

146 FINAL REGULATIONS

Document No. 4894
STATE FISCAL ACCOUNTABILITY AUTHORITY
CHAPTER 19

Statutory Authority: 1976 Code Sections 11-35-10 et seq., and 2019 Act No. 41, Section 76

19-445. Consolidated Procurement Code.

Synopsis:

The Consolidated Procurement Code authorizes the State Fiscal Accountability Authority to promulgate regulations governing the procurement, management, and control of any and all supplies, services, information technology, and construction to be procured by the State and any other regulations relating to implementation of Title 11, Chapter 35 (Sections 11-35-60 & -540(1)). The Authority previously submitted proposed regulations for legislative approval on January 8, 2019, as Document 4861. Pursuant to Section 76 of 2019 Act No. 41, the Authority published interim regulations in the *State Register* on August 23, 2019. The Act also requires the Authority to publish proposed final regulations it will follow to implement changes; accordingly, these proposed regulations include the text of the previously published interim regulations. In addition, the proposed regulation will address various matters regarding Regulation 19-445 and procurement in general.

Notice of Drafting for the proposed amendments was published in the *State Register* on July 26, 2019.

Instructions:

The following sections of Regulation 19-445 are modified as provided below in the text. All other items and sections remain unchanged.

Text:

19-445. Consolidated Procurement Code.

(Statutory Authority: 1976 Code Section 11-35-10 et seq., and 2019 Act No. 41, Section 76)

Table of Contents	
19-445.2000.	State Procurement Regulations.
19-445.2005.	Internal Procurement Procedures; Procurement Records.
19-445.2010.	Disclosure of Procurement Information.
19-445.2015.	Ratification.
19-445.2020.	Certification.
19-445.2022.	Temporary Suspension of Authority; Audit.
19-445.2025.	Authority to Contract for Certain Services; Definitions.
19-445.2030.	Competitive Sealed Bidding—The Invitation for Bids.
19-445.2040.	The Official State Government Publication.
19-445.2042.	Pre-Bid Conferences.
19-445.2045.	Receipt, Safeguarding, and Disposition of Bids.
19-445.2050.	Bid Opening.
19-445.2055.	Bid Acceptance and Bid Evaluation.
19-445.2065.	Rejection of Bids.
19-445.2070.	Rejection of Individual Bids.
19-445.2075.	All or None Qualifications.
19-445.2077.	Bid Samples and Descriptive Literature.
19-445.2080.	Bid Reductions.
19-445.2085.	Correction or Withdrawal of Bids; Cancellation of Awards.

19-445.2090.	Award.
19-445.2095.	Competitive Sealed Proposals.
19-445.2097.	Rejection of Proposals.
19-445.2099.	Competitive Negotiations.
19-445.2100.	Small Purchases and Other Simplified Purchasing Procedures.
19-445.2105.	Sole Source Procurements.
19-445.2110.	Emergency Procurements.
19-445.2115.	Information Technology Procurements.
19-445.2120.	Cost or Pricing Data.
19-445.2125.	Responsibility of Bidders and Offerors.
19-445.2127.	Organizational Conflicts of Interest.
19-445.2130.	Prequalification of Supplies and Suppliers.
19-445.2132.	Prequalification for a Single Solicitation.
19-445.2135.	Conditions for Use of Multi-term Contracts.
19-445.2137.	Food Service Contracts.
19-445.2140.	Specifications.
19-445.2141.	Commercial Products.
19-445.2143.	Contract Clauses and Administration.
19-445.2145.	Construction, Architect Engineer, Construction Management, and Land Surveying Services.
19-445.2150.	Surplus Property Management.
19-445.2152.	Leases, Lease/Payment, Installment Purchase, and Rental of Personal Property.
19-445.2155.	Intergovernmental Relations.
19-445.2160.	Assistance to Minority Businesses.
19-445.2165.	Gifts
19-445.2180.	Assignment, Novation, and Change of Name.
19-445.2200.	Administrative Review Protective Orders.
19-445.3000.	School District Procurement Codes; Model.

19-445.2000. State Procurement Regulations.

A. General.

These Regulations issued by the South Carolina State Fiscal Accountability Authority, hereafter referred to as the board, establish policies, procedures, and guidelines relating to the procurement, management, control, and disposal of supplies, services, information technology, and construction, as applicable, under the authority of the South Carolina Consolidated Procurement Code, as amended. These Regulations are designed to achieve maximum practicable uniformity in purchasing throughout state government. Hence, implementation of the Procurement Code by and within governmental bodies, as defined in Section 11-35-310(18) of the Procurement Code, shall be consistent with these Regulations. Nothing contained in these Rules and Regulations shall be construed to waive any rights, remedies or defenses the State might have under any laws of the State of South Carolina.

B. Organizational Authority.

(1) The Chief Procurement Officers acting on behalf of the board shall have the responsibility to audit and monitor the implementation of these Regulations and requirements of the South Carolina Consolidated Procurement Code. In accordance with Section 11-35-510 of the Code, all rights, powers, duties and authority relating to the procurement of supplies, services, and information technology and to the management, control, and warehousing of supplies, construction, information technology, and services now vested in or exercised by any governmental body under the provisions of law relating thereto, and regardless of source funding, are hereby vested in the appropriate chief procurement officers. In exercising this authority, the chief procurement officers shall afford each using agency reasonable opportunity to participate in and make recommendations with respect to procurement matters affecting the using agency. The chief procurement officers shall be responsible for

148 FINAL REGULATIONS

developing such organizational structure as necessary to implement the provisions of the Procurement Code and these Regulations.

(2) Materials Management Office: The Materials Management Officer is specifically responsible for:

(a) developing a system of training and certification for procurement officers of governmental bodies in accordance with Section 11-35-1030;

(b) recommending differential dollar limits for direct procurements on the basis of but not limited to the following:

(1) procurement expertise,

(2) commodity,

(3) service,

(4) dollar;

(c) performing procurement audits of governmental bodies in accordance with Sections 11-35-1230 and 11-35-5340 of the Procurement Code.

(d) overseeing acquisitions for the State by the State Procurement Office.

(e) coordinating with the Information Technology Management Office in accordance with Section 11-35-820;

(f) overseeing the acquisition of procurements by the State Engineer in accordance with Section 11-35-830.

(3) Office of Information Technology Management: The Office of Information Technology Management shall be responsible for all procurements involving information technology pursuant to Section 11-35-820 of the Procurement Code.

(4) Office of State Engineer: The Office of State Engineer under the direction and oversight of the Materials Management Officer shall be responsible for all procurements involving construction, architectural and engineering, construction management, and land surveying services pursuant to Section 11-35-830 of the Procurement Code.

C. Definitions

(1) "Head of purchasing agency" means the agency head, that is, the individual charged with ultimate responsibility for the administration and operations of the governmental body. Whenever the South Carolina Consolidated Procurement Code or these Regulations authorize either the chief procurement officer or the head of the purchasing agency to act, the head of the purchasing agency is authorized to act only within the limits of the governmental body's authority under Section 11-35-1210, except with regard to acts taken pursuant to Section 11-35-1560 and 11-35-1570.

(2) "Procuring Agency" means "purchasing agency" as defined in Section 11-35-310.

(3) "Certification" means the authority delegated by the board or the Director of Procurement Services to a governmental body to make direct procurements not under term contracts. Certification is granted pursuant to Section 11-35-1210 and R.19-445.2020.

(4) "Responsible procurement officer" means the individual employed by either the purchasing agency or the chief procurement officers, as applicable, assigned to serve as the procurement officer, as defined in Section 11-35-310, and responsible for administering the procurement process. Typically, the responsible procurement officer will be identified by name in the solicitation, as amended, and any subsequent contracts, as amended.

D. Duty to Report Violations

All governmental bodies shall comply in good faith with all applicable requirements of the consolidated procurement code and these procurement regulations. When any information or allegations concerning improper or illegal conduct regarding a procurement governed by the consolidated procurement code comes to the attention of any employee of the State, immediate notice of the relevant facts shall be transmitted to the appropriate chief procurement officer.

E. Application of the Procurement Code.

(1) Other Required Approvals. Approval pursuant to the Code or regulations does not substitute for any other approval required by law. For example, if the Procurement Code applies to an acquisition and the overall arrangement involves either construction or the granting or acquiring any interest in real property, other independent processes or approval may be required by law, e.g., Sections 1-11-55, 1-11-56, 1-11-58, 1-11-65, or Chapter 47 of Title 2.

(2) Multiple Instruments Not Determinative. The application of the Code does not depend on whether the parties memorialize the overall transaction into one or more contractual instruments. As a remedial statute, the

Consolidated Procurement Code should be construed liberally to carry out its purposes. (Section 11-35-20) Accordingly, when multiple written agreements are part of an overall transaction to accomplish an overall purpose, the documents will be considered together for purposes of determining whether the Consolidated Procurement Code applies, even if the instruments have not been executed simultaneously or the parties are not the same.

(3) Revenue generating contracts. The Consolidated Procurement Code “applies to every procurement . . . by this State under contract acting through a governmental body . . .” (Section 11-35-40(2)) “The term ‘contract’ means “all types of state agreements, regardless of what they may be called, for the procurement . . . of . . . supplies, services, information technology, or construction.” (Section 11-35-310(8)) In pertinent part, the term “procurement” is defined as “buying, purchasing, renting, leasing, or otherwise acquiring any . . . construction.” (Section 11-35-310(25) (emphasis added.)) Accordingly, the Procurement Code applies even though the governmental body does not make a payment of money. Without limitation, examples of such contracts include revenue-generating contracts, concession agreements, and contracts structured as a design-build-finance-operate-maintain project. (Section 11-35-2910(8))

(4) Financed Construction. The Consolidated Procurement Code “applies to every procurement . . . by this State under contract acting through a governmental body . . .” (Section 11-35-40(2)) The term “contract” means “all types of state agreements, regardless of what they may be called, for the procurement . . . of . . . construction.” (Section 11-35-310(18)) In pertinent part, the term “procurement” is defined as “buying, purchasing, renting, leasing, or otherwise acquiring any . . . construction.” (Section 11-35-310(25) (emphasis added)) The term “construction” is defined as “the process of building . . . any . . . public improvements of any kind to real property.” (Section 11-35-310(7)) Read together, and absent an applicable exclusion (e.g., gifts) or exemption (e.g., Section 11-35-710), the Procurement Code applies to every acquisition of the process of improving real property by a governmental body, whether or not the acquisition involves an expenditure of money. Such acquisitions may be memorialized in a number of related agreements and, without limitation, may be structured as an in-kind exchange, lease-purchase, lease with purchase option, lease-lease-back, sale-lease-back, installment-purchase, or so-called public-private-partnership.

(5) Acquisition involving an interest in real property. Generally, the Procurement Code does not apply to an acquisition solely of an interest in real property. For example, the Procurement Code does not apply to an acquisition of land, even though it includes pre-existing improvements and fixtures (i.e., not built-to-suit), nor does it apply to an acquisition of a leasehold estate, even though it includes complementary subordinate supplies, services, information technology, or construction (e.g., landlord-performed tenant improvements for a lease not-to-own, building security, janitorial services). In contrast, the Procurement Code does apply to an acquisition of an interest in real property if the transaction also involves a substantial acquisition of supplies, services, information technology, or construction. For example, and without limitation, the Procurement Code would apply to an acquisition of food services, even though it involved the agency leasing its land to the contractor. As another example, as discussed in R.19-445.2000E(4), a lease-purchase of custom-built, new construction must be acquired pursuant to the Procurement Code. While not necessarily conclusive, the primary objective of the transaction may be determinative.

F. Notice.

(1) When adequate public notice is required by Article 5, the notice must contain sufficient information to allow a prospective offeror to make an informed business judgment as to whether she should compete (or would have competed) for the contract. At minimum the notice must contain the following information, as applicable:

- (a) a description of the item(s) to be acquired;
- (b) how to obtain a copy of the solicitation document or the anticipated contract;
- (c) when and where responses are due; and
- (d) the place of performance or delivery.

(2) In addition to the information above, the notices required by Section 11-35-1560 and Section 11-35-1570 must include the contract dollar amount of the proposed contract.

19-445.2010. Disclosure of Procurement Information.

A. Reserved.

150 FINAL REGULATIONS

B. Prior to the issuance of an award or notification of intent to award, whichever is earlier, state personnel involved in an acquisition shall forward or refer all requests for information regarding the procurement to the responsible procurement officer. The procurement officer will respond to the request.

C. Prior to the issuance of an award or notification of intent to award, whichever is earlier, state personnel involved in an acquisition shall not engage in conduct that knowingly furnishes source selection information to anyone other than the responsible procurement officer, unless otherwise authorized in writing by the responsible procurement officer. "Source selection information" means any of the following information that is related to or involved in the evaluation of an offer (e.g., bid or proposal) to enter into a procurement contract, if that information has not been previously made available to the public or disclosed publicly: (1) Proposed costs or prices submitted in response to an agency solicitation, or lists of those proposed costs or prices, (2) source selection plans, (3) technical evaluation plans, (4) technical evaluations of proposals, (5) cost or price evaluations of proposals, (6) information regarding which proposals are determined to be reasonably susceptible of being selected for award, (7) rankings of responses, proposals, or competitors, (8) reports, evaluations of source selection committees or evaluations panels, (9) other information based on a case-by-case determination by the procurement officer that its disclosure would jeopardize the integrity or successful completion of the procurement to which the information relates.

D. In procurements conducted pursuant to Section 11-35-1530 or Section 11-35-1535, state personnel with access to proposal information shall not disclose either the number of offerors or their identity prior to the issuance of an award or notification of intent to award, whichever is earlier, except as otherwise required by law.

E. Prior to the issuance of an award or notification of intent to award, whichever is earlier, the procurement officer shall not release to any individual information obtained in response to an RFP, without first obtaining from that individual a written agreement, in a form approved by the responsible chief procurement officer, regarding restrictions on the use and disclosure of such information. Such agreements are binding and enforceable. Before allowing any individual to perform any role in discussions, negotiations, evaluation, or the source selection decision in a procurement conducted pursuant to Section 11-35-1530 or Section 11-35-1535, the responsible procurement officer must obtain from that individual, in a form approved by the appropriate chief procurement officer, a written acknowledgement of compliance and an agreement to comply with rules designed to protect the integrity of the procurement process.

F. The release of a proposal to non-state personnel for evaluation does not constitute public disclosure or a release of information for purposes of the Freedom of Information Act.

G. Except as prohibited by law, and subject to section 2200, state contracts may include clauses restricting the state's release of documents and information received from a contractor if those documents are exempt from disclosure under applicable law.

H. Subject to item (E), any person may furnish source selection information to the Office of the State Engineer. The procurement officer shall provide to the Office of the State Engineer any information it requests regarding a procurement.

I. Non-Public Solicitations. In accordance with Section 11-35-410(E), information that forms a part of a specific solicitation need not be publicly available if (a) the information is otherwise exempt from disclosure by law (e.g., Chapter 4, Title 30 (The Freedom of Information Act)), (b) the information is available to any prospective offeror that has executed a nondisclosure agreement (NDA), and (c) the appropriate chief procurement officer has approved the use and terms of an NDA for the solicitation at issue. Prior to use in a specific solicitation, the terms of a proposed NDA must be published in the solicitation unless otherwise approved by the CPO. When requesting approval from the appropriate chief procurement officer, the governmental body must identify the information to be released pursuant to the NDA, explain the reason for the request, cite the legal basis for not making the information publicly available, and provide any other information requested by the CPO. If governmental body declines a person's request to enter an NDA and acquire the information thereto, it must immediately notify the CPO. Consistent with R.19-445.2030, the applicable solicitation should instruct bidders how to comply with the NDA when submitting their offer. Information to be released pursuant to the NDA may also be released in accordance with R.19-445.2200 (Administrative Review Protective Orders).

19-445.2020. Certification.

A. Review Procedures.

(1) Unless otherwise authorized by statute, any governmental body that desires to make direct agency procurements in excess of \$50,000.00, shall contact the Materials Management Officer in writing to request certification in any area of procurement, including the following areas:

- (a) Supplies and services;
- (b) Reserved;
- (c) Construction, including, subject to Section 11-35-3220(9), construction-related professional services;
- (d) Information technology.

(2) The Materials Management Officer shall review and report on the particular governmental body's entire internal procurement operation to include, but not be limited to the following:

- (a) Adherence to provisions of the South Carolina Consolidated Procurement Code and these Regulations;
- (b) Procurement staff and training;
- (c) Adequate audit trails and purchase order register;
- (d) Evidences of competition;
- (e) Small purchase provisions and purchase order confirmation;
- (f) Emergency and sole source procurements;
- (g) Source selections;
- (h) File documentation of procurements;
- (i) Decisions and determinations made pursuant to section 2015;
- (j) Adherence to any mandatory policies, procedures, or guidelines established by the appropriate chief procurement officers;
- (k) Adequacy of written determinations required by the South Carolina Consolidated Procurement Code and these Regulations;
- (l) Contract administration;
- (m) Adequacy of the governmental body's system of internal controls in order to ensure compliance with applicable requirements.

(3) The report required by item A(2) shall be submitted to the board.

B. Approval

(1)(a) Upon recommendation by the Materials Management Officer, the Director of the Division of Procurement Services may authorize the particular governmental body to make direct agency procurements in the areas described in item A(1)(a) and A(1)(d), not under term contracts, in an amount up to one hundred fifty thousand dollars, provided a report required by item A(2) has been prepared within two years preceding the request.

(b) Upon recommendation by the State Engineer based on her knowledge of and experience with the particular governmental body, the Director of the Division of Procurement Services may authorize the particular governmental body to make direct agency procurements in the areas described in item A(1)(c), not under term contracts, in an amount up to one hundred fifty thousand dollars.

(c) The director shall advise the board in writing of all authorizations granted pursuant to this section B.

(2) If a governmental body requests certification above one hundred fifty thousand dollars, the request, along with the recommendation of the Materials Management Officer and the report required by item A(2), shall be submitted to the board. Upon recommendation by the Materials Management Officer and approval by the board, the particular governmental body may be certified and assigned a dollar limit below which the certified governmental body may make direct agency procurements not under term contracts.

(3) Certification under item B(1) or B(2) shall be in writing and specify:

- (a) The name of the governmental body;
- (b) Any conditions, limits or restrictions on the exercise of the certification;
- (c) The duration of the certification; and
- (d) The procurement areas in which the governmental body is certified.

C. Using the criteria listed in item A(2) above, the office of each chief procurement officer shall be reviewed at least every five years by the audit team of the Materials Management Office. The results of the audit shall be provided to the appropriate chief procurement officer and the Executive Director of the Authority.

D. Limitations.

(1) Such certification as prescribed in section B shall be subject to any term contracts established by the chief procurement officers which require mandatory procurement by all governmental bodies.

152 FINAL REGULATIONS

(2) Such certification as prescribed in section B shall be subject to maintaining an adequate staff of qualified or certified procurement officers.

19-445.2030. Competitive Sealed Bidding—The Invitation for Bids.

A. The invitation for bids shall be used to initiate a competitive sealed bid procurement and shall include the following, as applicable:

(1) instructions and information to bidders concerning the bid submission requirements, including the time and date set for receipt of bids, the individual to whom the bid is to be submitted, the address of the office to which bids are to be delivered, the maximum time for bid acceptance by the State, and any other special information;

(2) the purchase description, evaluation factors, delivery or performance schedule, and such inspection and acceptance requirements as are not included in the purchase description;

(3) the contract terms and conditions, including warranty and bonding or other security requirements, as applicable; and

(4) Instructions to bidders on how to visibly mark information which they consider to be exempt from public disclosure.

B. Adequate notice of the invitation for bids must be given at a reasonable time before the date set forth in it for the opening of bids. Accordingly, bidding time will be set to provide bidders a reasonable time to prepare their bids. Without limiting the foregoing requirements, the date of opening may not be less than seven (7) days after notice of the solicitation is provided as required by Section 11-35-1520(3), unless a shorter time is deemed necessary for a particular procurement as determined in writing by the Chief Procurement Officer or the head of the purchasing agency or his designee.

19-445.2042. Pre-Bid Conferences.

A. Pre-bid conferences may be conducted. The conference should be held long enough after the Invitation for Bids has been issued to allow bidders to become familiar with it, but sufficiently before bid opening to allow consideration of the conference results in preparing their bids. Notice of the conference must be included in the notice of the solicitation required by Articles 5 or 9 of this code.

B. Nothing stated at the pre-bid conference shall change the Invitation for Bids unless a change is made by written amendment. A potential bidder's failure to attend an advertised pre-bid conference will not excuse its responsibility for estimating properly the difficulty and cost of successfully performing the work, or for proceeding to successfully perform the work without additional expense to the State.

C. Pre-bid conferences may not be made mandatory absent a written determination by the head of the governmental body or his designee that the unique nature of the procurement justifies a mandatory pre-bid conference and that a mandatory pre-bid conference will not unduly restrict competition.

D. To minimize the time and expense imposed on industry by pre-bid conferences, the procurement officer should arrange for attendance by electronic means to the maximum extent practicable.

19-445.2045. Receipt, Safeguarding, and Disposition of Bids.

A. Procedures Prior to Bid Opening.

All bids (including modifications) received prior to the time of opening shall be kept secure and, except as provided in subsection B below, unopened. Necessary precautions shall be taken to insure the security of the bid. Prior to bid opening, information concerning the identity and number of bids received shall be made available only to the state employees, and then only on a "need to know" basis. When bid samples are submitted, they shall be handled with sufficient care to prevent disclosure of characteristics before bid opening.

B. Unidentified Bids.

Unidentified bids may be opened solely for the purpose of identification, and then only by an official specifically designated for this purpose by the Chief Procurement Officer, the procurement officer of the governmental body, or a designee of either officer. If a sealed bid is opened by mistake, the person who opens the bid will immediately write his signature and position on the envelope and deliver it to the aforesaid official. This official shall immediately write on the envelope an explanation of the opening, the date and time opened, the invitation for bids' number, and his signature, and then shall immediately reseal the envelope.

C. When bids or proposals are rejected, or a solicitation cancelled after bids or proposals are received, the bids or proposals which have been opened shall be retained in the procurement file or, if unopened, otherwise disposed of. Unopened bids or proposals are not considered to be public information under Chapter 4 of Title 30 (Freedom of Information Act).

19-445.2065. Rejection of Bids.

A. Unless there is a compelling reason to reject one or more bids, award will be made to the lowest responsible and responsive bidder. Every effort shall be made to anticipate changes in a requirement prior to the date of opening and to notify all prospective bidders of any resulting modification or cancellation, thereby permitting bidders to change their bids and preventing the unnecessary exposure of bid prices. As a general rule after opening, an invitation for bids should not be canceled and readvertised due solely to increased quantities of the items being procured; award should be made on the initial invitation for bids and the additional quantity required should be treated as a new procurement.

B. Cancellation of Bids Prior to Award.

(1) When it is determined prior to the issuance of an award or notification of intent to award, whichever is earlier, but after opening, that the requirements relating to the availability and identification of specifications have not been met, the invitation for bids shall be cancelled. Invitations for bids may be cancelled after opening, but prior to award, when such action is consistent with subsection A above and the procurement officer determines in writing that:

- (a) inadequate or ambiguous specifications were cited in the invitation;
- (b) specifications have been revised;
- (c) the supplies, services, information technology, or construction being procured are no longer required;
- (d) the invitation did not provide for consideration of all factors of cost to the State, such as cost of transporting state furnished property to bidders' plants;
- (e) bids received indicate that the needs of the State can be satisfied by a less expensive article differing from that on which the bids were invited;
- (f) all otherwise acceptable bids received are at unreasonable prices;
- (g) the bids were not independently arrived at in open competition, were collusive, or were submitted in bad faith; or
- (h) for other reasons, cancellation is clearly in the best interest of the State.

(2) Determinations to cancel invitations for bids shall state the reasons therefor.

C. Extension of Bid Acceptance Period.

Should administrative difficulties be encountered after bid opening which may delay award beyond bidders' acceptance periods, the several lowest bidders should be requested, before expiration of their bids, to extend the bid acceptance period (with consent of sureties, if any) in order to avoid the need for re-advertisement.

19-445.2080. Bid Reductions.

The responsible procurement officer may accept a voluntary reduction in price from a low bidder after bid opening but prior to award; provided that such reduction is not conditioned on, nor results in, the modification or deletion of any conditions contained in the invitation for bids.

19-445.2090. Award.

A. Application.

The contract shall be awarded to the lowest responsible and responsive bidder(s) whose bid meets the requirements and criteria set forth in the invitation for bids.

B. The procurement officer shall issue the notice of intent to award or award on the date specified in the solicitation, unless the procurement officer determines, and gives notice, that a longer review time is necessary. The procurement officer shall give notice of the revised posting date in accordance with Section 11-35-1520(10).

19-445.2095. Competitive Sealed Proposals.

A. Request for Proposals.

The provisions of Regulations 19-445.2030B and 19-445.2040 shall apply to implement the requirements of Section 11-35-1530 (2), Public Notice.

154 FINAL REGULATIONS

B. Receipt, Safeguarding, and Disposition of Proposals.

The provisions of Regulation 19-445.2045 shall apply to competitive sealed proposals.

C. Receipt of Proposals.

The provisions of Regulation 19-445.2050(B) shall apply to competitive sealed proposals. For the purposes of implementing Section 11-35-1530(3), Receipt of Proposals, the following requirements shall be followed:

(1) Proposals shall be opened publicly by the procurement officer or his designee in the presence of one or more witnesses at the time and place designated in the request for proposals. Proposals and modifications shall be time-stamped upon receipt and held in a secure place until the established due date. After the date established for receipt of proposals, a Register of Proposals shall be prepared which shall include for all proposals the name of each offeror, the number of modifications received, if any, and a description sufficient to identify the item offered. The Register of Proposals shall be certified in writing as true and accurate by both the person opening the proposals and the witness. The Register of Proposals shall be open to public inspection only after the issuance of an award or notification of intent to award, whichever is earlier. Proposals and modifications shall be shown only to State personnel having a legitimate interest in them and then only on a "need to know" basis. Contents and the identity of competing offers shall not be disclosed during the process of opening by state personnel.

(2) As provided by the solicitation, offerors must visibly mark all information in their proposals that they consider to be exempt from public disclosure.

D. [Repealed]

E. Clarifications and Minor Informalities in Proposals.

The provisions of Section 11-35-1520(13) shall apply to competitive sealed proposals.

F. Specified Types of Construction.

Consistent with Section 48-52-670, which allows the use of competitive sealed proposals, it is generally not practicable or advantageous to the State to procure guaranteed energy, water, or wastewater savings contracts by competitive sealed bidding.

G. Procedures for Competitive Sealed Proposals.

The appropriate Chief Procurement Officer may develop and issue procedures which shall be followed by all agencies using the competitive sealed proposal method of acquisition. Unless excused by the State Engineer, the Office of State Engineer shall oversee (1) the evaluation process for any procurement of construction if factors other than price are considered in the evaluation of a proposal, and (2) any discussions with offerors conducted pursuant to Section 11-35-1530(6) or subsection I below.

H. Other Applicable Provisions.

The provisions of the following Regulations shall apply to competitive sealed proposals:

- (1) Regulation 19-445.2042, Pre-Bid Conferences,
- (2) Regulation 19-445.2060, Telegraphic and Electronic Bids,
- (3) Regulation 19-445.2075, All or None Qualifications,
- (4) Regulation 19-445.2085, Correction or Withdrawal of Bids; Cancellation of Awards, and Cancellation of Awards Prior to Performance.
- (5) Regulation 19-445.2137, Food Service Contracts.

I. Discussions with Offerors

(1) Classifying Proposals.

For the purpose of conducting discussions under Section 11-35-1530(6) and item (2) below, proposals shall be initially classified in writing as:

- (a) acceptable (i.e., reasonably susceptible of being selected for award);
- (b) potentially acceptable (i.e., reasonably susceptible of being made acceptable through discussions); or
- (c) unacceptable.

(2) Conduct of Discussions.

If discussions are conducted, the procurement officer shall exchange information with all offerors who submit proposals classified as acceptable or potentially acceptable. The content and extent of each exchange is a matter of the procurement officer's judgment, based on the particular facts of each acquisition. In conducting discussions, the procurement officer shall:

- (a) Control all exchanges;
- (b) Advise in writing every offeror of all deficiencies in its proposal, if any, that will result in rejection as non-responsive;

(c) Attempt in writing to resolve uncertainties concerning the cost or price, technical proposal, and other terms and conditions of the proposal, if any;

(d) Resolve in writing suspected mistakes, if any, by calling them to the offeror's attention.

(e) Provide the offeror a reasonable opportunity to submit any cost or price, technical, or other revisions to its proposal, but only to the extent such revisions are necessary to resolve any matter raised by the procurement officer during discussions under items (2)(b) through (2)(d) above.

(3) Limitations. Offerors shall be accorded fair and equal treatment with respect to any opportunity for discussions and revisions of proposals. Ordinarily, discussions are conducted prior to final ranking. Discussions may not be conducted unless the solicitation alerts offerors to the possibility of such an exchange, including the possibility of limited proposal revisions for those proposals reasonably susceptible of being selected for award.

(4) Communications authorized by Section 11-35-1530(6) and items (1) through (3) above may be conducted only by procurement officers authorized by the appropriate chief procurement officer.

J. Rejection of Individual Proposals.

(1) Proposals need not be unconditionally accepted without alteration or correction, and to the extent otherwise allowed by law, the State's stated requirements may be clarified after proposals are submitted. This flexibility must be considered in determining whether reasons exist for rejecting all or any part of a proposal. Reasons for rejecting proposals include but are not limited to:

(a) the business that submitted the proposal is nonresponsible as determined under Section 11-35-1810;

(b) the proposal ultimately (that is, after an opportunity, if any is offered, has passed for altering or clarifying the proposal) fails to meet the announced requirements of the State in some material respect; or

(c) the proposed price is clearly unreasonable.

(2) The reasons for cancellation or rejection shall be made a part of the procurement file and shall be available for public inspection.

K. Negotiations.

(1) Prior to initiating negotiations under Section 11-35-1530(8), the using agency must document its negotiation objectives.

(2) The responsible procurement officer must participate in, control, and document all negotiations.

L. Delay in Posting Notice of Intent to Award or Award.

Regulation 19-445.2090B shall apply to competitive sealed proposals.

19-445.2097. Rejection of Proposals.

A. Unless there is a compelling reason to reject one or more proposals, award will be made to the highest ranked responsible offeror or otherwise as allowed by Section 11-35-1530. Every effort shall be made to anticipate changes in a requirement prior to the date of opening and to notify all prospective offerors of any resulting modification or cancellation.

B. Cancellation of Solicitation Prior to Award.

(1) When it is determined prior to the issuance of an award or notification of intent to award, whichever is earlier, but after opening, that the requirements relating to the availability and identification of specifications have not been met, the request for proposals shall be cancelled. A request for proposals may be cancelled after opening, but prior the issuance of an award or notification of intent to award, whichever is earlier, when such action is consistent with subsection A above and the procurement officer determines in writing that:

(a) inadequate or ambiguous specifications were cited in the solicitation;

(b) specifications have been revised;

(c) the supplies, services, information technology, or construction being procured are no longer required;

(d) the solicitation did not provide for consideration of all factors of cost to the State, such as cost of transporting state furnished property to bidders' plants;

(e) proposals received indicate that the needs of the State can be satisfied by a less expensive article differing from that on which the proposals were requested;

(f) all otherwise acceptable proposals received are at unreasonable prices;

(g) the proposals were not independently arrived at in open competition, were collusive, or were submitted in bad faith; or

(h) for other reasons, cancellation is clearly in the best interest of the State.

(2) Determinations to cancel a request for proposals shall state the reasons therefor.

156 FINAL REGULATIONS

C. Extension of Bid Acceptance Period.

Should administrative difficulties be encountered after opening which may delay award beyond offeror's acceptance periods, the relevant offerors should be requested, before expiration of their offers, to extend the acceptance period (with consent of sureties, if any).

19-445.2099. Competitive Negotiations.

A. General

(1) Competitive negotiations are governed by R.19-445.2030B, -2040, -2042, -2045, -2050B, -2085C, -2090B, -2095C, -2095J, and -2098. Regulation 19-445-2097 (Rejection of Proposals) applies to competitive negotiations except that R.19-445.2099(K)(1) is substituted for R.19-445.2097A.

(2) Documentation required by this Regulation 19-445.2099 must be prepared at the time the process to be documented is conducted.

(3) For each competitive negotiation the head of the using agency or his designee must appoint in writing an individual to serve as the selection executive (SE). The SE must be an individual who has sufficient rank and professional experience to effectively carry out the functions of an SE. Subject to the authority and approval of the responsible procurement officer, the SE shall—

(a) Recommend an acquisition team, tailored for the particular acquisition, that includes appropriate contracting, legal, logistics, technical, and other expertise to ensure a well-developed solicitation, a comprehensive evaluation of offers, and effective negotiations;

(b) Approve the acquisition plan and the solicitation before solicitation release;

(c) Ensure consistency among and sufficiency of the solicitation requirements, evaluation factors and subfactors, solicitation provisions or contract clauses, and data requirements;

(d) Ensure that proposals are evaluated based solely on the factors and subfactors contained in the solicitation;

(e) Consider the recommendations of subject matter experts, advisory boards or panels (if any); and

(f) Select the source or sources whose proposal is the best value to the State, as provided in R.19-445.2099K.

(4) Consistent with Section 11-35-1535(A)(3), competitive negotiated acquisitions may be conducted only by the office of the appropriate chief procurement officer; accordingly, a chief procurement officer may not delegate to a using agency the authority to conduct a competitive negotiation.

B. Procedures for Competitive Negotiations.

The Division of Procurement Services may develop and issue procedures which shall be followed when using the competitive negotiations method of acquisition.

C. Definitions

Clarification means any communication in which the responsible procurement officer requests or accepts information that clarifies any information in a proposal. Clarification does not include the request or acceptance of any change to the terms of an offer.

Competitive range means the offeror or group of offerors selected for negotiation.

Deficiency means any term of an offer that does not conform to a material requirement of a solicitation. A material requirement is one that affects the price, quantity, quality, delivery, or other performance obligations of the contract.

Negotiation means any communication, oral or written, that invites or permits an offeror to change any texts or graphics in the terms of its offer in any way. Negotiation does not include communications involving (i) information that is necessary to understand an offer, but that does not change any text or graphics in the offer, (ii) information about the offeror, or (iii) any other information that will not bind the parties upon acceptance of an offer.

Offer means those portions of a proposal that constitute a written promise or set of promises to act or refrain from acting in a specified way, so made as to manifest a commitment to be bound by those promises upon acceptance by the State. Offer does not include mere descriptions of approaches, plans, intentions, opinions, predictions, or estimates; statements that describe the offeror's organization or capability; or any other statements that do not make a definite and firm commitment to act or refrain from acting in a specified way.

Proposal means the information submitted to the State in response to a request for proposals. The information in a proposal includes (i) the offer, (ii) information explaining the offer, (iii) information about the offeror, and (iv) any other information that is relevant to source selection decision making.

Weakness means a flaw in the proposal that increases the risk of unsuccessful contract performance. A “significant weakness” in the proposal is a flaw that appreciably increases the risk of unsuccessful contract performance.

D. Amending the solicitation

(1) When, either before or after receipt of proposals, the State changes its requirements or terms and conditions, the responsible procurement officer shall amend the solicitation.

(2) When, after the receipt of proposals, the State discovers that material inadequacies of the solicitation have contributed to technical or pricing deficiencies, the responsible procurement officer shall amend the solicitation to resolve the inadequacies, preferably prior to proceeding further with the procurement process.

(3) If a proposal of interest to the State involves a desirable departure from the stated requirements, the responsible procurement officer shall amend the solicitation, preferably prior to completion of proposal evaluation pursuant to F(1), provided this can be done without revealing to the other offerors the alternate solution proposed or any other information that is entitled to protection (see Regulation 19-445.2099I).

(4) Amendments issued after the established time and date for receipt of proposals may not exceed the general scope of the request for proposals and must be issued to those offerors that have not been eliminated from the competition.

(5) If, based on market research or otherwise, an amendment proposed for issuance after offers have been received is so substantial as to exceed what prospective offerors reasonably could have anticipated, so that additional sources likely would have submitted offers had the substance of the amendment been known to them, the responsible procurement officer shall cancel the original solicitation and issue a new one, regardless of the stage of the acquisition.

E. Evaluation Factors

(1) The award decision is based on evaluation factors and significant subfactors that are tailored to the acquisition.

(2) Evaluation factors and significant subfactors must—

(a) Represent the key areas of importance and emphasis to be considered in the source selection decision; and

(b) Support meaningful comparison and discrimination between and among competing proposals.

(3) The evaluation factors and significant subfactors that apply to an acquisition and their relative importance are within the broad discretion of the responsible procurement officer, subject to the following requirements:

(a) Price or cost to the State shall be evaluated unless the responsible procurement officer documents the reasons price or cost is not an appropriate evaluation factor for the acquisition and that decision is approved by the head of the using agency.

(b) The quality of the item to be acquired shall be addressed in every source selection through consideration of one or more non-cost evaluation factors such as past performance, compliance with solicitation requirements, technical excellence, management capability, personnel qualifications, and prior experience.

(c) Past performance shall be evaluated unless the responsible procurement officer documents the reasons past performance is not an appropriate evaluation factor for the acquisition.

(4) All factors and significant subfactors that will affect contract award and their relative importance shall be stated clearly in the solicitation. The rating method need not be disclosed in the solicitation.

(5) The request for proposals must state the relative importance of all factors to be considered in evaluating proposals but need not state a numerical weighting for each factor.

(6) If price is an evaluation factor, the solicitation must state whether all evaluation factors other than cost or price, when combined, are significantly more important than, approximately equal to, or significantly less important than cost or price.

F. Evaluation Process

(1) General. Proposal evaluation is an assessment of the proposal and the offeror’s ability to perform the prospective contract successfully. All proposals shall be evaluated and, after evaluation, their relative qualities must be assessed solely on the factors and subfactors specified in the solicitation. The relative strengths, deficiencies, significant weaknesses, and risks supporting proposal evaluation shall be documented in the contract file.

(2) Evaluation methods. Evaluations may be conducted using any rating method or combination of methods, including color or adjectival ratings, numerical weights, and ordinal rankings.

158 FINAL REGULATIONS

(3) Cost or price evaluation. The responsible procurement officer shall document the cost or price evaluation. Price reasonableness shall be determined independently of cost or price evaluation.

(4) Past performance evaluation.

(a) Past performance information is one indicator of an offeror's ability to perform the contract successfully. The currency and relevance of the information, source of the information, context of the data, and general trends in contractor's performance shall be considered. This comparative assessment of past performance information is separate from the responsibility determination.

(b) The solicitation shall provide offerors an opportunity to identify past or current contracts (including Federal, State, and local government and private) for efforts similar to the stated requirement. The solicitation shall also authorize offerors to provide information on problems encountered on the identified contracts and the offeror's corrective actions. When evaluating an offeror's past performance, this information, as well as information obtained from any other sources, must be considered; however, the relevance of similar past performance information is a matter of business judgment.

(c) The evaluation should take into account past performance information regarding predecessor companies, key personnel who have relevant experience, or subcontractors that will perform major or critical aspects of the requirement when such information is relevant to the instant acquisition.

(5) Technical evaluation. The source selection records shall include—

(a) An assessment of each offeror's ability to accomplish the technical requirements; and

(b) A summary, matrix, or quantitative ranking, along with appropriate supporting narrative, of each technical proposal using the evaluation factors.

G. Exchanges with offerors.

(1) Control. The responsible procurement officer shall control all exchanges after opening and prior to award.

(2) Fairness and Impartiality. The responsible procurement officer shall treat all offerors fairly and impartially when deciding whether and when to seek clarification or to negotiate. Similarly-situated offerors shall be given similar opportunities to clarify and, if in the competitive range, to negotiate.

(3) Clarifications. The responsible procurement officer may conduct clarifications at any time prior to the award decision.

(4) Competitive Range.

(a) After complying with Section 11-35-1535(G) (Evaluation), and before negotiating with anyone, the responsible procurement officer shall establish a competitive range comprised of the offerors that submitted the most promising offers.

(b) Ordinarily, the competitive range should not include more than three offerors. The responsible procurement officer may select only one offeror and may select more than three. The rationale for establishment of, and every modification to, the competitive range shall be determined in writing.

(c) Prior to conducting the minimum negotiations required by Section 11-35-1535(I)(3)(b)(i) and R.19-445.2099H(2), otherwise promising offerors should not be excluded from the competitive range due solely to deficiencies that are reasonably susceptible of correction.

(d) After conducting the minimum negotiations required by 11-35-1535(I)(3)(b)(i) and R.19-445.2099H(2), the responsible procurement officer may eliminate an offeror from the competitive range if the offeror is no longer considered to be among the most promising.

(e) Offerors excluded or otherwise eliminated from the competitive range may request a debriefing.

H. Negotiations with offerors

(1) Negotiations – General.

(a) The responsible procurement officer shall participate in and control all negotiations.

(b) The primary objective of negotiation is to maximize the State's ability to obtain best value, based on the requirements and the evaluation factors set forth in the solicitation.

(c) The State may use any method of communication.

(d) Prior to any negotiation session, the using agency must document its prenegotiation objectives with regard to each offeror in the competitive range.

(e) The responsible procurement officer shall prepare a record of each negotiation session.

(f) Negotiations may include bargaining. Bargaining includes persuasion, alteration of assumptions and positions, give-and-take, and may apply to price, schedule, technical requirements, type of contract, or other terms of a proposed contract.

(g) The responsible procurement officer may not relax or change any material requirement of the solicitation during negotiation except by amendment in accordance with R.19-445.2099D.

(h) Negotiations may include pricing. The responsible procurement officer may state a price that the State is willing to pay for what has been offered and may tell an offeror its price standing.

(i) Subject to the following requirements, the scope and extent of negotiations are a matter of the responsible procurement officer's judgment:

- (i) Section 11-35-30 (Obligation of Good Faith);
- (ii) R.19-445.2099G(2) (Fairness and Impartiality); and
- (iii) R.19-445.2099H(2) (Minimum Negotiations).

(j) The State may engage in more than one session with an offeror if necessary. Subject to R.19-445.2099G(2), the conduct of multiple sessions with a particular offeror does not require the conduct of multiple sessions with other offerors.

(k) Throughout the competitive negotiation process, state personnel shall not disclose the content of any offeror's proposal to any other offeror.

(l) State personnel shall not promise that the State will select an offeror for award if it makes a particular change or set of changes to its offer.

(2) Negotiations – Minimum – Problem Identification

The State shall negotiate with each offeror in the competitive range. At a minimum, the State shall identify and seek the correction of any deficiency and the elimination of any other undesirable term in an offer.

(3) Negotiations – Enhancement.

(a) The responsible procurement officer may negotiate with offerors in the competitive range to seek changes in their offers that the State desires and to allow them to make other improvements.

(b) The responsible procurement officer may state specific terms that the State desires and seek improvements in already acceptable terms.

(4) Proposal Revisions.

(a) The responsible procurement officer may request or allow proposal revisions either (i) to clarify and document understandings reached during negotiations, or (ii) to provide offerors an opportunity to respond to an amendment.

(b) If an offeror's proposal is eliminated or otherwise removed from the competitive range, no further revisions to that offeror's proposal shall be accepted or considered.

(c) Upon the completion of all negotiations, the responsible procurement officer shall request that offerors still in the competitive range submit final offers not later than a specified common cutoff date and time that allows a reasonable opportunity for submission. When submitting final offers, an offeror may revise any aspect of its offer. The responsible procurement officer shall notify offerors that failure to submit a final offer by the common cutoff date and time will result in the consideration of their last prior offer. Requests for final offers shall advise offerors that final offers shall be in writing and that the government intends to make award without obtaining further revisions.

I. Limitations on exchanges. State personnel involved in the acquisition shall not engage in conduct that—

(1) Favors one offeror over another;

(2) Reveals an offeror's technical solution, including unique technology, innovative and unique uses of commercial items, or any information that would compromise an offeror's intellectual property to another offeror;

(3) Reveals the names of individuals providing reference information about an offeror's past performance; or

(4) Knowingly furnishes source selection information in violation of Regulation 19-445.2010.

J. Tradeoff Process

(1) A tradeoff process is appropriate when it may be in the interest of the State to consider award to other than the lowest priced offeror or other than the highest technically rated offeror.

(2) This process permits tradeoffs among cost or price and non-cost factors and allows the State to accept other than the lowest priced proposal. The perceived benefits of the higher priced proposal shall merit the additional cost, and the rationale for tradeoffs must be documented in the file.

K. Award

(1) Unless there is a compelling reason to reject proposals, award must be made to the responsible offeror whose final proposal meets, in all material respects, the requirements announced in the solicitation, as amended,

160 FINAL REGULATIONS

and is determined in writing to provide the best value to the State, taking into consideration the evaluation factors set forth in the request for proposals and, if price is an evaluation factor, any tradeoffs among price and non-price factors. Award must be based on a comparative assessment of final proposals from offerors within the competitive range against all source selection criteria in the solicitation.

(2) The contract file must document the basis on which the award is made, and the documentation must explain and justify the rationale for any business judgments and tradeoffs made or relied on in the award determination, including benefits associated with additional costs. Although the rationale for the selection decision must be documented, that documentation need not quantify the tradeoffs that led to the decision.

(3) The contract file must document who performed the functions required by sections F, J, and K of R.19-445.2099 and which functions they performed.

19-445.2100. Small Purchases and Other Simplified Purchasing Procedures.

A. Authority.

(1) An agency may make small purchases not exceeding the limits prescribed in Section 11-35-1550 in accordance with the procedures in that section and herein.

(2) Any purchase of supplies, services, or information technology made pursuant to Section 11-35-1550 must be within the agency's certification.

(3) These simplified acquisition procedures shall not be used for items available under mandatory state term contracts (see R.19-445-2020B(1)).

(4) Contracts solely for the procurement of commercially available off-the-shelf products pursuant to Section 11-35-1550 are not subject to laws identified in Section 11-35-2040.

(5) When required, adequate public notice must comply with R.19-445.2000F.

(6) Section 11-35-4210(1)(d) makes the protest process inapplicable to contracts with an actual or potential value of up to \$50,000. Because the protest process applies to all small purchases in excess of \$50,000, notice of an award must be communicated to all bidders on the same date award is made and must be documented in the procurement file. Any method of communication may be used.

B. Purchases pursuant to Section 11-35-1550(2)(b) (Three Written Quotes).

(1) If an agency does not receive responsive quotes from at least three responsible bidders, adequate public notice must be given and documented with the purchase requisition. So-called "no bids" are not bona fide and do not count as one of the three.

(2) Requests for quotes must be distributed equitably among qualified suppliers, unless adequate public notice is given in South Carolina Business Opportunities.

C. Purchases pursuant to Section 11-35-1550(2)(c) (Advertised Small Purchase) may be made by giving adequate public notice in South Carolina Business Opportunities and:

(1) issuing a written solicitation for written quotes, as described in Section 11-35-1550(2)(c);

(2) soliciting bids in accordance with Section 11-35-1520, Competitive Sealed Bidding, Section 11-35-1525, Competitive Fixed Price Bidding, or Section 11-35-1528, Competitive Best Value Bidding; or

(3) soliciting proposals in accordance with Section 11-35-1530, Competitive Sealed Proposals.

D. When conducting a small purchase over twenty-five thousand dollars for which adequate public notice is required, potential offerors must be provided reasonable time to prepare their bids, no less than seven (7) days after such notice is provided, unless a shorter time is deemed necessary for a particular procurement as determined in writing by the head of the purchasing agency, the appropriate chief procurement officer, or the designee of either.

E. Establishment of Blanket Purchase Agreements.

(1) General. A blanket purchase agreement is a simplified method of filling repetitive needs for small quantities of miscellaneous supplies, services, or information technology by establishing "charge accounts" with qualified sources of supply. Blanket purchase agreements are designed to reduce administrative costs in accomplishing small purchases by eliminating the need for issuing individual purchase documents.

(2) Alternate Sources. To the extent practicable, blanket purchase agreements for items of the same type should be placed concurrently with more than one supplier. All competitive sources shall be given an equal opportunity to furnish supplies, services, or information technology under such agreements.

(3) Terms and Conditions. Blanket purchase agreements shall contain the following provisions:

(a) Description of agreement. A statement that the supplier shall furnish supplies, services, or information technology, described therein in general terms, if and when requested by the Procurement Officer, or his authorized representative, during a specified period and within a stipulated aggregate amount, if any. Blanket purchase agreements may encompass all items that the supplier is in a position to furnish.

(b) Extent of obligation. A statement that the State is obligated only to the extent of authorized calls actually placed against the blanket purchase agreement.

(c) Notice of individuals authorized to place calls and dollar limitations. A provision that a list of names of individuals authorized to place calls under the agreement, identified by organizational component, and the dollar limitation per call for each individual shall be furnished to the supplier by the Procurement Officer.

(d) Delivery tickets. A requirement that all shipments under the agreement, except subscriptions and other charges for newspapers, magazines, or other periodicals, shall be accompanied by delivery tickets or sales slips which shall contain the following minimum information:

- (1) name of supplier;
- (2) blanket purchase agreement number;
- (3) date of call;
- (4) call number;
- (5) itemized list of supplies, services, or information technology furnished;
- (6) quantity, unit price, and extension of each item less applicable discounts (unit price and extensions need not be shown when incompatible with the use of automated systems, provided that the invoice is itemized to show this information); and
- (7) date of delivery or shipment.

(e) Invoices one of the following statements:

(1) A summary invoice shall be submitted at least monthly or upon expiration of the blanket purchase agreement, whichever occurs first, for all deliveries made during a billing period, identifying the delivery tickets covered therein, stating their total dollar value, and supported by receipted copies of the delivery tickets; or

(2) An itemized invoice shall be submitted at least monthly or upon expiration of the blanket purchase agreement, whichever occurs first, for all deliveries made during a billing period and for which payment has not been received. Such invoices need not be supported by copies of delivery tickets;

(3) When billing procedures provide for an individual invoice for each delivery, these invoices shall be accumulated provided that a consolidated payment will be made for each specified period; and the period of any discounts will commence on final date of billing period or on the date of receipt of invoices for all deliveries accepted during the billing period, whichever is later. This procedure should not be used if the accumulation of the individual invoices materially increases the administrative costs of this purchase method.

F. Competition Under Blanket Purchase Agreement.

Calls against blanket purchase agreements shall be placed after prices are obtained. When concurrent agreements for similar items are in effect, calls shall be equitably distributed. In those instances where there is an insufficient number of BPAs for any given class of supplies, services, or information technology to assure adequate competition, the individual placing the order shall solicit quotations from other sources.

G. Calls Against Blanket Purchase Agreement.

Calls against blanket purchase agreements generally will be made orally, except that informal correspondence may be used when ordering against agreements outside the local trade area. Written calls may be executed. Documentation of calls shall be limited to essential information. Forms may be developed for this purpose locally and be compatible with the Comptroller General's Office STARS system.

H. Receipt and Acceptance of Supplies or Services.

Acceptance of supplies, services, or information technology shall be indicated by signature and date on the appropriate form by the authorized State representative after verification and notation of any exceptions.

I. Review Procedures.

The governmental body shall review blanket purchase agreement files at least semiannually to assure that authorized procedures are being followed. Blanket purchase agreements shall be issued for a period of no longer than 12 months.

19-445.2105. Sole Source Procurements.

A. Application.

162 FINAL REGULATIONS

The provisions of this Regulation shall apply to all sole source procurements unless emergency conditions exist as defined in Regulation 19-445.2110.

B. Exceptions.

Sole source procurement is not permissible unless there is only a single supplier. The following are examples of circumstances which could necessitate sole source procurement:

- (1) where the compatibility of equipment, accessories, or replacement parts is the paramount consideration;
- (2) where a sole supplier's item is needed for trial use or testing;
- (3) [Repealed]
- (4) [Repealed]
- (5) where the item is one of a kind; and
- (6) [Repealed]

C. Written Determination.

(1) The written determination to conduct a procurement as a sole source shall be made by either the Chief Procurement Officer, the head of a purchasing agency, or designee of either above the level of the procurement officer. Any delegation of authority by either the Chief Procurement Officer or the head of a purchasing agency with respect to sole source determinations shall be submitted in writing to the Materials Management Officer.

(2) The written determination must include a purchase description that states the using agency's actual needs, which shall not be unduly restrictive. In cases of reasonable doubt, competition should be solicited. The determination must contain sufficient factual grounds and reasoning to provide an informed, objective explanation for the decision and must be accompanied by market research that supports the decision. The determination must be authorized prior to contract execution.

D. Notice.

(1) Compliance with the notice requirements in Section 11-35-1560(A) must be documented in the procurement file.

(2) The public notice required by Section 11-35-1560(A) must include the written determination required by Section C(2) above or instructions how to obtain the written determination immediately upon request.

E. Other Applicable Provisions.

Sole source procurements must comply with all applicable statutes and regulations, including without limitation, Sections 11-35-30 (Obligation of good faith), -210 (Determinations), -410 (Public access to procurement information), -1810 (Responsibility of bidders and offerors), -1830 (Cost or pricing data), -2010 (Types of contracts), -2030 (Multiterm contracts), -1610 (Change order or contract modification), -2440 (Records of procurement actions), -2730 (Assuring competition), and -4230 (Authority to resolve contract and breach of contract controversies).

19-445.2110. Emergency Procurements.

A. Application.

The provisions of this Regulation apply to every procurement made under emergency conditions that will not permit other source selection methods to be used.

B. Definition.

An emergency condition is a situation which creates a threat to public health, welfare, or safety such as may arise by reason of floods, epidemics, riots, equipment failures, fire loss, or such other reason as may be proclaimed by either the Chief Procurement Officer or the head of a purchasing agency or a designee of either office. The existence of such conditions must create an immediate and serious need for supplies, services, information technology, or construction that cannot be met through normal procurement methods and the lack of which would seriously threaten:

- (1) the functioning of State government;
- (2) the preservation or protection of property; or
- (3) the health or safety of any person.

C. Limitations.

Emergency procurement shall be limited to those supplies, services, information technology, or construction items necessary to meet the emergency.

D. Conditions.

Any governmental body may make emergency procurements when an emergency condition arises and the need cannot be met through normal procurement methods, provided that whenever practical, approval by either the head of a purchasing agency or his designee or the Chief Procurement Officer shall be obtained prior to the procurement.

E. Selection of Method of Procurement.

The procedure used shall be selected to assure that the required supplies, services, information technology, or construction items are procured in time to meet the emergency. Given this constraint, such competition as is practicable shall be obtained.

F. Notice.

Compliance with the notice requirements in Section 11-35-1570(B) must be documented in the procurement file.

G. Written Determination.

The Chief Procurement Officer or the head of the purchasing agency or a designee of either office shall make a written determination stating the basis for an emergency procurement and for the selection of the particular contractor. The determination must contain sufficient factual grounds and reasoning to provide an informed, objective explanation for the decision.

19-445.2115. Information Technology Procurements.

A. Reserved.

B. Reserved.

C. Software Licensing

Pursuant to Section 11-35-510, the Information Technology Management Officer may execute an agreement with a business on behalf of, and which binds all, governmental bodies in order to establish the terms and conditions upon which computer software may be licensed, directly or indirectly, from that business by a governmental body. Such an agreement may provide for the voluntary participation of any other South Carolina public procurement unit. Such agreements do not excuse any governmental body from complying with any applicable requirements of the Procurement Code and these Regulations, including the requirements of Section 11-35-1510.

19-445.2120. Cost or Pricing Data.

A. Definitions

(1) Adequate Price Competition. Price competition exists if competitive sealed proposals are solicited, at least two responsive and responsible offerors independently compete for a contract, and price is a substantial factor in the evaluation. If the foregoing conditions are met, price competition shall be presumed to be "adequate" unless the procurement officer determines in writing that such competition is not adequate.

(2) Commercial product has the meaning stated in Section 11-35-1410(1).

(3) Established catalog price has the meaning stated in Section 11-35-1410.

(4) Established Market Price means a current price, established in the usual and ordinary course of trade between buyers and sellers, which can be substantiated from sources which are independent of the manufacturer or supplier and may be an indication of the reasonableness of price.

(5) Prices Set by Law or Regulation. The price of a supply or service is set by law or regulation if some governmental body establishes the price that the offeror or contractor may charge the State and other customers.

B. Thresholds

(1) Section 11-35-1830(1)(a) applies where the total contract price exceeds five hundred thousand dollars.

(2) Section 11-35-1830(1)(b) applies where the pricing of any change order, contract modification, or termination settlement exceeds five hundred thousand dollars, unless the procurement officer determines in writing that such information is necessary to determine that the pricing is reasonable. Price adjustment amounts shall consider both increases and decreases (e.g., a \$150,000 modification resulting from a reduction of \$350,000 and an increase of \$200,000 is a pricing adjustment exceeding \$500,000.). This requirement does not apply when unrelated and separately priced changes for which cost or pricing data would not otherwise be required are included for administrative convenience in the same modification.

(3) Ordinarily, cost and pricing data should not be required for the acquisition of any item that meets the definition of commercial product, including any modification that does not change the item from a commercial

164 FINAL REGULATIONS

product to a non-commercial product. The contractor may be required to submit cost or pricing data for commercial products or COTS only if the purchase or modification exceeds the thresholds established in this section and the procurement officer determines in writing that no other basis exists to establish price reasonableness.

C. Conditions of Waiver

The requirements of Section 11-35-1830 may be waived if the head of the using agency determines in writing that the price can be determined to be fair and reasonable without submission of cost or pricing data.

D. Refusal to Submit Data

A refusal by the offeror to supply the requested information may be grounds to disqualify the offeror or to defer award pending further review and analysis.

19-445.2125. Responsibility of Bidders and Offerors.

A. State Standards of Responsibility.

Factors to be considered in determining whether the state standards of responsibility have been met include whether a prospective contractor has:

- (1) available the appropriate financial, material, equipment, facility, and personnel resources and expertise, or the ability to obtain them, necessary to indicate its capability to meet all contractual requirements;
- (2) a satisfactory record of performance;
- (3) a satisfactory record of integrity;
- (4) qualified legally to contract with the State; and
- (5) supplied all necessary information in connection with the inquiry concerning responsibility.

B. Obtaining Information; Duty of Contractor to Supply Information.

At any time prior to award, the prospective contractor shall supply information requested by the procurement officer concerning the responsibility of such contractor. If such contractor fails to supply the requested information, the procurement officer shall base the determination of responsibility upon any available information or may find the prospective contractor non responsible if such failure is unreasonable. In determining responsibility, the procurement officer may obtain and rely on any sources of information, including but not limited to the prospective contractor; knowledge of personnel within the using or purchasing agency; commercial sources of supplier information; suppliers, subcontractors, and customers of the prospective contractor; financial institutions; government agencies; and business and trade associations.

C. Demonstration of Responsibility.

The prospective contractor may demonstrate the availability of necessary financing, equipment, facilities, expertise, and personnel by submitting upon request:

- (1) evidence that such contractor possesses such necessary items;
- (2) acceptable plans to subcontract for such necessary items; or
- (3) a documented commitment from, or explicit arrangement with, a satisfactory source to provide the necessary items.

D. Duty Concerning Responsibility.

(1) Before awarding a contract or issuing a notification of intent to award, whichever is earlier, the procurement officer must be satisfied that the prospective contractor is responsible. The determination is not limited to circumstances existing at the time of opening.

(2) Consistent with Section 11-35-1529(3), the procurement officer must determine responsibility of bidders in competitive on-line bidding before bidding begins.

E. Written Determination of Nonresponsibility.

If a bidder or offeror who otherwise would have been awarded a contract is found nonresponsible, a written determination of nonresponsibility setting forth the basis of the finding shall be prepared by the procurement officer. A copy of the determination shall be sent promptly to the nonresponsible bidder or offeror. The final determination shall be made part of the procurement file.

F. Special Standards of Responsibility

When it is necessary for a particular acquisition or class of acquisitions, the procurement officer may develop, with the assistance of appropriate specialists, special standards of responsibility. Special standards may be particularly desirable when experience has demonstrated that unusual expertise or specialized facilities are needed for adequate contract performance. The special standards shall be set forth in the solicitation (and so

identified) and shall apply to all offerors. A valid special standard of responsibility must be specific, objective and mandatory.

G. Subcontractor responsibility.

(1) Generally, prospective prime contractors are responsible for determining the responsibility of their prospective subcontractors. Determinations of prospective subcontractor responsibility may affect the procurement officer's determination of the prospective prime contractor's responsibility. A prospective contractor may be required to provide written evidence of a proposed subcontractor's responsibility.

(2) When it is in the state's interest to do so, the procurement officer may directly determine a prospective subcontractor's responsibility (e.g., when the prospective contract involves medical supplies, urgent requirements, or substantial subcontracting). In this case, the same standards used to determine a prime contractor's responsibility shall be used by the procurement officer to determine subcontractor responsibility.

19-445.2127. Organizational Conflicts of Interest.

A. General.

(1) "Organizational conflict of interest" occurs when, because of other activities or relationships with the State or with other businesses:

- (a) a business is unable or potentially unable to render impartial assistance or advice to the State, or
- (b) the business' objectivity in performing the contract work is or might be otherwise impaired, or
- (c) a business has an unfair competitive advantage.

(2) This regulation applies to acquisitions of supplies, services and information technology, except for acquisitions made pursuant to Section 11-35-1550. Unless the procurement uses a project delivery method identified in Section 11-35-3005(1)(e), 1(f), or (2)(a), this regulation does not apply to acquisitions under Article 9 (Construction, Architect-Engineer, Construction Management, and Land Surveying Services).

(3) The general rules in sections B (Providing systems engineering and technical direction), C (Preparing specifications or work statements), and D (Providing evaluation of offers) below prescribe limitations on contracting as the means of avoiding organizational conflicts of interest that might otherwise exist in the stated situations. Conflicts may arise in situations not expressly covered in sections B, C, and D. Each individual contracting situation should be examined on the basis of its particular facts and the nature of the proposed contract. The exercise of common sense, good judgment, and sound discretion is required in both the decision on whether a significant potential conflict exists and, if it does, the development of an appropriate means for resolving it. The two underlying principles are

- (a) Preventing the existence of conflicting roles that might bias a contractor's judgment; and
- (b) Preventing unfair competitive advantage. Without limitation, an unfair competitive advantage exists where a business competing for award of a State contract possesses (i) proprietary information that was obtained from the State without authorization; or (ii) source selection information (R.19-445.2010C) that is relevant to the contract but is not available to all competitors, and such information would assist that business in obtaining the contract.

(4) The terms "contractor" and "subcontractor" are defined by Section 11-35-310.

B. Providing systems engineering and technical direction. (1) A business shall not be awarded a contract to supply a system or any of its major components, or be a subcontractor or consultant, if that business, as a contractor, provided or provides a combination of substantially all of the following activities:

- (a) determining specifications or developing work statements,
- (b) determining parameters,
- (c) identifying and resolving interface problems,
- (d) developing test requirements,
- (e) evaluating test data,
- (f) supervising design,
- (g) directing other contractors' operations, and
- (h) resolving technical controversies.

(2) This section B does not prohibit a contractor providing systems engineering and technical direction, from developing or producing a system if the entire effort is conducted under a single contract.

C. Preparing specifications or work statements.

166 FINAL REGULATIONS

(1) If a contractor prepares and furnishes specifications for a specific acquisition of tangible supplies or information resources, or their components, that contractor shall not be allowed to furnish these items, either as a contractor or as a subcontractor at any tier, for a reasonable period of time including, at least, the duration of the initial contract for purchase of the items.

(2) If a contractor prepares, or assists in preparing, a work statement to be used in a specific acquisition of a system or services—or provides material leading directly, predictably, and without delay to such a work statement—that contractor may not supply the system, major components of the system, or the services, either as a contractor or as a subcontractor at any tier, unless (a) the acquisition is a sole source under R.19-445.2105; (b) it has participated in the development and design work; or (c) more than one contractor has been involved in preparing the work statement.

D. Providing evaluation of offers. If a contractor evaluates or supports the evaluation of a bid or proposal for a contract with a governmental body, that contractor and its affiliates are barred from performing under that contract as either a contractor or as a subcontractor at any tier.

E. Procurement Officer Responsibilities.

(1) The responsible procurement officer shall (a) analyze planned acquisitions in order to identify and evaluate potential organizational conflicts of interest as early in the acquisition process as possible; and (b) review plans to avoid, neutralize, or mitigate significant potential conflicts before contract award.

(2) The responsible procurement officer shall determine whether the apparent successful offeror has an organizational conflict of interest. The responsible procurement officer shall award the contract to the apparent successful offeror unless (i) a conflict of interest is determined to exist that cannot be avoided or mitigated, or (ii) the conflict is not waived as provided in section F. Before determining to withhold award based on conflict of interest considerations, the procurement officer shall notify the contractor, provide the reasons therefor, and allow the contractor a reasonable opportunity to respond.

F. Waiver. With respect to the award of an individual contract, the using agency may waive an organizational conflict of interest by determining that the application of these rules in a particular situation would not be in the State's interest. A determination to waive a conflict of interest must be in writing, shall set forth the extent of the conflict, and requires approval by the agency head or her designee above the level of the agency's senior procurement official. If a waiver involves an acquisition with a value that exceeds either the limits of the governmental body's authority under Section 11-35-1210(1) or one million dollars, the appropriate Chief Procurement Officer must concur in the waiver and the written determination must be published with the notice of intent to award. Any report required by R.19-445.2020A(2) must include every waiver addressing a procurement during the audit period.

G. The appropriate Chief Procurement Officer may develop and issue procedures which shall be followed by all agencies to identify organizational conflicts of interest and techniques to avoid or mitigate them.

19-445.2135. Conditions for Use of Multi-term Contracts.

A. General.

A multi-term contract is a contract for the acquisition of supplies, services, or information technology for more than one year. A contract is not a multi-term contract if no single term exceeds one year and each term beyond the first requires the governmental body to exercise an option to extend or renew. A multi-term contract is appropriate when it is in the best interest of the State to obtain uninterrupted services for a period in excess of one year, where the performance of such services involves high start up costs, or when a changeover of service contracts involves high phase in/phase out costs during a transition period. The multi-term method of contracting is also appropriate when special production of definite quantities of supplies for more than one year is necessary to best meet state needs but funds are available only for the initial fiscal period. Special production refers to production for contract performance when it requires alteration in the contractor's facilities or operations involving high start up costs.

B. Objective.

The objective of the multi-term contract is to promote economy and efficiency in procurement by obtaining the benefits of sustained volume production and consequent low prices, and by increasing competitive participation in procurements which involve special production with consequent high start-up costs and in the procurement of services which involve high start-up costs or high phase-in/phase-out costs during changeover of service contracts.

C. Exceptions.

This Regulation 19-445.2135 applies only to contracts for supplies, services, or information technology and does not apply to contracts for construction.

D. Conditions for Use.

(1) A multi-term contract may be used if , prior to issuance of the solicitation, the Procurement Officer determines in writing that:

(a) Special production of definite quantities or the furnishing of long term services are required to meet state needs; or

(b) a multi-term contract will serve the best interests of the state by encouraging effective competition or otherwise promoting economies in state procurement.

(2) The following factors are among those relevant to such a determination:

(a) firms which are not willing or able to compete because of high start up costs or capital investment in facility expansion will be encouraged to participate in the competition when they are assured of recouping such costs during the period of contract performance;

(b) lower production cost because of larger quantity or service requirements, and substantial continuity of production or performance over a longer period of time, can be expected to result in lower unit prices;

(c) stabilization of the contractor’s work force over a longer period of time may promote economy and consistent quality;

(d) the cost and burden of contract solicitation, award, and administration of the procurement may be reduced.

(3) The determination must contain sufficient factual grounds and reasoning to provide an informed, objective explanation for the decision.

E. Solicitation.

The solicitation shall state:

(1) the estimated amount of supplies or services required for the proposed contract period;

(2) that a unit price shall be given for each supply or service, and that such unit prices shall be the same throughout the contract (except to the extent price adjustments may be provided in the solicitation and resulting contract);

(3) that the multi-term contract will be cancelled only if funds are not appropriated or otherwise made available to support continuation of performance in any fiscal period succeeding the first; however, this does not affect either the state’s rights or the contractor’s rights under any termination clause in the contract;

(4) that the procurement officer of the governmental body must notify the contractor on a timely basis that the funds are, or are not, available for the continuation of the contract for each succeeding fiscal period;

(5) whether bidders or offerors may submit prices for:

(a) the first fiscal period only;

(b) the entire time of performance only; or

(c) both the first fiscal period and the entire time of performance;

(6) that a multi-term contract may be awarded and how award will be determined including, if prices for the first fiscal period and entire time of performance are submitted, how such prices will be compared; and,

(7) that, in the event of cancellation as provided in (E) (3) of this subsection, the contractor will be reimbursed the unamortized, reasonably incurred, nonrecurring costs.

F. Award.

Award shall be made as stated in the solicitation and permitted under the source selection method utilized. Care should be taken when evaluating multi-term prices against prices for the first fiscal period that award on the basis of prices for the first period does not permit the successful bidder or offerer to “buy in”, that is give such bidder or offeror an undue competitive advantage in subsequent procurements.

G. Maximum Contract Periods

Every contract with a total potential duration in excess of five years must be approved as required by Section 11-35-2030(4) or Section 11-35-2030(5). No solicitation shall be issued for a contract with a total potential duration in excess of five years, nor shall any contract with a total potential duration in excess of five years be awarded pursuant to Section 11-35-1560, until such approval is granted.

19-445.2141. Commercial Products.

168 FINAL REGULATIONS

A. Definitions.

(1) Commercial product has the meaning stated in Section 11-35-1410, and does not include printing or insurance.

(2) Commercially available off-the-shelf product (“COTS”) has the meaning stated in Section 11-35-1410, and does not include printing or insurance.

B. General.

(1) Agencies shall conduct market research to determine whether commercial products or COTS are available that could meet agency requirements, and should endeavor to acquire commercial products or COTS when they are available to meet agency needs (see R.19-445.2140D (Preference for commercially available products)).

(2) Consistent with Section 11-35-1535(A)(2), the competitive negotiations source selection method may not be used to acquire only commercially available off-the-shelf products.

C. Price reasonableness.

(1) An advantage of COTS is that a competitive market, evidenced by substantial commercial sales, helps to determine price reasonableness. Substantial sales of a COTS product may establish catalog prices (see Section 11-35-1410) and market prices. Market prices are current prices that are established in the usual and ordinary course of trade between buyers and sellers (see R.19-445.2120A(3)). A characteristic of both catalog prices and market prices is that they can be substantiated from sources independent of the offeror—for example, through market research.

(2) “Items customarily sold in bulk” means products that are loaded and carried in bulk without mark or count. COTS does not include bulk materials, like fuel and grain, because the prices for those items fluctuate, making it difficult or impossible to rely on short-term pricing to establish price reasonableness for purchase contracts that may be for a longer term.

D. Purchase description or specification.

The agency’s purchase description must contain sufficient detail for potential offerors of commercial products or COTS to know which products may be suitable. Generally, an agency’s specification for COTS should describe the type of product to be acquired and explain how the agency intends to use the product in terms of function to be performed, performance requirement or physical characteristics. Describing the agency’s needs in these terms allows offerors to propose products that will best meet the State’s needs.

E. Simplified purchasing procedures for COTS.

(1) Section 11-35-1550(2)(b) authorizes the use of simplified procedures for the acquisition of supplies and information resources in amounts up to \$100,000, if the responsible procurement officer reasonably expects, based on the nature of the supplies or information resources sought, and on market research, that offers will include only COTS. The purpose of these simplified procedures is to vest procurement officers with additional procedural discretion and flexibility, so that COTS acquisitions in this dollar range may be solicited, offered, evaluated, and awarded in a simplified manner that maximizes efficiency and economy and minimizes burden and administrative costs for both the State and industry (see R.19-445.2100).

(2) The procurement officer should be aware of customary commercial terms and conditions when pricing COTS. COTS prices are affected by factors that include, but are not limited to, speed of delivery, length and extent of warranty, limitations of seller’s liability, quantities ordered, length of the performance period, and specific performance requirements. The procurement officer should review the using agency’s standard contract terms and conditions, along with commercial terms appropriate for the acquisition of the particular item. The procurement officer should consider avoiding terms inconsistent with commercial practice, unless those terms are required by law (see R.19-445.2143) or are essential to the using agency’s requirements.

(3) Section 11-35-2040 provides that COTS purchases made using any of the simplified procedures of Section 11-35-1550 are exempt from a number of statutory provisions that vendors have complained are overly burdensome. The procurement officer should consider Section 11-35-2040 and R.19-445.2143 when preparing the solicitation or written request for quotes.

(4) Regulation 19-445.2120B(3) prohibits requiring cost or pricing data when acquiring a commercial product, including COTS, unless the purchase or modification exceeds the thresholds established in that section and the procurement officer determines in writing that no other basis exists to establish price reasonableness.

F. The appropriate Chief Procurement Officer may develop and issue guidance, including solicitation forms, which may be used by agencies acquiring COTS using small purchase procedures.

19-445.2143. Contract clauses and administration.

A. Contracts formed pursuant to the Consolidated Procurement Code are deemed to incorporate all applicable provisions thereof and the ensuing regulations.

B. Prohibited Terms. Unless otherwise specifically provided by or authorized by law, if a contract contains any of the following terms, the term shall be void, and the contract is otherwise enforceable as if it did not contain such term or condition:

(1) Terms (a) subjecting the State of South Carolina or its agencies to the jurisdiction of the courts of other states; or (b) requiring the State of South Carolina or its agencies to bring or defend a legal claim in a venue outside this State. (Sections 11-35-2050 and -4230)

(2) Terms limiting the time in which the State of South Carolina or its agencies may bring a legal claim under the contract to a period shorter than that provided in South Carolina law. (Sections 11-35-4230(2) and 15-3-140)

(3) Terms imposing a payment obligation, including a rate of interest for late payments, inconsistent with the terms of Section 11-35-45.

(4) Terms that require the State to defend, indemnify, or hold harmless another person. (Section 11-35-2050)

(5) Terms requiring that the contract be governed or interpreted by other than South Carolina law. (Section 11-35-2050)

C. A material change is a change order or contract modification that is beyond the general scope of the original contract, such that the subject of the modification should be competitively procured absent a valid sole-source justification. Material changes are inconsistent with the underlying purposes and policies of this code. The appropriate Chief Procurement Officer may develop and issue guidance and procedures for evaluating whether a change order or modification is material.

19-445.2145. Construction, Architect Engineer, Construction Management, and Land Surveying Services.

A. Definitions

(1) Designer, as used in these regulations, means a person who has been awarded, through the qualifications-based process set forth in Section 11-35-3220, a contract with the State for the design of any infrastructure facility using the design-bid-build project delivery method defined in Section 11-35-2910(6).

(2) Builder, as used in these regulations, means a person who has been awarded, through competitive sealed bidding, a separate contract with the State to construct (alter, repair, improve, or demolish) any infrastructure facility using the design-bid-build project delivery method defined in Section 11-35-2910(6).

(3) Design-Builder, as used in these regulations, means a person who has been awarded a contract with the State for the design and construction of any infrastructure facility using the design-build project delivery method defined in Section 11-35-2910(7).

(4) DBO Producer, as used in these regulations, means a person who has been awarded a contract with the State for the design, construction, operation, and maintenance of any infrastructure facility using the design-build-operate-maintain project delivery method defined in Section 11-35-2910(9).

(5) DBFO Producer, as used in these regulations, means a person who has been awarded a contract with the State for the design, construction, finance, operation, and maintenance of any infrastructure facility using the design-build-finance-operate-maintain project delivery method defined in Section 11-35-2910(8).

(6) Guaranteed Maximum Price (GMP) means a price for all costs for the construction and completion of the project, or designated portion thereof, including all construction management services and all mobilization, general conditions, profit and overhead costs of any nature, and where the total contract amount, including the contractor's fee and general conditions, will not exceed a guaranteed maximum amount.

(7) Independent Peer Reviewer means a person who has been awarded a contract with the State for an independent, contemporaneous, peer review of the design services provided to the State by a DBO or DBFO Producer. In the event the State does not elect to contract with the Independent Peer Reviewer proposed by the successful DBO or DBFO Producer, the Independent Peer Reviewer shall be selected as provided in Section 11-35-2910(11).

(8) Operator, as used in these regulations, means a person who has been awarded, through competitive sealed bidding, a separate contract with the State for the routine operation, routine repair, and routine maintenance (Operation and Maintenance) of any infrastructure facility, as defined in Section 11-35-2910(13).

B. Choice of Project Delivery Method.

170 FINAL REGULATIONS

(1) This Subsection contains provisions applicable to the selection of the appropriate project delivery method for constructing infrastructure facilities, that is, the method of configuring and administering construction projects which is most advantageous to the State and will result in the most timely, economical, and otherwise successful completion of the infrastructure facility. The governmental body shall have sufficient flexibility in formulating the project delivery approach on a particular project to fulfill the State's needs. Before choosing the project delivery method, a careful assessment must be made of requirements the project must satisfy and those other characteristics that would be in the best interest of the State.

(2) Selecting An Appropriate Project Delivery Method.

In selecting an appropriate project delivery method for each of the State's Infrastructure Facilities, the governmental body should consider the results achieved on similar projects in the past and the methods used. Consideration should be given to all authorized project delivery methods, the comparative advantages and disadvantages of each, and how these methods may be appropriately configured and applied to fulfill State requirements. Additional factors to consider include:

(a) the extent to which the governmental body's design requirements for the Infrastructure Facility are known, stable, and established in writing;

(b) the extent to which qualified and experienced State personnel are available to the governmental body to provide the decision-making and administrative services required by the project delivery method selected;

(c) the extent to which decision-making and administrative services may be appropriately assigned to designers, builders, construction-managers at-risk, design-builders, DBO producers, DBFO producers, peer reviewers, or operators, as appropriate to the project delivery method;

(d) the extent to which outside consultants, including construction manager agent, may be able to assist the governmental body with decision-making and administrative contributions required by the project delivery method;

(e) the governmental body's projected cash flow for the Infrastructure Facility to be acquired (both sources and uses of the funds necessary to support design, construction, operations, maintenance, repairs, and demolition over the facility life cycle);

(f) the type of infrastructure facility or service to be acquired - for example, public buildings, schools, water distribution, wastewater collection, highway, bridge, or specialty structure, together with possible sources of funding for the infrastructure facility - for example, state or federal grants, state or federal loans, local tax appropriations, special purpose bonds, general obligation bonds, user fees, or tolls;

(g) the required delivery date of the infrastructure facility to be constructed;

(h) the location of the infrastructure facility to be constructed;

(i) the size, scope, complexity, and technological difficulty of the infrastructure facility to be constructed;

(j) the State's current and projected sources and uses of public funds that are currently generally available (and will be available in the future) to support operation, maintenance, repair, rehabilitation, replacement, and demolition of existing and planned infrastructure facilities;

(k) and, any other factors or considerations specified in the Manual for Planning of Execution of State Permanent Improvements, Part 11, or as otherwise requested by the State Engineer.

(3) Except for guaranteed energy, water, or wastewater savings contracts (Section 48-52-670), design-bid-build (acquired using competitive sealed bidding) is hereby designated as an appropriate project delivery method for any infrastructure facility and may be used by any governmental body without further project specific justification.

(4) Governmental Body Determination.

The head of the governmental body shall make a written determination that must be reviewed by the State Engineer. The determination shall describe the project delivery method (Section 11-35-3005), source selection method (Section 11-35-3015 and 11-35-1510), any additional procurement procedures (11-35-3023 and 11-35-3024(2)(c)), and types of performance security (Sections 11-35-3030 and 11-35-3037) selected and set forth the facts and considerations leading to those selections. This determination shall demonstrate either reliance on paragraph (3) above, or that the considerations identified in paragraphs (1) and (2) above, as well as the requirements and financing of the project, were all considered in making the selection. Any determination to use a project delivery method other than design-bid-build must explain why the use of design-bid-build is not practical or advantageous to the State. Any determination to use any of the additional procedures allowed by Section 11-35-3024(2)(c) must explain why the use of such procedures are in the best interests of the State. Any

request to use the prequalification process in a design-bid-build procurement must be in writing and must set forth facts sufficient to support a finding that pre-qualification is appropriate and that the construction involved is unique in nature, over ten million dollars in value, or involves special circumstances.

C. Bonds and Security.

(1) Bid Security. Bid Security required by Section 11-35-3030 shall be a certified cashier's check or a bond, in a form to be specified in the Manual for Planning and Execution of State Permanent Improvements - Part II, provided by a surety company licensed in South Carolina with an "A" minimum rating of performance as stated in the most current publication of "Best Key Rating Guide, Property Liability", which company shows a financial strength rating of at least five (5) times that portion of the contract price that does not include operations, maintenance, and finance. Each bond shall be accompanied by a "Power of Attorney" authorizing the attorney in fact to bind the surety.

(2) Contract Performance and Payment Bonds. Unless waived pursuant to Section 11-35-3030(2)(iii), the contractor shall provide a certified cashier's check in the full amount of the Performance and Payment Bonds or may provide, and pay for the cost of, Performance and Payment Bonds in a form to be specified in the Manual for Planning and Execution of State Permanent Improvements-Part II. Each bond for construction exceeding \$50,000 shall be issued by a Surety Company licensed in South Carolina with an "A" minimum rating of performance as stated in the most current publication of "Best Key Rating Guide, Property Liability", which company shows a financial strength rating of at least five (5) times that portion of the contract price that does not include operations, maintenance, and finance. Where the agency requires a payment bond for construction of \$50,000 or less, the bond must be issued by a surety meeting the requirements of Section 29-6-270. Each bond shall be accompanied by a "Power of Attorney" authorizing the attorney in fact to bind the surety.

D. Architect Engineer, Construction Management and Land Surveying Services Procurement.

(1) The Advertisement of Project Description

The provisions of Regulation 19-445.2040 shall apply to implement the requirements of Code Section 11-35-3220(2), Advertisement of Project Description.

(2) State Engineer's Office Review.

The Office of State Engineer will provide forms in the Manual for Planning and Execution of State Permanent Improvements Projects-Part II for use by governmental bodies in submitting a contract for approval pursuant to Section 11-35-3220(8) of the Code.

E. Contract Forms.

(1) Pursuant to Section 11-35-2010(2), the following contract forms shall be used as applicable, as amended by the State Engineer, and as provided in the Manual for Planning and Execution of State Permanent Improvements-Part II. Subject to the foregoing:

(a) If an agency conducts a competitive sealed bid to acquire construction independent of architect-engineer or construction management services, the governmental body may use a document in the form of AIA Document A701.

(b) If an agency acquires architect-engineer services independent of construction, the governmental body may use a document in the form of AIA Document B151.

(c) If an agency acquires construction independent of architect-engineer or construction management services, the governmental body may use documents in the form of ALA Document A101 and A201. Other contract forms may be used as are approved by the State Engineer.

(d) If an agency acquires architect-engineer services, construction management services, and construction on the same project, each under separate contract, the governmental body may use documents in the form of AIA Documents A101/CMa, A201/CMa, B141/CMa, and B801/CMa. This paragraph does not apply if an agency acquires both construction and construction management services from the same business under the same contract.

(2) With prior approval of the State Engineer, a governmental body may supplement the contract forms identified in paragraph (1), as they have been amended by the State Engineer.

(3) Paragraph (1) does not apply to a contract entered into pursuant to Sections 11-35-1530, 11-35-1550, 11-35-3230, or 11-35-3310.

(4) For any contract forms specified herein, the Manual for Planning and Execution of State Permanent Improvements-Part II shall specify the appropriate edition or, if applicable, replacement form.

172 FINAL REGULATIONS

(5) For any contract forms not specified herein or otherwise required by law, the Manual for Planning and Execution of State Permanent Improvements-Part II may, without limitation, require the use of any appropriate contract document, standard industry contract form, standard state amendments to such documents or forms, or publish state specific contract forms. Absent contrary instructions in the Manual, the governmental body may use a contract written for an individual project.

(6) Construction under Procurement Code Section 11-35-1550 and 11-35-1530 may be in a format and description of services approved by the State Engineer.

F. Manual for Planning and Execution of State Permanent Improvements Projects.

For the purpose of these Regulations and Code Section 11-35-3240, a manual of procedures to be followed by governmental bodies for planning and execution of state permanent improvement projects is prepared and furnished by the designated board office, and included in this regulation. Part II of this manual, covering the procurement of construction for the projects, will be the responsibility of the Office of the State Engineer.

G. Prequalifying Construction Bidders.

In accordance with Section 11-35-3023, the State Engineer's Office shall develop procedures for a prequalification process and shall include it in the Manual for Planning and Execution of State Permanent Improvements-Part II. The provisions of Regulation 19-445.2132 shall apply to implement Section 11-35-3023.

H. With regard to Section 11-35-3310, the State Engineer's Office will establish working procedures for indefinite quantity contracts for professional services, and shall include them in the Manual for Planning and Execution of State Permanent Improvements-Part II. With regard to Section 11-35-3320, the State Engineer's Office will establish working procedures for task order contracts for construction services and shall include them in the Manual for Planning and Execution of State Permanent Improvements-Part II.

I. Construction Procurement-The Invitation for Bids.

The provisions of Regulation 19-445.2040 shall apply to implement the requirements of Section 11-35-3020(a), Invitation for Bids. The provisions of Regulation 19-445.2090(B) shall not apply to implement the requirements of Code Section 11-35-3020.

J. Participation in Prior Reports or Studies.

(1) Before awarding a contract for a report or study that could subsequently be used in the creation of design requirements for an infrastructure facility or service, the procurement officer should address, to the extent practical, the contractor's ability to compete for follow-on work.

(2) Before issuing a request for proposals for an infrastructure facility or service, the procurement officer should take reasonable steps to determine if prior participation in a report or study could provide a firm with a substantial competitive advantage, and, if so, the procurement officer should take appropriate steps to eliminate or mitigate that advantage.

(3) In complying with items (1) and (2) above, the procurement officer shall consider the requirements of Section 11-35-3245 and the Manual for Planning and Execution of State Permanent Improvements, Part II.

K. Additional Procedures for Design-Build; Design-Build-Operate-Maintain; and Design-Build-Finance-Operate-Maintain.

(1) Content of Request for Proposals. Each request for proposals (RFP) issued by the State for design-build, design-build-operate-maintain, or design-build-finance-operate-maintain services shall contain a cover sheet that: (a) confirms that design requirements are included in the RFP, (b) confirms that proposal development documents are solicited in each offeror's response to the RFP, and (c) states the governmental body's determination for that procurement (i) whether offerors must have been prequalified through a previous request for qualifications; (ii) whether the governmental body will select a short list of responsible offerors prior to discussions and evaluations (along with the number of proposals that will be short-listed); and (iii) whether the governmental body will pay stipends to unsuccessful offerors (along with the amount of such stipends and the terms under which stipends will be paid).

(2) Purpose of Design Requirements. The purpose and intent of including design requirements in the RFP is to provide prospective and actual offerors a common, and transparent, written description of the starting point for the competition and to provide the State with the benefit of having responses from competitors that meet the same RFP requirements. In order to be effective, the governmental body must first come to understand and then to communicate its basic requirements for the infrastructure facility to those who are considering whether they will participate in the procurement competition.

(3) Purpose of Requirement for Proposal Development Documents. The purpose and intent of including the requirement for submittal of proposal development documents in each RFP for design-build, design-build-operate-maintain, or design-build-finance-operate-maintain is to provide actual offerors with a common, and transparent, written description of the finish point for the competition. To be responsive, each offeror must submit drawings and other design related documents that are sufficient to fix and describe the size and character of the infrastructure facility to be acquired, including price (or life-cycle price for design-build-operate-maintain and design-build-finance-operate-maintain procurements).

(4) Content of Request for Proposals: Evaluation Factors. Each request for proposals for design-build, design-build-operate-maintain, or design-build-finance-operate-maintain shall state the relative importance of (1) demonstrated compliance with the design requirements, (2) offeror qualifications, (3) financial capacity, (4) project schedule, (5) price (or life-cycle price for design-build-operate-maintain and design-build-finance-operate-maintain procurements), and (6) other factors, if any by listing the required factors in descending order of importance (without numerical weighting), or by listing each factor along with a numerical weight to be associated with that factor in the governmental body's evaluation. Subfactors, if any, must be stated in the RFP and listed, pursuant to the requirements of this Regulation, either in descending order, or with numerical weighting assigned to each subfactor. The purpose and intent of disclosing the relative importance of factors (and subfactors) is to provide transparency to prospective and actual competitors from the date the RFP is first published.

(5) The Manual for Planning and Execution of State Permanent Improvement Projects - Part II must include guidelines for the proper drafting of design requirements, proposal development documents, and requests for proposals.

L. Errors and Omissions Insurance.

(1) For design services in design-bid-build procurements. A governmental body shall include in the solicitation such requirements as the procurement officer deems appropriate for errors and omissions insurance (commonly called "professional liability insurance" in trade usage) coverage of architectural and engineering services in the solicitation for design services in design-bid-build procurements.

(2) For design services to be provided as part of design-build procurements. A governmental body shall include in the solicitation for design-build such requirements as the procurement officer deems appropriate for errors and omissions insurance coverage of architectural and engineering services to be provided as part of such procurements. Prior to award, the head of a governmental body, or his delegee, shall review and approve the errors and omissions insurance coverage for all design-build contracts in excess of \$25,000,000.

(3) For design services to be provided as part of design-build-operate-maintain and design-build-finance-operate-maintain procurements. A governmental body shall include in the solicitation for design-build-operate-maintain and design-build-finance-operate-maintain such requirements as the procurement officer deems appropriate for errors and omissions insurance coverage of architectural and engineering services to be provided as part of such procurements. Prior to award, the head of a governmental body, or his delegee, shall review and approve the errors and omissions insurance coverage for all design-build-operate-maintain and design-build-finance-operate-maintain contracts in excess of \$25,000,000.

(4) For Construction Management (Agency) services. A governmental body shall include in the solicitation for construction management agency services such requirements as the procurement officer deems appropriate for errors and omissions insurance coverage.

(5) Errors and omissions (or professional liability) insurance coverage for construction management services is typically not required when the governmental body is conducting a construction management at-risk procurement.

M. Other Security; Operations Period Performance Bonds.

(1) Purpose.

To assure the timely, faithful, and uninterrupted provision of operations and maintenance services procured separately, or as one element of design-build-operate-maintain or design-build-finance-operate-maintain services, the governmental body shall identify, in the solicitation, one or more of the other forms of security identified in Section 11-35-3037 that shall be furnished to the governmental body by the offerors (or bidders) in order to be considered to be responsive.

(2) Operations Period Performance Bonds.

174 FINAL REGULATIONS

(a) If required in a solicitation for operation and maintenance, design-build-operate-maintain, or design-build-finance-operate-maintain, each offeror shall demonstrate in its offer that it is prepared to provide, and upon award of the contract, to maintain in effect an operations period performance bond that secures the timely, faithful, and uninterrupted performance of operations and maintenance services required under the contract, in the amount of 100% of that portion of the contract price that includes the cost of such operation and maintenance services during the period covered by the bond. In those procurements in which the contract period for operation and maintenance is longer than 5 years, the procurement officer may accept an operations period performance bond of five years' duration, provided that such bond is renewable by the contractor every five (5) years during the contract, and provided further, that the contractor has made a firm contractual commitment to maintain such bond in full force and effect throughout the contract term.

(b) The operations period performance bond shall be delivered by the contractor to the governmental body at the same time the contract is executed. If a contractor fails to deliver the required bond, the contractor's bid (or offer) shall be rejected, its bid security shall be enforced, award of the contract shall be made to the next ranked bidder (or offeror), or the contractor shall be declared to be in default, as otherwise provided by these regulations.

(c) Operations period performance bond shall be in a form to be specified in the Manual for Planning and Execution of State Permanent Improvement, Part II. Each bond shall be issued by a Surety Company licensed in South Carolina with an "A" minimum rating of performance as stated in the most current publication of "Best Key Rating Guide, Property Liability", which company shows a financial strength rating of at least five (5) times the bond amount.

(3) Letters of Credit to Cover Interruptions in Operation.

(a) If required in a solicitation for operation and maintenance, design-build-operate-maintain, or design-build-finance-operate-maintain, each offeror shall demonstrate in its offer that it is prepared to post, and upon award of the contract shall post, and in each succeeding year adjust and maintain in place, an irrevocable letter of credit with a banking institution in this State that secures the timely, faithful, and uninterrupted performance of operations and maintenance services required under the contract, in an amount established under the contract that is sufficient to cover 100% of the cost of performing such operation and maintenance services during the next 12 months.

(b) The letter of credit required under this Section shall be posted by the contractor at the same time the contract is executed, and thereafter, shall be annually adjusted in amount and maintained by the contractor. If an offeror or bidder fails to demonstrate in its offer that it is prepared to post the required letter of credit, the bid (or offer) shall be rejected, the bid security shall be enforced, and award of the contract shall be made to the next ranked bidder (or offeror), as otherwise provided by these regulations. If the contractor fails to place and maintain the required letter of credit, the contractor shall be declared to be in default, as otherwise provided by these regulations.

(c) If required by the solicitation, letters of credit shall be in a form to be specified in the Manual for Planning and Execution of State Permanent Improvement, Part II.

(4) Guarantees.

(a) If required in a solicitation for operation and maintenance, design-build-operate-maintain, or design-build-finance-operate-maintain, the contractor and affiliated organizations (including parent corporations) shall provide a written guarantee that secures the timely, faithful, and uninterrupted performance of operations and maintenance services required under the contract, in an amount established under the contract that is sufficient to cover 100% of the cost of performing such operation and maintenance services during the contract period.

(b) The written guarantee required under this Section shall be submitted by each offeror at the time the proposal is submitted. If the contractor fails to submit the required guarantee, the contractor's bid (or offer) shall be rejected, its bid security shall be enforced, and award of the contract shall be made to the next ranked bidder (or offeror) as otherwise provided by these regulations.

(c) If required by the solicitation, guarantees shall be in a form to be specified in the Manual for Planning and Execution of State Permanent Improvement, Part II.

N. Construction Management At-Risk.

(1) Absent the approval required by Section 11-35-2010, a contract with a construction manager at-risk may not involve cost reimbursement.

(2) Prior to contracting for a GMP, all construction management services provided by a construction manager at-risk must be paid as a fee based on either a fixed rate, fixed amount, or fixed formula.

(3) As required by Section 11-35-3030(2)(a)(iv), construction may not commence until the bonding requirements of Section 11-35-3030(2)(a) have been satisfied. Subject to the foregoing, bonding may be provided and construction may commence for a designated portion of the construction.

(4) In a construction management at-risk project, construction may not commence for any portion of the construction until after the governmental body and the construction manager at risk contract for a fixed price or a GMP regarding that portion of the construction. Prior to executing a contract for a fixed price or a GMP, a governmental body shall comply with Section 11-35-1830 and Regulation 19-445.2120, if applicable. For purposes of Section 11-35-1830(3)(a), adequate price competition exists for all components of the construction work awarded by a construction manager at-risk on the basis of competitive bids.

(5) When seeking competitive sealed proposals in a construction management at-risk procurement, the solicitation shall include a preliminary budget, and if applicable, completed programming and the conceptual design. The solicitation shall request information concerning the prospective offeror's qualifications, experience, and ability to perform the requirements of the contract, including but not limited to, experience on projects of similar size and complexity, and history of on-time, on-budget, on-schedule construction. The offeror's proposed fee may be a factor in determining the award.

(6) After all preconstruction services and final construction drawings have been completed, or prior thereto upon written determination by the procurement officer, a governmental body must negotiate with and contract for a GMP with a construction manager at-risk. If negotiations are unsuccessful, the governmental body may issue an invitation for bids, as allowed by this code, for the remaining construction.

(7) A governmental body shall have the right at any time, and for three years following final payment, to audit the construction manager at-risk to disallow and to recover costs not properly charged to the project. Any costs incurred above the GMP shall be paid for by the construction manager at-risk.

(8) A construction manager at-risk may not self-perform any construction work for which subcontractor bids are invited, unless no acceptable bids are received or a subcontractor fails to perform. Ordinarily, the contract with a construction manager at-risk should require the construction manager at-risk to invite bids for all major components of the construction work. Section 11-35-4210 does not apply to any subcontractor bid process conducted by a construction manager at-risk.

19-445.2152. Leases, Lease/Payment, Installment Purchase, and Rental of Personal Property.

A. Justification. A governmental body proposing to enter into an agreement other than an outright purchase is responsible for the justification of such action. Lease, lease/purchase, installment purchase, or rental agreements are subject to the procedures of the Procurement Code and these Regulations.

B. Procedures. Upon written justification by the procurement officer of the governmental body of such alternate method, the following procedures will be followed:

(1) The State of South Carolina Standard Equipment Agreement will be used in all cases unless modifications are approved by the Director of the Division of Procurement Services or his designee. A purchasing agency may enter into an agreement for the rental of equipment without using the Standard Equipment Agreement when the agreement has a total potential value of fifteen thousand dollars or less or the agreement does not exceed ninety days in duration.

(2) Installment purchases will require the governmental body to submit both a justification and purchase requisition to the appropriate chief procurement officer or his designee for processing.

(3) All lease/purchase and installment sales contracts must contain an explicitly stated rate of interest to be incurred by the State under the contract.

19-445.3000. School District Procurement Codes; Model.

A. Application.

Under Section 11-35-5340, a school district is exempt from the South Carolina Consolidated Procurement Code (except for a procurement audit) if the district has its own procurement code which is, in the written opinion of the Division of Procurement Services of the State Fiscal Accountability Authority, substantially similar to the provisions of the Consolidated Procurement Code and regulations in effect at the time the opinion is issued.

B. Delegation.

176 FINAL REGULATIONS

The authority and responsibilities under Section 11-35-5340 are hereby delegated to the Materials Management Officer.

C. Substantially Similar.

To qualify for approval, a district code should largely mirror, but need not be identical to, the Consolidated Procurement Code. Because a district code needs only to be substantially similar to the consolidated procurement code and regulations, a district code may accommodate the differing context of school districts (e.g., differences between state government and local school district operations, including size, purchasing staff resources, volume and type of procurements, and structure of its governing body and executive hierarchy) as long as it preserves the sound procurement policies and practices underlying the rules found in the consolidated procurement code and regulations.

D. Definitions.

Covered District means a school district subject to the requirements of Section 11-35-5340. Model code means a model school district procurement code and any subsequent modifications to the model code, including instructions regarding how each district may customize the model code to an individual district's organizational structure.

E. Guidelines; Model Code.

By requiring a written opinion, Section 11-35-5340 provides for an exercise of judgment. The best interest of the state is served by exercising this judgment in a consistent manner. Accordingly, the Materials Management Office may publish guidance regarding its exercise of this judgment, including publication of a model code. In developing a model code, the Materials Management Officer should consult with all covered districts and the State Department of Education. Any model should be designed to serve and comply with the purposes and policies enumerated in Section 11-35-20 in the specific context of local school district operations, with due regard for minimizing administrative costs of compliance with the model code. Prior to publishing a model code, the Materials Management Officer must determine in writing that the model code is substantially similar to the provisions of the South Carolina Consolidated Procurement Code and these procurement regulations. Any school district may adopt the model code.

F. Duration of Written Opinion.

A written opinion issued pursuant to Section 11-35-5340 remains valid for a covered district's procurement code until the covered district seeks and receives a written opinion for modifications to its procurement code.

G. Effect of Adoption.

A procurement code adopted by a school district in accordance with all applicable law shall have the full force and effect of law.

Fiscal Impact Statement:

No additional state funding is requested. The State Fiscal Accountability Authority estimates that no additional costs will be incurred by the State and its political subdivisions in complying with the proposed revisions to Regulation 19-445.

Statement of Rationale:

The Consolidated Procurement Code expressly contemplates the continued development of explicit and thoroughly considered procurement policies and practices. The proposed changes are needed to accommodate developments in the law and in best practices for government procurement, and to further consolidate, clarify, and modernize the law governing procurement in this State. S.C. Code Section 11-35-20(d).