

	<p align="center">GUILFORD COUNTY SCHOOLS Request for Proposals</p> <p align="center">Purchasing Department 501 W. Washington Street Greensboro, NC 27401</p>
Direct all inquiries to:	Request for Proposals: 6612
Velicia Gaddy	Proposal due date: Wednesday, January 31, 2024
gaddyv@gcsnc.com	Commodity: Technical Assistance and Research Services

NOTICE TO SUPPLIERS

Proposals, subject to the conditions made a part hereof, will be received at this office 501 W. Washington St., Greensboro NC 27401, until **1:00 PM EST** on the day of opening for furnishing and delivering the commodity as described herein. Proposals submitted via facsimile (FAX) machine in response to this Request for Proposals **will not** be accepted.

EXECUTION

In compliance with this Request for Proposals (RFP), and subject to all the conditions herein, the undersigned Vendor offers and agrees to furnish and deliver any or all items upon which prices are proposal, at the prices set opposite each item within the time specified herein. By executing this proposal, the undersigned Vendor certifies that this proposal is submitted competitively and without collusion (G.S. 143- 54), that none of its officers, directors, or owners of an unincorporated business entity has been convicted of any violations of Chapter 78A of the General Statutes, the Securities Act of 1933, or the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 (G.S. 143-59.2), and that it is not an ineligible Vendor as set forth in G.S. 143-59.1. False certification is a Class I felony. Furthermore, by executing this proposal, the undersigned certifies to the best of Vendor’s knowledge and belief, that it and its principals are not presently debarred, suspended, proposed for debarment, declared ineligible or voluntarily excluded from covered transactions by any Federal or State department or agency. As required by G.S. 143- 48.5, the undersigned Vendor certifies that it, and each of its sub-Contractors for any Contract awarded as a result of this RFP, complies with the requirements of Article 2 of Chapter 64 of the NC General Statutes, including the requirement for each employer with more than 25 employees in North Carolina to verify the work authorization of its employees through the federal E-Verify system.

Failure to execute/sign proposal prior to submittal shall render proposal invalid and it WILL BE REJECTED. Late proposals will not be accepted.

SUPPLIER:		FEDERAL ID OR SOCIAL SECURITY NO.	
STREET ADDRESS:		P.O. BOX:	ZIP:
CITY & STATE & ZIP:		TELEPHONE NUMBER:	FAX NUMBER:
TYPE OR PRINT NAME & TITLE OF PERSON SIGNING:		TITLE	
AUTHORIZED SIGNATURE:	DATE:	E-MAIL:	

Offer valid for **60 days** from date of proposal opening, unless otherwise stated. After this time, any withdrawal of offer shall be made in writing, effective upon receipt by the agency issuing this RFP.

1.0 PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND

Guilford County Schools (GCS) is seeking proposals from qualified vendors to understand the enrollment decision-making process of Guilford County families in choosing educational programs with the goal of enhancing communication between the district and families. Guilford County Schools, the third largest school district in North Carolina and among the largest of more than 14,000 in the United States, serves nearly 70,000 PK-12 students at 124 schools. With approximately 9,800 employees, GCS works in partnership with parents, businesses, colleges and the community to deliver an education that connects student interests and skills with the careers and economy of our future here and around the world. We provide educational choices to meet individual student needs in a culturally diverse citizenship and new opportunities to help our students grow.

For more information, visit the district's website at www.gcsnc.com.

2.0 GENERAL INFORMATION

This RFP is comprised of the base proposal document, any attachments, and any addenda released before contract award. All attachments and addenda released for this RFP in advance of any contract award are incorporated herein by reference. Proposals shall be submitted in accordance with the terms and conditions of this RFP and any addenda issued hereto.

TAXES

Guilford County Schools is **NOT** tax-exempt. Unless otherwise indicated, tax must be computed and added to your proposal. Any itemized shipping charges are also subject to tax. When invoiced, tax should be invoiced as a separate line item.

MINORITY AND WOMEN OWNED BUSINESS ENTERPRISE (MWBE)

The Board of Education awards public contracts without regard to race, religion, color, creed, national origin, sex, age or handicapped condition as defined by North Carolina General Statutes, 168A-3. GCS Board of Education promotes full and equal access to business opportunities with Guilford County Schools. Minority businesses are encouraged to submit proposals for this project. All vendors shall have a fair and reasonable opportunity to participate in GCS business opportunities.

INSURANCE

Certificate of Insurance

Each vendor shall furnish GCS a certificate of insurance showing that the required workmen's compensation and public liability insurance are carried by the Contractor. The certificate of insurance should show that it is issued to or at the request of the Guilford County Board of Education, Greensboro, North Carolina. All insurance carriers shall be licensed to do business in North Carolina or approved to issue insurance coverage by the Commission of Insurance of North Carolina.

The certificate of insurance shall include substantially the following provision: The insurance policies to which this certificate refers shall not be altered or canceled until after ten (10) days' written notice of such cancellation or alteration has been sent by certified mail to the Guilford County Board of Education, Greensboro, North Carolina.

Public Liability Insurance

The vendor shall maintain public liability insurance covering his liability for bodily injury and property damage which may arise from his operations, contractual obligations, products and completed operations, as well as operations performed by independent contractors, in not less than the following amounts:

- 1.A combined single limit (CSL) of \$1,000,000 each occurrence, or
- 2.A \$1,000,000 limit for Bodily Injury Liability, and \$1,000,000 limit for Property Damage Liability.

An occurrence form of policy will be required, and the certificate of insurance submitted by the Contractor must be personally signed by a resident licensed agent of each of the companies listed on that form.

Worker's Compensation Insurance

The Contractor shall maintain during the life of his contract all such workmen's compensation insurance as is or may be required by the laws of North Carolina.

Terms and Conditions

It shall be the vendor's responsibility to read the instructions, terms and conditions, all relevant exhibits and attachments, and any other components made a part of this RFP and comply with all requirements and specifications herein. Vendors also are responsible for obtaining and complying with all Addenda and other changes that may be issued relating to this RFP. All suppliers are hereby notified that they must have the proper license as required under the North Carolina laws. The award of a contract under this solicitation may be paid with federal

funding. Funding is contingent upon compliance with all terms and conditions of funding award. All prospective contractors shall comply with all applicable federal laws, regulations, executive orders, FEMA requirements and the terms and conditions of the funding award. In addition, contractors providing submittals shall be responsible for complying with state law and local ordinances.

3.0 SPECIFIC INFORMATION

PROPOSAL QUESTIONS

Upon review of the RFP documents, vendors may have questions to clarify or interpret the RFP to submit the best proposal possible. To accommodate the proposal questions process, vendors shall submit any such **questions by Wednesday, January 10, 2023, at 12:00 pm EST**. Answers to such questions will be posted by **Monday, January 15, 2023, at 12:00 pm EST**.

Instructions:

Written questions shall be emailed to Velicia Gaddy gaddyv@gcsnc.com by the date and time specified above. Vendors will enter “**RFP 6612 Questions**” as the subject for the email. Question submittals will include a reference to the applicable RFP section and be submitted in a format shown below:

Reference	Vendor Question
RFP Section, Page Number	Vendor question...?

Questions received prior to the submission deadline date, GCS’s response, and any additional terms deemed necessary by GCS will be posted in the form of an addendum. No information, instruction or advice provided orally or informally by any GCS personnel, whether made in response to a question or otherwise regarding this RFP, shall be considered authoritative or binding. Vendors shall be entitled to rely **only** on written material contained in an addendum to this RFP.

PROPOSAL SUBMITTAL

Sealed proposals, subject to the conditions made a part hereof and the receipt requirements described below, shall be received at the address indicated below, as described herein. **One (1) Original, hard copy & and an email (digital copy) of the proposal response to be labeled ‘RFP 6612 Response’ as the subject of the email, shall be received in the GCS Purchasing Department but the close date and time. The original hard copy should be addressed in an envelope with the RFP number as shown below in the mailing instructions. It is the responsibility of the supplier to have the proposal in the Guilford County Schools Purchasing office by the specified time and date of opening.**

****Please be advised that if the original, hard copy of the proposal response is not received in the Guilford County Schools Purchasing Department before the due date and time, regardless of receiving the email version, the proposal will not be considered. We are only asking for an email version to have a digital copy for our records. ****

****Please be advised that Washington Street building is closed from Friday at 5:00 pm until Monday at 8:00 am and deliveries will be left outside the front door if delivered during these times. ****

Proposals shall be marked on the outside of the sealed envelope with the Vendor's name, RFP number and date and time of opening. If Vendor is submitting more than one proposal, each proposal shall be submitted in separate sealed envelopes and marked accordingly. For delivery purposes, separate sealed proposals from a single Vendor may be included in the same outer package.

MAILING INSTRUCTIONS

DELIVERED BY US POSTAL SERVICE OR ANY OTHER MEANS:

RFP No. 6612
Velicia Gaddy
Director-Purchasing
Guilford County Schools
Purchasing Department
501 W. Washington Street
Greensboro, NC 27401

REFERENCES

Guilford County Schools reserves the right to require upon request a list of references from other school districts or similar service agencies for which the company has provided the services or goods solicited in this RFP. GCS may contact these users to determine quality level. Such information may be considered in the evaluation of the proposal.

4.0 AWARD AND PROPOSAL EVALUATION

REVIEW AND AWARD

It is the intent of Guilford County Schools (GCS) to award this Request for Proposals to the responsible supplier(s) who best matches the needs for the Chief of Staff's Department. Guilford County Schools reserves the right to reject any or all proposals presented and to waive any informalities and irregularities. Award of this proposal may be in whole or in part as deemed to be in the best interest of GCS. All projects are awarded contingent upon funding. No proposal may be withdrawn after the scheduled closing time for the receipt of proposals for a period of **60 days**.

EVALUATION CRITERIA

All qualified proposals will be evaluated, and award will be made based on consideration of the criteria outlined in the 5.0 Request for Proposal Document.

5.0 Request for Proposal Document

Scope of Work –

5.1.0 Collect statistically valid data through surveys and focus groups to understand the enrollment decision-making process of Guilford County families.

Audiences:

- Parents of current students
- Parents of students who were once enrolled in GCS but have left
- Parents of children ages 3-5
- Parents of 5-to 7-year-olds who have not yet enrolled their children in school
- Parents of students who are currently in charter, private or homeschool settings
- Guilford County residents, both with school-age children and without

Information sought:

- Opinion of Guilford County Schools as a whole (including but not limited to quality, safety, transparency, stewardship of taxpayer dollars, effectiveness of educators, effectiveness of leaders, customer service, preparation for life after high school)
- Opinion of Guilford County Schools choice programs (including but not limited to quality, safety, transparency, stewardship of taxpayer dollars, effectiveness of educators, effectiveness of leaders, customer service, preparation for life after high school)
- Reasons for leaving the district or not enrolling at all
- Where they receive information about Guilford County Schools
- What are the qualities of their ideal school/district
- Most important issues when deciding where to enroll (in rank order)
- For those who have enrolled, what could be improved about the process
- What could be improved about the GCS website to facilitate enrollment and improve overall communication
- At what point did they make their enrollment decisions (age of child)
- What, if any, marketing information did they receive from charter or private schools
- How much does word of mouth (neighbors, friends, etc.) play a role in their decision
- How much does mainstream media play a role in their decision, and what specific mainstream media channels they use
- How much does social media play a role in their decision, and what specific social media channels they use

5.2.0 Provide data collection and hosting services in a secure environment aligned to a mutually agreed upon data security agreement.

5.3.0 Provide technical assistance and support in creating effective communication messages and strategies to share information with families and the community regarding the various free public education programs.

6.0 Vendor Presentation and Interview

6.1. A presentation and interview session may be held with vendors who demonstrate the ability to perform the requirements of this RFP. Multiple sessions may be required.

6.2. If applicable, presentations and interviews will be held at Guilford County Schools administrative offices. Travel expenses are the responsibility of the vendor(s).

7.0 Rubric

	INADEQUATE (0)	LACKING (1)	ADEQUATE (2)	EXEMPLARY (3)
5.1.0 Collect statistically valid data through surveys and focus groups to understand the enrollment decision-making process of Guilford County families	Proposal provides no evidence of experience and/or expertise conducting surveys and focus groups	Proposal provides little evidence of experience and/or expertise conducting surveys and focus groups	Proposal provides adequate evidence of experience and/or expertise conducting surveys and focus groups	Proposal provides significant evidence of experience and/or expertise conducting surveys and focus groups
5.1.2 Provide data collection and hosting services in a secure environment	Proposal provides no evidence of the firm's capability to collect and host data in a secure environment	Proposal provides little evidence of the firm's capability to collect and host data in a secure environment	Proposal provides adequate evidence of the firm's capability to collect and host data in a secure environment	Proposal provides significant evidence of the firm's capability to collect and host data in a secure environment
5.1.3 Provide technical assistance and support in creating effective communication messages and strategies to share information with families and the community regarding the various free public education programs.	Proposal provides no evidence of experience and/or expertise in this area of technical assistance.	Proposal provides little evidence of experience and/or expertise in this area of technical assistance.	Proposal provides adequate evidence of experience and/or expertise in this area of technical assistance.	Proposal provides significant evidence of experience and/or expertise in this area of technical assistance.



ATTACHMENT I: SUPPLEMENTAL VENDOR INFORMATION

HISTORICALLY UNDERUTILIZED BUSINESSES

Historically Underutilized Businesses (HUBs) consist of minority, women and disabled business firms that are at least fifty-one percent owned and operated by an individual(s) of the categories. Also included in this category are disabled business enterprises and non-profit work centers for the blind and severely disabled.

Pursuant to G.S. 143B-1361(a), 143-48 and 143-128.4, THE STATE invites and encourages participation in this procurement process by businesses owned by minorities, women, disabled, disabled business enterprises and nonprofit work centers for the blind and severely disabled. This includes utilizing subcontractors to perform the required functions in this RFP. Any questions concerning NC HUB certification, contact **the North Carolina Office of Historically Underutilized Businesses** at (919) 807-2330. The Vendor shall respond to question #1 and #2 below.

a) Is Vendor a Historically Underutilized Business? Yes No

b) Is Vendor Certified with North Carolina as a Historically Underutilized Business? Yes No

If so, state HUB classification: _____

INSTRUCTIONS TO SUPPLIERS

1. **READ, REVIEW AND COMPLY:** It shall be the supplier's responsibility to read this entire document, review all enclosures and attachments, and comply with all requirements specified herein.
2. **NOTICE TO SUPPLIERS:** All proposals are subject to the provisions of the Instructions to Suppliers, special terms and conditions specific to this Invitation for Proposals, the specifications, and the North Carolina General Contract Terms and Conditions.
The Guilford County Schools (GCS) objects to and will not evaluate or consider any additional terms and conditions submitted with a supplier response. This applies to any language appearing in or attached to the document as part of the supplier's response. **DO NOT ATTACH ANY ADDITIONAL TERMS AND CONDITIONS.**
By execution and delivery of this document, the supplier agrees that any additional terms and conditions, whether submitted purposely or inadvertently, shall have no force or effect.
3. **DEFINITIONS:**
 - **SUPPLIER:** Company, firm, corporation, partnership, individual, etc., submitting a response to an Invitation for Proposals.
 - **TERM CONTRACT:** A contract generally intended to cover all normal requirements for a commodity for a specified period of time based on estimated quantities only.
 - **STATEWIDE TERM CONTRACT:** A term Contract for all agencies, unless exempted by statute, rule, or special term and condition specific to this proposal.
 - **AGENCY SPECIFIC TERM CONTRACT:** A Term Contract for a specific agency.
 - **OPEN MARKET CONTRACT:** A contract for the purchase of a commodity not covered by a term contract.
4. **EXECUTION:** Failure to sign under EXECUTION section will render proposal invalid.
5. **ORDER OF PRECEDENCE:** In cases of conflict between specific provisions in this proposal, the order of precedence shall be (1) special terms and conditions specific to this proposal, (2) specifications, (3) North Carolina General Contract Terms and Conditions, and (4) Instructions to Suppliers.
6. **TIME FOR CONSIDERATION:** Unless otherwise indicated on the first page of this document, supplier's offer shall be valid for 45 days from the date of proposal opening. Preference may be given to proposals allowing not less than 45 days for consideration and acceptance.
7. **PROMPT PAYMENT DISCOUNTS:** Suppliers are urged to compute all discounts into the price offered. If a prompt payment discount is offered, it will not be considered in the award of the contract except as a factor to aid in resolving cases of identical prices.
8. **SPECIFICATIONS:** Any deviation from specifications indicated herein must be clearly pointed out; otherwise, it will be considered that items offered are in strict compliance with these specifications, and supplier will be held responsible, therefore. Deviations shall be explained in detail. **The supplier shall not construe this paragraph as inviting deviation or implying that any deviation will be acceptable.**
9. **INFORMATION AND DESCRIPTIVE LITERATURE:** Supplier is to furnish all information requested and, in the spaces, provided in this document. Further, if required elsewhere in this proposal, each supplier must submit with their proposal sketches, descriptive literature and/or complete specifications covering the products offered. Reference to literature submitted with a previous proposal will not satisfy this provision. Proposals which do not comply with these requirements will be subject to rejection.
10. **RECYCLING AND SOURCE REDUCTION:** It is the policy of this State to encourage and promote the purchase of products with recycled content to the extent economically practicable, and to purchase items which are reusable, refillable, repairable, more durable, and less toxic to the extent that the purchase or use is practicable and cost-effective.
We also encourage and promote using minimal packaging and the use of recycled/recyclable products in the packaging of commodities purchased. However, no sacrifice in quality of packaging will be acceptable. The company remains responsible for providing packaging that will protect the commodity and contain it for its intended use.
Companies are strongly urged to bring to the attention of the purchasers in the Division of Purchase and Contract those products or packaging they offer which have recycled content and that are recyclable.
11. **CLARIFICATIONS/INTERPRETATIONS:** Any and all questions regarding this document must be addressed to the purchaser named on the cover sheet of this document. Do not contact the user directly. Any and all revisions to this document shall be made only by written addendum from the Division of Purchase and Contract. The supplier is cautioned that the requirements of this proposal can be altered only by written addendum and that verbal communications from whatever source are of no effect.
12. **ACCEPTANCE AND REJECTION:** GCS reserves the right to reject any and all proposals, to waive any informality in proposals and, unless otherwise specified by the supplier, to accept any item in the proposal. If either a unit price or extended price is obviously in error and the other is obviously correct, the incorrect price will be disregarded.
13. **REFERENCES:** GCS reserves the right to require a list of users of the exact item offered. GCS may contact these users to determine acceptability of the proposal. Such information may be considered in the evaluation of the proposal.
14. **TAXES:**
 - **FEDERAL:** All agencies participating in this contract are exempt from Federal Taxes, such as excise and transportation.

Exemption forms submitted by the contractor will be executed and returned by the using agency.

- **OTHER:** Prices offered are not to include any personal property taxes, nor any sales or use tax (or fees) unless required by the North Carolina Department of Revenue.
- Any applicable taxes shall be invoiced as a separate item.

15. **AWARD OF CONTRACT:** As directed by statute, qualified proposals will be evaluated and acceptance may be made of the lowest and best proposal most advantageous to GCS as determined upon consideration of such factors as: prices offered; the quality of the articles offered; the general reputation and performance capabilities of the suppliers; the substantial conformity with the specifications and other conditions set forth in the proposal; the suitability of the articles for the intended use; the related services needed; the date or dates of delivery and performance; and such other factors deemed by GCS to be pertinent or peculiar to the purchase in question. Unless otherwise specified by GCS or the supplier, GCS reserves the right to accept any item or group of items on a multi-item proposal. In addition, on TERM CONTRACTS, GCS reserves the right to make partial, progressive or multiple awards: where it is advantageous to award separately by items; or where more than one supplier is needed to provide the contemplated requirements as to quantity, quality, delivery, service, geographical areas; other factors deemed by GCS to be pertinent or peculiar to the purchase in question.

All contracts are awarded contingent upon the availability of funds.

16. **HISTORICALLY UNDERUTILIZED BUSINESSES:** Pursuant to General Statute 143-48 and Executive Order #150, GCS invites and encourages participation in this procurement process by businesses owned by minorities, women, disabled, disabled business enterprises and non-profit work centers for the blind and severely disabled.
17. **CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION:** As provided by statute and rule, the GCS will consider keeping trade secrets which the supplier does not wish disclosed confidential. Each page shall be identified in boldface at the top and bottom as "CONFIDENTIAL" by the supplier. Cost information shall not be deemed confidential. In spite of what is labeled as a trade secret, the determination whether it is or not will be determined by North Carolina law.
18. **SAMPLES:** Sample of items, when required, must be furnished as stipulated herein, free of expense, and if not destroyed will, upon request be returned at the supplier's expense. Request for the return of samples must be made within 10 days following date of proposal opening. Otherwise the samples will become GCS property. Each individual sample must be labeled with the supplier's name, proposal number, and item number. A sample on which an award is made, will be retained until the contract is completed, and then returned, if requested, as specified above.
19. **PROTEST PROCEDURES:** When an offeror wants to protest a contract awarded pursuant to this solicitation, that is over \$10,000, they must submit a written request to the GCS Purchasing Officer at the address given in the solicitation document entitled "Mailing Instructions". This request must be received in the Purchasing Department within (5) consecutive business days of the e-mail notification to the offeror of GCS' intent to maintain the original award. The offeror must submit a written protest letter to the GCS Purchasing Officer. This letter must contain specific reasons and any supporting documentation for the protest.
20. **MISCELLANEOUS:** Masculine pronouns shall be read to include feminine pronouns, and the singular of any word or phrase shall be read to include the plural and vice versa.
21. **DEFAULT AND PERFORMANCE BOND:** In case of default by the contractor, Guilford County Schools (GCS) may procure the articles or services from other sources and hold the contractor responsible for any excess cost occasioned thereby. GCS reserves the right to require performance bond or other acceptable alternative guarantees from successful supplier without expense to GCS.

22. **SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS REGARDING CRIMINAL BACKGROUND**

- A. Criminal Background Investigations of individuals working on school property (sites occupied with students and sites not occupied with students).
- B. At a minimum, the contractor shall obtain a complete North Carolina statewide criminal background investigation for all employees and subcontractors who will work on this project, covering a period for the last seven (7) years. If the contractor or subcontractor is from out of state, the criminal background investigation shall be broadened to include their home state, as well as the state of North Carolina as outlined above. The company providing such information must be recognized by local law enforcement agency as qualified to do so. All costs associated with these criminal background checks is the responsibility of the contractor.

Each prime contractor will be responsible for all their employees and all of their subcontractors working under them.

On sites that are occupied with students and staff, a daily sign-in sheet will be presented by each prime contractor to the principal and SRO – Student Resource Officer by 9:00 a.m. each morning. If there is no SRO – provide to the Principal. This list will contain the name of each person on site and the company they work for.

- C. Any individual with the following criminal convictions or pending charges will NOT be permitted on any school project or property.
 - 1. Child Molestation or Abuse or indecent liberties with a child;
 - 2. Rape;
 - 3. Any Sexually Oriented Crime;
 - 4. Drugs: Felony use, possession or distribution;
 - 5. Murder, manslaughter or other death related charge; or
 - 6. Assault with a deadly weapon or assault with intent to kill.

- D. Any individual with a prior conviction or pending charges contained in the aforementioned list, shall be banned (not allowed) from any school project or property.

- E. Each person on site must wear a plastic laminated identification badge that identifies the name of the company and the person's name. These badges are to be computer produced at a font large enough to be clearly visible. All costs associated with these criminal background checks is the responsibility of the contractor. The ID badge template will be made available to the successful prime contractors at the Pre-Construction Meeting.

- F. Guilford County Schools, may, at any time, request verification of criminal background investigation for any employee or subcontractor on school property.

GENERAL CONTRACT TERMS AND CONDITIONS

1. **DEFAULT AND PERFORMANCE BOND:** In case of default by the contractor, Guilford County Schools (GCS) may procure the articles or services from other sources and hold the contractor responsible for any excess cost occasioned thereby. GCS reserves the right to require performance bond or other acceptable alternative guarantees from successful supplier without expense to GCS.
2. **GOVERNMENTAL RESTRICTIONS:** In the event any Governmental restrictions are imposed which necessitate alteration of the material, quality, workmanship or performance of the items offered prior to their delivery, it shall be the responsibility of the contractor to notify, in writing, the issuing purchasing office at once, indicating the specific regulation which required such alterations. GCS reserves the right to accept any such alterations, including any price adjustments occasioned thereby, or to cancel the contract.
3. **AVAILABILITY OF FUNDS:** Any and all payments to the contractor are dependent upon and subject to the availability of funds to the agency for the purpose set forth in this agreement. No goods or services should be shipped or provided prior to issuance of a Purchase Order to the vendor/contractor by Guilford County Schools.
4. **TAXES:** Any applicable taxes shall be invoiced as a separate item.

G.S. 143-59.1 bars the Secretary of Administration from entering into contracts with vendors if the vendor or its affiliates meet one of the conditions of G. S. 105-164.8(b) and refuse to collect use tax on sales of tangible personal property to purchasers in North Carolina. Conditions under G. S. 105-164.8(b) include: (1) Maintenance of a retail establishment or office, (2) Presence of representatives in the State that solicit sales or transact business on behalf of the vendor and (3) Systematic exploitation of the market by media-assisted, media-facilitated, or media-solicited means. By execution of the proposal document the vendor certifies that it and all of its affiliates, (if it has affiliates), collect(s) the appropriate taxes.

5. **SITUS:** The place of this contract, its situs and forum, shall be North Carolina, where all matters, whether sounding in contract or tort, relating to its validity, construction, interpretation and enforcement shall be determined.
6. **GOVERNING LAWS:** This contract is made under and shall be governed and construed in accordance with the laws of the State of North Carolina.
7. **INSPECTION AT CONTRACTOR'S SITE:** GCS reserves the right to inspect, at a reasonable time, the equipment/item, plant or other facilities of a prospective contractor prior to contract award, and during the contract term as necessary for GCS determination that such equipment/item, plant or other facilities conform with the specifications/requirements and are adequate and suitable for the proper and effective performance of the contract.
8. **PAYMENT TERMS:** Payment terms are Net 30 days after receipt of correct invoice or acceptance of goods. The using agency is responsible for all payments to the contractor under the contract. Payment by some agencies may be made by procurement card and it shall be accepted by the contractor for payment if the contractor accepts that card (Visa, Mastercard, etc.) from other customers. If payment is made by procurement card, then payment may be processed immediately by the contractor.
9. **AFFIRMATIVE ACTION:** The contractor will take affirmative action in complying with all Federal and State requirements concerning fair employment and employment of people with disabilities and concerning the treatment of all employees without regard to discrimination by reason of race, color, religion, sex, national origin or disability.
10. **CONDITION AND PACKAGING:** Unless otherwise provided by special terms and conditions or specifications, it is understood and agreed that any item offered or shipped has not been sold or used for any purpose and shall be in first class condition. All containers/packaging shall be suitable for handling, storage or shipment.
11. **STANDARDS:** All manufactured items and/or fabricated assemblies subject to operation under pressure, operation by connection to an electric source, or operation involving a connection to a manufactured, natural, or LP gas source shall be constructed and approved in a manner acceptable to the appropriate state inspector which customarily requires the label or re-examination listing or identification marking of the appropriate safety standard organization; such as the American Society of Mechanical Engineers for pressure vessels; the Underwriters Laboratories and /or National Electrical Manufacturers' Association for electrically operated assemblies; or the American Gas Association for gas operated assemblies, where such approvals of listings have been established for the type of device offered and furnished. Further, all items furnished shall meet all requirements of the Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA), and state and federal requirements relating to clean air and water pollution.
12. **PATENT:** The contractor shall hold and save GCS, its officers, agents and employees, harmless from liability of any kind, including costs and expenses, on account of any copyrighted material, patented or unpatented invention, articles, device or appliance manufactured or used in the performance of this contract, including use by the government.
13. **ADVERTISING:** Contractor agrees not to use the existence of this contract or the name of the State of North Carolina as part of any commercial advertising.
14. **ACCESS TO PERSONS AND RECORDS:** The State Auditor and the using agency's internal auditors shall have access to persons and records as a result of all contracts or grants entered into by State agencies or political subdivisions in accordance with General Statute 147-64.7 and Session Law 2010-194, Section 21 (i.e., the State Auditors and internal auditors may audit the records of the contractor during the term of the contract to verify accounts and data affecting fees or performance).

15. **ASSIGNMENT:** No assignment of the contractor's obligations nor the contractor's right to receive payment hereunder shall be permitted. However, upon written request approved by the issuing purchasing authority and solely as a convenience to the contractor, may:
- Forward the contractor's payment check directly to any person or entity designated by the contractor, and
 - Include any person or entity designated by contractor as a joint payee on the contractor's payment check.
- In no event shall such approval and action obligate the State to anyone other than the contractor and the contractor shall remain responsible for fulfillment of all contract obligations.
16. **INSURANCE COVERAGE:** - During the term of the contract, the contractor at its sole cost and expense shall provide commercial insurance of such type and with such terms and limits as may be reasonably associated with the contract. As a minimum, the contractor shall provide and maintain the following coverage and limits:
- Worker's Compensation** - The contractor shall provide and maintain Worker's Compensation Insurance, as required by the laws of North Carolina, as well as employer's liability coverage with minimum limits of \$150,000.00, covering all of contractor's employees who are engaged in any work under the contract. If any work is sublet, the contractor shall require the subcontractor to provide the same coverage for any of his employees engaged in any work under the contract.
 - Commercial General Liability** - General Liability Coverage on a Comprehensive Broad Form on an occurrence basis in the minimum amount of \$1,000,000.00 Combined Single Limit. (Defense cost shall be in excess of the limit of liability.)
 - Automobile** - Automobile Liability Insurance, to include liability coverage, covering all owned, hired and non-owned vehicles, used in connection with the contract. The minimum combined single limit shall be \$150,000.00 bodily injury and property damage; \$150,000.00 uninsured/under insured motorist; and \$1,000.00 medical payment.
- REQUIREMENTS:** Providing and maintaining adequate insurance coverage is a material obligation of the contractor and is of the essence of this contract. All such insurance shall meet all laws of the State of North Carolina. Such insurance coverage shall be obtained from companies that are authorized to provide such coverage and that are authorized by the Commissioner of Insurance to do business in North Carolina. The contractor shall at all times comply with the terms of such insurance policies, and all requirements of the insurer under any such insurance policies, except as they may conflict with existing North Carolina laws or this contract. The limits of coverage under each insurance policy maintained by the contractor shall not be interpreted as limiting the contractor's liability and obligations under the contract.
17. **GENERAL INDEMNITY:** The contractor shall hold and save the State, its officers, agents, and employees, harmless from liability of any kind, including all claims and losses, with the exception of consequential damages, accruing or resulting to any other person, firm, or corporation furnishing or supplying work, services, materials, or supplies in connection with the performance of this contract, and from any and all claims and losses accruing or resulting to any person, firm, or corporation that may be injured or damaged by the contractor in the performance of this contract and that are attributable to the negligence or intentionally tortuous acts of the contractor provided that the contractor is notified in writing within 30 days that the State has knowledge of such claims. The contractor represents and warrants that it shall make no claim of any kind or nature against the State's agents who are involved in the delivery or processing of contractor goods to the State. The representation and warranty in the preceding sentence shall survive the termination or expiration of this contract.
18. **THE SUCCESSFUL SUPPLIER(S) SHALL PAY A TRANSACTION FEE OF 1.75% (.0175) ON THE TOTAL DOLLAR AMOUNT (EXCLUDING SALES TAXES) OF EACH PURCHASE ORDER ISSUED THROUGH THE STATEWIDE E-PROCUREMENT SERVICE** This applies to all e-procurement purchase orders, regardless of the quantity or dollar amount of the purchase order. This transaction fee shall neither be charged to nor paid by GCS. The transaction fee shall not be stated or included as a separate item in the proposed contract or invoice. There are no additional fees or charges to the contractor for the services rendered by GCS under this contract.
19. **CANCELLATION (TERM CONTRACTS ONLY):** All contract obligations shall prevail for at least 180 days after the effective date of the contract. After that period, in addition to the provisions of the paragraph entitled Price Adjustments, for the protection of both parties, this contract may be canceled in whole or in part by either party by giving 30 days prior notice in writing to the other party. Such notice of cancellation, as required herein, shall be transmitted via U.S. MAIL, Certified, Return Receipt Requested. The 30 days' notice for cancellation shall begin on the day the return receipt is signed and dated.
20. **QUANTITIES (TERM CONTRACTS ONLY):** The award of a term contract neither implies nor guarantees any minimum or maximum purchases thereunder.
21. **PRICE ADJUSTMENTS (TERM CONTRACTS ONLY):** Any price changes, downward or upward, which might be permitted during the contract period must be general, either by reason of market change or on the part of the contractor to other customers.
- Notification:** Must be given to GCS, in writing, concerning any proposed price adjustments. Such notification shall be accompanied by copy of manufacturer's official notice or other acceptable evidence that the change is general in nature.
 - Decreases:** GCS shall receive full proportionate benefit immediately at any time during the contract period.
 - Increases:** All prices shall be firm against any increase for 180 days from the effective date of the contract. After this period, a request for increase may be submitted with GCS reserving the right to accept or reject the increase or cancel the contract. Such action by GCS shall occur not later than 15 days after the receipt by GCS of a properly documented request for price increase. Any increases accepted shall become effective not later than 30 days after the expiration of the original 15 days reserved to evaluate the request for increase.
 - Invoices:** It is understood and agreed that orders will be shipped at the established contract prices in effect on dates orders are placed. Invoicing at variance with this provision will subject the contract to cancellation. Applicable North Carolina sales tax shall be invoiced as a separate item.