

# City of Burlington

## **Minority-owned, Woman-owned, Disadvantaged-owned Outreach Plan and Guidelines And Mediated Settlement Conferences For Construction Projects**



October 15, 2019

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# **OUTREACH PLAN AND GUIDELINES FOR RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION OF MINORITY BUSINESSES FOR PARTICIPATION IN CITY OF BURLINGTON BUILDING CONSTRUCTION OR REPAIR CONTRACTS**

In accordance with G.S. 143-128.2, these guidelines establish goals for minority participation in single-prime bidding, separate-prime bidding, construction manager at risk, and alternative contracting methods, on City of Burlington building construction or repair projects in the amount of \$300,000 or more. The outreach plan shall also be applicable to the selection process of architectural, engineering, and Construction Manager-at-Risk services.

CITY OF BURLINGTON has a current verifiable goal of **10** percent for minority participation for building construction or repair projects. The goal will be reviewed annually or as soon as relevant data becomes available.

## **SECTION A: INTENT**

It is the intent of these guidelines that City of Burlington, as awarding authority for building construction or repair projects, and the contractors and subcontractors performing the construction contracts awarded shall cooperate and in good faith do all things legal, proper, and reasonable to achieve the goal of

10 percent for participation by minority businesses in each building construction or repair project as required by GS 143-128.2. Nothing in these guidelines 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.

## **SECTION B: DEFINITIONS**

1. Minority - 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, the Pacific Islands;
- d. American Indian, that is, a person having origins in any of the original peoples of North America; or
- e. Female

2. Minority Business (MBE) - means a business:

- a. In which at least fifty-one percent (51%) is owned by one or more minority persons, 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.

3. Socially and economically disadvantaged individual - means the same as defined in 15 U.S.C. 637: "Socially disadvantaged individuals are those who have been subjected to racial or ethnic prejudice or cultural bias because of their identity as a member of a group without regard to their individual qualities." "Economically disadvantaged individuals are those socially disadvantaged individuals whose ability to compete in the free enterprise system has been impaired due to diminished capital and credit opportunities as compared to others in the same business area who are not socially disadvantaged."

4. Public Entity – Means State and all public subdivisions and local government units.

5. Owner – City of Burlington

6. Designer – Any person, firm, partnership, or corporation which has contracted with City of Burlington to perform architectural or engineering work.

7. Bidder - Any person, firm, partnership, corporation, association, or joint venture seeking to be awarded a public contract or subcontract.
8. Contract - A mutually binding legal relationship or any modification thereof obligating the seller to furnish equipment, materials, or services, including construction, and obligating the buyer to pay for them.
9. Contractor - Any person, firm, partnership, corporation, association, or joint venture which has contracted with City of Burlington to perform building construction or repair work.
10. Subcontractor - A firm under contract with the prime contractor or construction manager at risk for supplying materials or labor and materials and/or installation. The subcontractor may or may not provide materials in his subcontract.

## **SECTION C: MINORITY OUTREACH PLAN AND GUIDELINES**

### **Owner**

CITY OF BURLINGTON will employ the following strategies to encourage participation from MBEs.

1. Work with minority-focused and small business groups that support MBE and small business inclusion in the solicitation of bids.
2. Place emphasis on the importance of soliciting certified MBE firms for subcontracting opportunities at pre-bid conferences and in the bid documents. Examine specifications to identify special subcontracting opportunities and strongly encourage prime contractors to solicit bids for subcontracts from MBE firms.
3. Provide detailed information to majority contractors concerning the bidding and good faith efforts requirements by holding meetings with the contractors.
4. Assess the effectiveness of the MBE program, and identify opportunities to enhance it by evaluating MBE participation and compliance and reviewing the good faith efforts provided in bid packages.
5. Identify subcontracting opportunities unique to each construction contract and project and concentrate heavily on targeting certified MBE firms that have expressed an interest in City of Burlington projects. Identify these opportunities and contact interested businesses no later than 10 days prior to the bid opening and provide a list of prime contractors who plan to participate in the project.
6. Build new and strengthen existing business relationships through networking. Continue communicating with other North Carolina public agencies to find out how their MBE outreach programs are working and to share “best practices” and ideas to improve programs.
7. Participate in educational opportunities throughout the community as they become available and offer training sessions to share City of Burlington’s outreach plan with interested businesses and organizations.
8. Be visible through participation in trade shows and business organizations of interest to MBE firms, majority contractors, and small businesses, and provide information to the general public about the MBE program, and continue outreach efforts to the business community.
9. Enhance City of Burlington’s web page by including the outreach plan and guidelines, listing good faith efforts, creating links to MBE resources, and creating awareness of specific subcontracting opportunities.

10. Make available to minority-focused agencies a list of subcontracting opportunities when they are identified, no later than 10 days prior to the bid opening, and a list of prime bidders that subcontractors may wish to contact for subcontracting consideration.
11. Maintain or continue to maintain a database specifically for MBE firms and majority contractors to ensure those firms wishing to do business with City of Burlington have access to up-to-date information.
12. Advertise upcoming bid opportunities in minority-focused media.
13. Work with architects and engineers to make subcontracting opportunities more noticeable and more easily understood by potential contractors and subcontractors.

### **Designer**

Under the single-prime bidding, separate prime bidding, dual bidding, construction manager at risk, or alternative contracting method, the designer will:

1. Attend the scheduled pre-bid conference to explain minority business requirements to the prospective bidders.
2. Assist the owner to identify and notify prospective minority business prime and subcontractors of potential contracting opportunities.
3. Maintain documentation of any contacts, correspondence, or conversation with minority business firms made in an attempt to meet the goals.
4. Review jointly with the owner, all requirements of G.S. 143-128.2(c) and G.S.143-128.2(f) – (i.e. bidders’ proposals for identification of the minority businesses that will be utilized with corresponding total dollar value of the bid and affidavit listing good faith efforts, or affidavit of self-performance of work, if the contractor will perform work under contract by its own workforce) - prior to recommendation of award.
5. During construction phase of the project, review documentation for contract payment to MBEs (e.g. state form “Appendix E: MBE Documentation for Contract Payment” <https://ncadmin.nc.gov/document/appendix-e-mbe-documentation-contract-payments>) for compliance with minority business utilization commitments. Submit this form with monthly pay applications to the Owner.

### **Prime Contractor(s), Construction Manager-at Risk, and Its First-Tier Subcontractors**

Under the single-prime bidding, the separate-prime bidding, dual bidding, construction manager at risk, and alternative contracting methods, contractor(s) will:

1. Attend the scheduled pre-bid conference.
2. Identify or determine those work areas of a subcontract where minority businesses may have an interest in performing subcontract work.
3. During the bidding process, comply with the owner’s requirements listed in the proposal for minority participation.
4. Identify on the bid the minority businesses that will be utilized on the project with corresponding total dollar value of the bid and affidavit listing good faith efforts as required by G.S. 143-128.2(c) and G.S. 143-128.2(f).
5. Make documentation showing evidence of implementation of Prime Contractor, CM-at-Risk and First-Tier Subcontractor responsibilities available for review by City of Burlington, upon request.
6. Upon being named the apparent low bidder, the bidder shall provide one of the following:
  - (1) 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; or

(2) if the percentage is not equal to the applicable goal, then documentation of all good faith efforts taken 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. Failure to comply with these requirements is grounds for rejection of the bid and award to the next lowest responsible and responsive bidder.

7. The contractor(s) shall identify the name(s) of minority business subcontractor(s) and corresponding dollar amount of work on the schedule of values.
8. The contractor(s) shall submit with each monthly pay request(s) and final payment(s) documentation for contract payment to MBEs (e.g. state form “MBE Documentation for Contract Payment” for designer’s review.
9. During the construction of a project, at any time, if it becomes necessary to replace a minority business subcontractor, immediately advise the owner in writing, of the circumstances involved. The prime contractor shall make a good faith effort to replace a minority business subcontractor with another minority business subcontractor.
10. If during the construction of a project additional subcontracting opportunities become available, the contractor shall make a good faith effort to solicit sub-bids from minority businesses.

### **Minority Business Responsibilities**

#### **Certification**

CITY OF BURLINGTON requires certification for minority, disadvantaged or women-owned businesses. Any business that desires to participate as an MBE will be required to complete and submit for certification, documents required by any of the agencies listed below. Only those firms holding current certification through at least one of the following agencies will be considered eligible for inclusion in meeting the MBE participation percentage goals:

North Carolina Department of Administration Historically Underutilized Business (HUB) certification  
North Carolina Department of Transportation Minority/Disadvantaged/Women-owned Business certification  
Small Business Administration 8(a) certification  
Other governmental agencies on a case-by-case basis

#### **Other Responsibilities**

Minority businesses that are contacted by owners or bidders must respond promptly whether or not they wish to submit a bid.

### **SECTION D: MINIMUM COMPLIANCE REQUIREMENTS**

All written statements or affidavits made by the bidder shall become a part of the agreement between the Contractor and CITY OF BURLINGTON for performance of the contract. Failure to comply with any of these statements, affidavits, or with the minority business guidelines shall constitute a breach of the contract. A finding by CITY OF BURLINGTON that any information submitted either prior to award of the contract or during the performance of the contract is inaccurate, false, or incomplete shall also constitute a breach of the contract. Any such breach may result in termination of the contract in accordance with the termination provisions contained in the contract. It shall be solely at the option of CITY OF BURLINGTON whether to terminate the contract for breach.

In determining whether a contractor has made good faith efforts, CITY OF BURLINGTON will evaluate all efforts made by the Contractor and will determine compliance in regard to quantity, diligence, and results of these efforts. Contractors are required to earn at least 50 points for good faith efforts. Failure to file a required affidavit

or documentation demonstrating that the contractor made the required good faith effort, is grounds for rejection of the bid. 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. (10 points)
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. (10 points)
3. Breaking down or combining elements of work into economically feasible units to facilitate minority participation. (15 points)
4. Working with minority trade, community, or contractor organizations identified by the Office for Historically Underutilized Businesses and included in the bid documents that provide assistance in recruitment of minority businesses. (10 points)
5. Attending any pre-bid meetings scheduled by the public owner. (10 points)
6. Providing assistance in getting required bonding or insurance or providing alternatives to bonding or insurance for subcontractors. (20 points)
7. Negotiating in good faith with interested minority businesses and not rejecting them as unqualified without sound reasons based on their capabilities. Reasons for rejection of a minority business based on lack of qualification should be documented in writing. (15 points)
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. (25 points)
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. (20 points)
10. Providing quick pay agreements and policies to enable minority contractors and suppliers to meet cash flow demands. (20 points)

## **SECTION E: DISPUTE RESOLUTION PROCEDURES**

Pursuant to G.S. 143-128 (f1), all disputes involving contractors on a building construction or repair project with CITY OF BURLINGTON shall be resolved pursuant to **State of North Carolina Policy G.S. 143-135.26(11)**.

**SECTION F:** In addition to these guidelines, there will be issued with each construction bid package provisions for providing minority business participation in the CITY OF BURLINGTON projects.

**\*\*\*DO NOT SUBMIT THIS FORM WITH THE BID PROPOSAL\*\*\***  
**Portion of the Work to be Performed by HUB Certified/Minority Businesses**  
**County of \_\_\_\_\_**

(Note this form is to be submitted only by the apparent lowest responsible, responsive bidder.)

If the portion of the work to be executed by HUB certified/minority businesses as defined in GS143-128.2(g) and 128.4(a),(b),(e) is equal to or greater than 10% of the bidders total contract price, then the bidder must complete this affidavit.  
 This affidavit shall be provided by the apparent lowest responsible, responsive bidder within **72 hours** after notification of being low bidder.

Affidavit of \_\_\_\_\_ I do hereby certify that on the \_\_\_\_\_  
 (Name of Bidder)

(Project Name)  
 Project ID# \_\_\_\_\_ Amount of Bid \$ \_\_\_\_\_

I will expend a minimum of \_\_\_\_\_% of the total dollar amount of the contract with minority business enterprises. Minority businesses will be employed as construction subcontractors, vendors, suppliers or providers of professional services. Such work will be subcontracted to the following firms listed below.

Attach additional sheets if required

Name and Phone Number	*Minority Category	**HUB Certified Y/N	Work Description	Dollar Value

\*Minority categories: Black, African American (**B**), Hispanic (**H**), Asian American (**A**) American Indian (**I**), Female (**F**) Socially and Economically Disadvantaged (**D**)

**\*\* HUB Certification with the state HUB Office required to be counted toward state participation goals.**

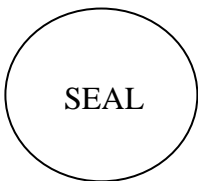
*Pursuant to GS143-128.2(d), the undersigned will enter into a formal agreement with Minority Firms for work listed in this schedule conditional upon execution of a contract with the Owner. Failure to fulfill this commitment may constitute a breach of the contract.*

The undersigned hereby certifies that he or she has read the terms of this commitment and is authorized to bind the bidder to the commitment herein set forth.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Name of Authorized Officer: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_



State of \_\_\_\_\_, County of \_\_\_\_\_

Subscribed and sworn to before me this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_ 20\_\_\_\_

Notary Public \_\_\_\_\_

My commission expires \_\_\_\_\_



# City of Burlington

# – Good Faith Efforts

(Note this form is to be submitted only by the apparent lowest responsible, responsive bidder.)

If the goal of 10% participation by HUB Certified/ minority business **is not** achieved, the Bidder shall provide the following documentation to the Owner of his good faith efforts:

Affidavit of \_\_\_\_\_ I do hereby certify that on the \_\_\_\_\_  
 (Name of Bidder)

Project ID# \_\_\_\_\_ (Project Name) Amount of Bid \$ \_\_\_\_\_

I will expend a minimum of \_\_\_\_\_% of the total dollar amount of the contract with HUB certified/ minority business enterprises. Minority businesses will be employed as construction subcontractors, vendors, suppliers or providers of professional services. Such work will be subcontracted to the following firms listed below. (Attach additional sheets if required)

Name and Phone Number	*Minority Category	**HUB Certified Y/N	Work Description	Dollar Value

\*Minority categories: Black, African American (**B**), Hispanic (**H**), Asian American (**A**) American Indian (**I**), Female (**F**) Socially and Economically Disadvantaged (**D**)

\*\* **HUB Certification with the state HUB Office required to be counted toward state participation goals.**

**Examples** of documentation that may be required to demonstrate the Bidder's good faith efforts to meet the goals set forth in these provisions include, but are not necessarily limited to, the following:

- A. Copies of solicitations for quotes to at least three (3) minority business firms from the source list provided by the State for each subcontract to be let under this contract (if 3 or more firms are shown on the source list). Each solicitation shall contain a specific description of the work to be subcontracted, location where bid documents can be reviewed, representative of the Prime Bidder to contact, and location, date and time when quotes must be received.
- B. Copies of quotes or responses received from each firm responding to the solicitation.
- C. A telephone log of follow-up calls to each firm sent a solicitation.
- D. For subcontracts where a minority business firm is not considered the lowest responsible sub-bidder, copies of quotes received from all firms submitting quotes for that particular subcontract.
- E. Documentation of any contacts or correspondence to minority business, community, or contractor organizations in an attempt to meet the goal.
- F. Copy of pre-bid roster
- G. Letter documenting efforts to provide assistance in obtaining required bonding or insurance for minority business.
- H. Letter detailing reasons for rejection of minority business due to lack of qualification.
- I. Letter documenting proposed assistance offered to minority business in need of equipment, loan capital, lines of credit, or joint pay agreements to secure loans, supplies, or letter of credit, including waiving credit that is ordinarily required.

Failure to provide the documentation as listed in these provisions may result in rejection of the bid and award to the next lowest responsible and responsive bidder.

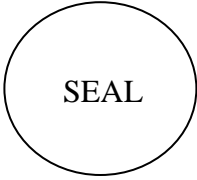
*Pursuant to GS143-128.2(d), the undersigned will enter into a formal agreement with Minority Firms for work listed in this schedule conditional upon execution of a contract with the Owner. Failure to fulfill this commitment may constitute a breach of the contract.*

*The undersigned hereby certifies that he or she has read the terms of this commitment and is authorized to bind the bidder to the commitment herein set forth.*

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Name of Authorized Officer: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_



State of \_\_\_\_\_, County of \_\_\_\_\_

Subscribed and sworn to before me this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_ 20\_\_\_\_

Notary Public \_\_\_\_\_

My commission expires \_\_\_\_\_

## MBE DOCUMENTATION FOR CONTRACT PAYMENTS

Prime Contractor/Architect: \_\_\_\_\_

Address & Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Project Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Pay Application #: \_\_\_\_\_ Period: \_\_\_\_\_

The following is a list of payments made to Minority Business Enterprises on this project for the above-mentioned period.

MBE FIRM NAME	* TYPE OF MBE	AMOUNT PAID THIS MONTH (With This Pay App)	TOTAL PAYMENTS TO DATE	TOTAL AMOUNT COMMITTED

\*Minority categories: Black (B), Hispanic (H), Asian American (AA), American Indian (AI), White Female (WF), Socially and Economically Disadvantaged (SED)

Approved/Certified By:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Title

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

**SUBMIT WITH EACH PAY REQUEST - FINAL PAYMENT - FINAL REPORT**

# Identification of HUB Certified/ Minority Business Participation

I, \_\_\_\_\_ (Name of Bidder)

do hereby certify that on this project, we will use the following HUB Certified/ minority business as construction subcontractors, vendors, suppliers or providers of professional services.

Firm Name, Address and Phone #	Work Type	*Minority Category	**HUB Certified (Y/N)
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\*Minority categories: Black, African American **(B)**, Hispanic **(H)**, Asian American **(A)** American Indian **(I)**, Female **(F)** Socially and Economically Disadvantaged **(D)**

\*\* HUB Certification with the state HUB Office required to be counted toward state participation goals.  
The total value of minority business contracting will be (\$)\_\_\_\_\_.

RULES IMPLEMENTING MEDIATED  
SETTLEMENT CONFERENCES IN  
NORTH CAROLINA PUBLIC CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS

Adopted  
February 26, 2002

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## RULE 1. INITIATING MEDIATED SETTLEMENT CONFERENCES

### **A. Purpose of Mandatory Settlement Conferences.**

Pursuant to N.C.G.S. 143-128(g) 143-135.26(11), these Rules are promulgated to implement a system of settlement events which are designated to focus the parties' attention on settlement rather than on claim preparation and to provide a structured opportunity for settlement negotiations to take place. Nothing herein is intended to limit or prevent the parties from engaging in settlement procedures voluntarily at any time prior to or during commencement of the dispute resolution process.

### **B. Initiating the Dispute Resolution Process**

- 1) Any party to a public construction contract governed by Article 8. Ch. 143 of the North Carolina General Statutes and identified in N.C.G.S. 143-128(g) and who is a party to a dispute arising out of the construction process in which the amount in controversy is at least \$15,000 may submit a written request to the public owner for mediation of the dispute.
- 2) Prior to submission of a written request for mediation to the public owner, the parties requesting mediation,
  - a) If a prime contractor, must have first submitted its claim to the Project Designer for review as set forth in Exhibit A. If the dispute is not resolved through the Project Designer's instructions, then the dispute becomes ripe for mediation in the Formal Dispute Resolution Process, and the party may submit his written request for mediation to the public owner.
  - b) If the party requesting mediation is a subcontractor, it must first have submitted its claim for mediation to the prime contractor with whom it has a contract. If the dispute is not resolved through the Prime Contractor's involvement, then the dispute becomes ripe for mediation in the Formal Dispute Resolution Process, and the party may submit its written request for mediation to the public owner.
  - c) If the party requesting mediation is the Project Designer, then it must first submit its claim to the public owner to resolve. If the dispute is not resolved with the public owner's involvement, then the Project Designer's dispute is ripe for mediation in the Formal Dispute Resolution Process, and the Project Designer may submit its written request to the public owner for mediation.

## RULE 2. SELECTION OF MEDIATOR

- A. Selection of Certified Mediator by Agreement of the Parties.** The parties may select a mediator certified pursuant to the Rules by agreement within 21 days of requesting mediation. The requesting party shall file with the State Construction Office (hereinafter collectively referred to as the "SCO") or public owner if a non-State project a Notice of Selection of Mediator by Agreement within 10 days of the request; however, any party may file the notice. Such notice shall state the name, address and telephone number of the mediator selected; state the rate of compensation of the mediator; state that the mediator and opposing counsel have agreed upon the selection and rate of compensation; and state that the mediator is certified pursuant to these Rules.

- B. Nomination and Public Owner Approval of a Non-Certified Mediator.** The parties may select a mediator who does not meet the certification requirements of these rules but who, in the opinion of the parties and the SCO or public owner, is otherwise qualified by training or experience to mediate the action.

If the parties select a non-certified mediator, the requesting party shall file with the SCO a Nomination of Non-Certified Mediator within 10 days of the request. Such nomination shall state the name, address and telephone number of the mediator; state the training, experience or other qualifications of the mediator; state the rate of compensation of the mediator; and state that the mediator and opposing counsel have agreed upon the selection and rate of compensation.

The SCO or public owner shall rule on said nomination, shall approve or disapprove of the parties' nomination and shall notify the parties of its decision.

- C. Appointment of Mediator by the SCO.** If the parties cannot agree upon the selection of a mediator, the party or party's attorney shall so notify the SCO or public owner and request, on behalf of the parties, that the SCO or public owner appoint a mediator. The request for appointment must be filed within 10 days after request to mediate and shall state that the parties have had a full and frank discussion concerning the selection of a mediator and have been unable to agree. The request shall state whether any party prefers a certified attorney mediator, and if so, the SCO or public owner shall appoint a certified attorney mediator. If no preference is expressed, the SCO or public owner may appoint a certified attorney mediator or a certified non-attorney mediator.
- D. Mediator Information Directory.** To assist the parties in the selection of a mediator by agreement, the parties are free to utilize the list of certified mediators maintained in any county participating in the Superior Court Mediation Settlement Conference Program.
- E. Disqualification of Mediator.** Any party may request replacement of the mediator by the SCO or public owner for good cause. Nothing in this provision shall preclude mediators from disqualifying themselves.

### **RULE 3. THE MEDIATED SETTLEMENT CONFERENCE**

- A. Where Conference is to be Held.** Unless all parties and the mediator otherwise agree, the mediated settlement conference shall be held in the county where the project is located. The mediator shall be responsible for reserving a place and making arrangements for the conference and for giving timely notice of the time and location of the conference to all attorneys, unrepresented parties and other persons and entities required to attend.
- B. When Conference is to be Held.** The deadline for completion of the mediation shall be not less than 30 days nor more than 60 days after the naming of the mediator.
- C. Request to Extend Deadline for Completion.** A party, or the mediator, may request the SCO or public owner to extend the deadline for completion of the conference. Such request shall state the reasons the extension is sought and shall be served by the moving party upon the other parties and the mediator. If any party does not consent to the request, said party shall promptly communicate its objection to the SCO or public owner. The SCO or public owner may grant the request by setting a new deadline for completion of the conference.

- D. **Recesses.** The mediator may recess the conference at any time and may set times for reconvening. If the time for reconvening is set before the conference is recessed, no further notification is required for persons present at the conference.
- E. **The mediated settlement conference shall not be cause for the delay of the construction project which is the focus of the dispute.**

#### **RULE 4. DUTIES OF PARTIES AND OTHER PARTICIPANTS IN FORMAL DISPUTE RESOLUTION PROCESS**

A. **Attendance.**

- 1) All parties to the dispute originally presented to the Designer or Prime Contractor for initial resolution must attend the mediation. Failure of a party to a construction contract to attend the mediation will result in the public owner's withholding of monthly payment to that party until such party attends the mediation.
- 2) Attendance shall constitute physical attendance, not by telephone or other electronic means. Any attendee on behalf of a party must have authority from that party to bind it to any agreement reached as a result of the mediation.
- 3) Attorneys on behalf of parties may attend the mediation but are not required to do so.
- 4) Sureties or insurance company representatives are not required to attend the mediation unless any monies paid or to be paid as a result of any agreement reached as a result of mediation require their presence or acquiescence. If such agreement or presence is required, then authorized representatives of the surety or insurance company must attend the mediation.

B. **Finalizing Agreement.** If an agreement is reached in the conference, parties to the agreement shall reduce its terms to writing and sign it along with their counsel.

C. **The mediation fee shall be paid in accordance with N.C.G.S. 143-128(g).**

D. **Failure to compensate mediator.** Any party's failure to compensate the mediators in accordance with N.C.G.S. 143-128(g) shall subject that party to a withholding of said amount of money from the party's monthly payment by the public owner. Should the public owner fail to compensate the mediator, it shall hereby be subject to a civil cause of action from the mediator for the 1/3 portion of the mediator's total fee as required by N.C.G.S. 143-128(g).

#### **RULE 5. AUTHORITY AND DUTIES OF MEDIATORS**

A. **Authority of Mediator.**

- 1) *Control of Conference.* The mediator shall at all times be in control of the conference and the procedures to be followed.
- 2) *Private Consultation.* The mediator may communicate privately with any participant or counsel prior to and during the conference. The fact that private communications have occurred with a participant shall be disclosed to all other participants at the beginning of the conference.



- 3) *Scheduling the Conference.* The mediator shall make a good faith effort to schedule the conference at a time that is convenient with the participants, attorneys and mediator. In the absence of agreement, the mediator shall select the date for the conference.

**B. Duties of Mediator.**

- 1) The mediator shall define and describe the following at the beginning of the conference:
  - a) The process of mediation;
  - b) The difference between mediation and other forms of conflict resolution;
  - c) The costs of the mediated settlement conference;
  - d) That the mediated settlement conference is not a trial, the mediator is not a judge, and the parties retain their legal rights if they do not reach settlement;
  - e) The circumstances under which the mediator may meet and communicate privately with any of the parties or with any other person;
  - f) Whether and under what conditions communications with the mediator will be held in confidence during the conference;
  - g) The inadmissibility of conduct and statements as provided by N.C.G.S 7A-38.1(1);
  - h) The duties and responsibilities of the mediator and the participants; and
  - i) That any agreement reached will be reached by mutual consent.
- 2) *Disclosure.* The mediator has a duty to be impartial and to advise all participants of any circumstance bearing on possible bias, prejudice or partiality.
- 3) *Declaring Impasse.* It is the duty of the mediator timely to determine that an impasse exists and that the conference should end.
- 4) *Reporting Results of Conference.* The mediator shall report to the SCO or public owner within 10 days of the conference whether or not an agreement was reached by the parties. If an agreement was reached, the report shall state the nature of said agreement. The mediator's report shall inform the SCO or public owner of the absence of any party known to the mediator to have been absent from the mediated settlement conference without permission. The SCO or public owner may require the mediator to provide statistical data for evaluation of the mediated settlement conference program.
- 5) *Scheduling and Holding the Conference.* It is the duty of the mediator to schedule the conference and conduct it prior to the deadline of completion set by the rules. Deadlines for completion of the conference shall be strictly observed by the mediator unless said time limit is changed by a written order of the SCO or public owner.

## **RULE 6. COMPENSATION OF THE MEDIATOR**

- A. **By Agreement.** When the mediator is stipulated by the parties, compensation shall be as agreed upon between the parties and the mediator provided that the provisions of N.C.G.S 143-128(g) are observed.
- B. **By Appointment.** When the mediator is appointed by the SCO or public owner, the parties shall compensate the mediator for mediation services at the rate in accordance with the rate charged for Superior Court mediation. The parties shall also pay to the mediator a one-time per case administrative rate in accordance with the rate charged for Superior Court mediation, which is due upon appointment.

## **RULE 7. MEDIATOR CERTIFICATION**

All mediators certified in the Formal Dispute Resolution Program shall be properly certified in accordance with the rules certifying mediators in Superior Court in North Carolina. \* When selecting mediators, the parties may designate a preference for mediators with a background in construction law or public construction contracting. Such requirements, while preferred, are not mandatory under these rules.

All mediators chosen must either demonstrate they are certified in accordance with the Rules Implementing Scheduled Mediated Settlement Conference in Superior Court or must gain the consent of the SCO or public owner to mediate any dispute in accordance with these rules.

\* Except when otherwise allowed by the SCO or public owner upon the request of the parties to the mediation.

## **RULE 8. RULE MAKING**

These Rules are subject to amendment by rule making by the State Building Commission.

These Rules are mandated for State projects when the contracting state entity has not otherwise adopted its own dispute resolution provision. These rules are optional for all other projects subject to Article 8, Ch. 143 of the General Statutes.

## **RULE 9. DEFINITIONS**

When the phrase “SCO or public owner” is used in these rules, “SCO” shall apply to state projects, “public owner” shall apply to non-state public projects.

## **RULE 10. TIME LIMITS**

On state contracts, any time limit provided for by these Rules may be waived or extended by the SCO for good cause shown.

On non-state contracts, any time limit provided for by these Rules may be waived or extended by the mediator it appoints for good cause shown. If the mediator has not yet been appointed, the designer of record shall decide all waivers or extensions of time for good cause shown.