and municipalities.

(a) Buildings constructed by the State of North Carolina or by any agency or institution of the State in accordance with plans and specifications approved by the Department of Administration or by The University of North Carolina or one of its affiliated or constituent institutions pursuant to G.S. 116-31.11 shall not be subject to inspection by any county or municipal authorities and shall not be subject to county or municipal building codes and requirements.

(b) Inspection fees fixed by counties and municipalities shall not be applicable to such construction by the State of North Carolina. County and municipal authorities may inspect any plans or specifications upon their request to the Department of Administration or, with respect to projects under G.S. 116-31.11, The University of North Carolina, and any and all recommendations made by them shall be given consideration. Requests by county and municipal

authorities to inspect plans and specifications for State projects shall be on the basis of a specific project. Should any agency or institution of the State require the services of county or municipal authorities, notice shall be given for the need of such services, and appropriate fees for such services shall be paid to the county or municipality; provided, however, that the application for such services to be rendered by any county or municipality shall have prior written approval of the Department of Administration, or with respect to projects under G.S. 116-31.11, The University of North Carolina.

(c) Notwithstanding any law to the contrary, including any local act, no county or municipality may impose requirements that exceed the North Carolina State Building Code regarding the design or construction of buildings constructed by the State of North Carolina. (1951, c. 1104, s. 4; 1967, c. 860; 1971, c. 563; 1985, c. 757, s. 170(a); 1997-412, s. 10; 2001-496, s. 8(c); 2005-300, s. 1.)

§ 143-135.2. Contracts for restoration of historic buildings with private donations.

This Article shall not apply to building contracts let by a State agency for restoration of a historic building or structure where the funds for the restoration of such building or structure are provided entirely by funds donated from private sources. (1955, c. 27; 1967, c. 860.)

§ 143-135.3. Adjustment and resolution of State board construction contract claim.

(a) For purposes of this section, the following shall apply:

- (1) "Board" shall mean the State of North Carolina or any board, bureau, commission, institution, or other agency of the State, as distinguished from a board or governing body of a subdivision of the State.
- (2) "A contract for construction or repair work" shall mean any contract for the construction of buildings and appurtenances thereto, including, but not by way of limitation, utilities, plumbing, heating, electrical, air conditioning, elevator, excavation, grading, paving, roofing, masonry work, tile work and painting, and repair work as well as any contract for the construction of airport runways, taxiways and parking aprons, sewer and water mains, power lines, docks, wharves, dams, drainage canals, telephone lines, streets, site preparation, parking areas and other types of construction on which the Department of Administration or The University of North Carolina enters into contracts.
- (3) "Contractor" shall include any person, firm, association or corporation which has contracted with a State board for architectural, engineering or other professional services in connection with construction or repair work as well as those persons who have contracted to perform such construction or repair work.

(b) A contractor who has not completed a contract with a board for construction or repair work and who has not received the amount that contractor claims is due under the contract may submit a verified written claim to the Director of the Office of State Construction of the Department of Administration for the amount the contractor claims is due. The Director may deny, allow, or compromise the claim, in whole or in part. A claim under this subsection is not a contested case under Chapter 150B of the General Statutes.

(c) A contractor who has completed a contract with a board for construction or repair work and who has not received the amount that contractor claims is due under the contract may submit a verified written claim to the Director of the Office of State Construction of the Department of Administration for the amount the contractor claims is due. The verified written claim shall be

submitted within 60 days after the contractor receives a final statement of the board's disposition of the claim and shall state the factual basis for the claim.

The contractor may appear before the Director, either in person or through counsel, to present facts and arguments in support of the verified written claim. The Director may allow, deny, or compromise the verified written claim, in whole or in part. The Director shall give the contractor a final written decision, as provided in subsection (c2) of this section, allowing or denying those portions of the contractor's claim that have not been previously compromised.

(c1) A contractor who is dissatisfied with the Director's final written decision on a verified written claim, or any portion of a verified written claim, submitted under subsection (c) of this section may commence a contested case on the claim under Chapter 150B of the General Statutes. The contested case shall be commenced within 60 days of receiving the Director's written statement of the decision.

(c2) The verified written claim submitted under subsection (c) of this section shall be disposed of as follows:

- (1) If the verified written claim was originally for an amount less than one hundred thousand dollars (\$100,000), the Director shall investigate and issue a final written decision allowing or denying the verified written claim, in whole or in part, within 120 days of receipt of the contractor's verified written claim.
- (2) If the verified written claim was originally for an amount of at least one hundred thousand dollars (\$100,000) but less than five million dollars (\$5,000,000), the Director shall investigate and issue a final written decision allowing or denying the verified claim, in whole or in part, within 180 days of receipt of the contractor's verified written claim.
- (3) If the verified written claim was originally for an amount of five million dollars (\$5,000,000) or more, the Director shall investigate and issue a final written decision allowing or denying the verified written claim, in whole or in part, within 270 days of receipt of the contractor's verified written claim.

(c3) Prior to the expiration of the time periods provided for in subsection (c2) of this section, the Director and contractor may, in writing, extend the time in which the Director shall issue a final written decision. The Director's failure to issue a final written decision as provided in subsection (c2) of this section, or at the expiration of the agreed-upon extended time, shall be deemed a denial of the portions of the verified written claim not previously compromised, and the contractor may seek relief on those portions of the verified written claim as provided in subsection (c1) or (d) of this section.

(d) As to any portion of a verified written claim that is denied by the Director under subsection (c) of this section, the contractor may, in lieu of the procedures set forth in subsection (c1) of this section, within six months of receipt of the Director's final written decision, institute a civil action for the sum the contractor claims to be entitled to under the contract by filing a verified complaint and the issuance of a summons in the Superior Court of Wake County or in the superior court of any county where the work under the contract was performed. The procedure shall be the same as in all civil actions except that all issues shall be tried by the judge, without a jury.

(e) The provisions of this section are part of every contract for construction or repair work made by a board and a contractor. A provision in a contract that conflicts with this section is invalid. (1965, c. 1022; 1967, c. 860; 1969, c. 950, s. 1; 1973, c. 1423; 1975, c. 879, s. 46; 1981, c. 577; 1983, c. 761, s. 190; 1985, c. 746, s. 18; 1987, c. 847, s. 4; 1989, c. 40, s. 1; 1991, c. 103, s. 1; 1997-412, s. 7; 2001-496, s. 8(c); 2005-300, s. 1; 2019-39, s. 1.)

§ 143-135.4. Authority of Department of Administration not repealed.

Nothing contained in this Article shall be construed as contravening or repealing any authorities given by statute to the Department of Administration. (1967, c. 860; 1975, c. 879, s. 46.)

§ 143-135.5. State policy; cooperation in promoting the use of small, minority, physically handicapped and women contractors; purpose.

(a) It is the policy of this State to encourage and promote the use of small, minority, physically handicapped and women contractors in State construction projects. All State agencies, institutions and political subdivisions shall cooperate with the Department of Administration and all other State agencies, institutions and political subdivisions in efforts to encourage and promote the use of small, minority, physically handicapped and women contractors in achieving the purpose of this Article, which is the effective and economical construction of public buildings.

(b) It is the policy of this State not to accept bids or proposals from, nor to engage in business with, any business that, within the last two years, has been finally found by a court or an administrative agency of competent jurisdiction to have unlawfully discriminated on the basis of race, gender, religion, national origin, age, physical disability, or any other unlawful basis in its solicitation, selection, hiring, or treatment of another business. (1983, c. 692, s. 1; 2001-496, s. 5.2.)

§ 143-135.6. Adjustment and resolution of community college board construction contract claim.

(a) A contractor who has not completed a contract with a board of a community college for construction or repair work and who has not received the amount that contractor claims is due under the contract may follow the claims procedure in G.S. 143-135.3(b) that is available to a contractor who has contracted with a State board.

(b) A contractor who has completed a contract with a board of a community college for construction or repair work and who has not received the amount that contractor claims is due under the contract may follow the same claims procedure in G.S. 143-135.3(c) through (d) that is available to a contractor who has contracted with a State board.

(c) Repealed by Session Laws 2019-39, s. 2, effective January 1, 2020, and applicable to verified claims submitted on or after that date.

(d) The provisions of this section are part of every contract for construction or repair work made by a board of a community college and a contractor. A provision in a contract that conflicts with this section is invalid.

(e) For the purposes of this section, the following definitions shall apply, unless the context indicates otherwise:

(1) "Community college" has the same meaning as in G.S. 115D-2(2).

(2) "Contract for construction or repair work" has the same meaning as in G.S. 143-135.3(a).

(3) "Contractor" means any person, firm, association, or corporation which has contracted for architectural, engineering, or other professional services in connection with construction or repair work, as well as those persons who have contracted to perform the construction or repair work.

(f) The provisions of this section are applicable only to community college buildings subject to G.S. 143-341(3). (1989, c. 40, s. 2; 2019-39, s. 2.)

§ 143-135.7. Safety officers.

Each contract for a State capital improvement project, as defined in Article 8B of this Chapter, shall require the contractor to designate a responsible person as safety officer to inspect the project site for unsafe health and safety hazards, to report these hazards to the contractor for correction, and to provide other safety and health measures on the project site as required by the terms and conditions of the contract. (1991 (Reg. Sess., 1992), c. 893, s. 3.)

§ 143-135.8. Prequalification.

(a) Except as provided in this section, bidders may not be prequalified for any construction or repair work project.

(b) A governmental entity may prequalify bidders for a particular construction or repair work project when all of the following apply:

- (1) The governmental entity is using one of the construction methods authorized in G.S. 143-128(a1)(1) through G.S. 143-128(a1)(3).
- (2) The board or governing body of the governmental entity adopts an objective prequalification policy applicable to all construction or repair work prior to the advertisement of the contract for which the governmental entity intends to prequalify bidders.
- (3) The governmental entity has adopted the assessment tool and criteria for that specific project, which must include the prequalification scoring values and minimum required score for prequalification on that project.

(c) The objective prequalification policy adopted by a governmental entity pursuant to subdivision (2) of subsection (b) of this section shall meet all of the following criteria:

- (1) Must be uniform, consistent, and transparent in its application to all bidders.
- (2) Must allow all bidders who meet the prequalification criteria to be prequalified to bid on the construction or repair work project.
- (3) Clearly state the prequalification criteria, which must comply with all of the following:
 - a. Be rationally related to construction or repair work.
 - b. Not require that the bidder has previously been awarded a construction or repair project by the governmental entity.
 - c. Permit bidders to submit history or experience with projects of similar size, scope, or complexity.
- (4) Clearly state the assessment process of the criteria to be used.
- (5) Establish a process for a denied bidder to protest to the governmental entity denial of prequalification, which process shall be completed prior to the opening of bids under G.S. 143-129(b) and which allows sufficient time for a bidder subsequently prequalified pursuant to a protest to submit a bid on the contract for which the bidder is subsequently prequalified.
- (6) Outline a process by which the basis for denial of prequalification will be communicated in writing, upon request, to a bidder who is denied prequalification.

(d) If the governmental entity opts to prequalify bidders, bids submitted by any bidder not prequalified shall be deemed nonresponsive. This subsection shall not apply to bidders initially

denied prequalification that are subsequently prequalified pursuant to a protest under the governmental entity's prequalification policy.

(e) Prequalification may not be used for the selection of any qualification-based services under Article 3D of this Chapter, G.S. 143-128.1A, G.S. 143-128.1B, G.S. 143-128.1C, or the selection of the construction manager at risk under G.S. 143-128.1.

(f) For purposes of this section, the following definitions shall apply:

(1) Governmental entity. – As defined in G.S. 143-128.1B(a)(6).

(2) Prequalification. – A process of evaluating and determining whether potential bidders have the skill, judgment, integrity, sufficient financial resources, and ability necessary to the faithful performance of a contract for construction or repair work. (1995, c. 367, s. 8; 2014-42, s. 1.)

§ 143-135.9. Best Value procurements.

(a) Definitions. – The following definitions apply in this section:

(1) Best Value procurement. – The selection of a contractor based on a determination of which proposal offers the best trade-off between price and performance, where quality is considered an integral performance factor. The award decision is made based on multiple factors, including: total cost of ownership, meaning the cost of acquiring, operating, maintaining, and supporting a product or service over its projected lifetime; the evaluated technical merit of the vendor's proposal; the vendor's past performance; and the evaluated probability of performing the requirements stated in the solicitation on time, with high quality, and in a manner that accomplishes the stated business objectives and maintains industry standards compliance.

(2) Government-Vendor partnership. – A mutually beneficial contractual relationship between State government and a contractor, wherein the two share risk and reward, and value is added to the procurement of needed goods or services.

(3) Repealed by Session Laws 2013-188, s. 1, effective June 26, 2013.

(4) Solution-Based solicitation. – A solicitation in which the requirements are stated in terms of how the product or service being purchased should accomplish the business objectives, rather than in terms of the technical design of the product or service.

(b) Intent. – The intent of Best Value procurement is to enable contractors to offer and the agency to select the most appropriate solution to meet the business objectives defined in the solicitation and to keep all parties focused on the desired outcome of a procurement.

(c) Information Technology. – The acquisition of information technology by the State of North Carolina shall be conducted using the Best Value procurement method. For purposes of this section, business process reengineering, system design, and technology implementation may be combined into a single solicitation. For acquisitions which the procuring agency and the Division of Purchase and Contracts or the Department of Information Technology, as applicable, deem to be highly complex or determine that the optimal solution to the business problem at hand is not known, the use of Solution-Based Solicitation and Government-Vendor Partnership is authorized and encouraged. Any county, city, town, or subdivision of the State may acquire information technology pursuant to this section.

(d) Repealed by Session Laws 2009-320, s. 1, effective July 24, 2009.

(e) North Carolina Zoological Park. – The acquisition of goods and services under a contract entered pursuant to the exemption of G.S. 143-129.8A(a) by the Department of Natural and Cultural Resources on behalf of the North Carolina Zoological Park may be conducted using the Best Value procurement method. For acquisitions which the procuring agency deems to be highly complex, the use of Government-Vendor partnership is authorized. (1998-189, s. 1; 1999-434, s. 15; 1999-456, s. 39; 2009-329, s. 1.2; 2013-188, s. 1; 2015-241, ss. 7A.4(u), 14.30(zz).)