

Rules Governing Procurement of Goods, Services, Insurance and Construction by a Public Institution of Higher Education of the Commonwealth of Virginia

Governed by Article 4 of the Restructured Higher Education Financial and Administrative Operations Act, Chapter 10 (§ 23.1004 et seq.) of Title 23.1 of the Code of Virginia

FOREWORD

(Authored by the Virginia Association of College and University Procurement Professionals)

For all restructured Higher Education institutions in the Commonwealth, the *Governing Rules* replaces the Virginia Public Procurement Act (§§ 2.2-4300 through 2.2-4377) (VPPA) as the set of rules for conducting public procurement. In 2004, the “Governing Rules” was authored jointly by the Higher Education institutions along with representatives from The Commonwealth of Virginia Executive Branch and the Department of General Services. This work occurred during successful negotiations that led to passing the Restructured Higher Education Financial and Administrative s Operations Act of 2004 (§23-38.88 thru 23-38.121). The document was crafted strategically to support the mission of higher education in the Commonwealth. The Governing Rules closely mirrors the principles of the VPPA while allowing flexibility to best manage the operations of state funded higher education institutions and the unique challenges for acquisition of goods and services in a higher education environment. *The Governing Rules* state that "competition be sought to the maximum feasible degree," and that "procurement procedures involve openness and administrative efficiency." It also states that "individual public bodies enjoy broad flexibility in fashioning details of such competition."

The Governing Rules are referenced as the required ruleset in all public procurements conducted by the Virginia restructured higher educational institutions. In addition, four sections referenced directly from the VPPA also apply in all restructured higher education institutions’ procurements: (1) ethics in contracting (§2.2-4367), (2) public inspection of certain records (§ 2.2-4347), (3) prompt pay requirements to vendors (§ 2.2-4347) and (4) actions on payment bonds and statute of limitations on construction contracts (§§ 2.2-4340 through 2.2-4340.2)

Since 2004, several legislative changes have been passed that alters the original version of the Governing Rules Document. Below is a summary of those changes with reference to the legislation passed:

2009 Legislative Session – Additional exemption from competition category (HB1600, Chapter 761, Item 4-9.02)

Exception to the requirement to solicit competition. Added to the list of exceptions within the Governing Rules (Page 24): ***“Maintenance contract renewals for scientific research equipment and software, provided that the institution has posted the renewal to eVA and documented that there was only one response or less and such documentation includes a statement signed by the buyer indicating that no firm other than the original manufacturer/developer offers the service.”***

2019 Legislative Session – Increase in small purchase delegation threshold (HB1700, Item 4-9.03 and Item 4-9.02 #1c)

Notwithstanding the small purchase thresholds set forth in the Rules Governing Procurement the small purchases thresholds for Level III (and Level II) institutions shall be the small purchase thresholds set forth in the Virginia Public Procurement Act (§ 2.2-4300 et seq). Where small purchase thresholds under Rules Governing Procurement for Level III and Level II institutions exceed those in 2.2-4300 et seq, the Rules Governing Procurement shall be the authorized procurement threshold.

2021 Legislative Session – Removal of mandatory requirement to advertise RFP’s in newspaper of general circulation (SB1100, Item 262.80 #1s, D.2.)

“Consistent with the 2019 updates to the Virginia Public Procurement Act, institutions of higher education that have entered into memoranda of understanding or management agreements with the state are permitted to conform their Request for Proposal advertising rules to that of § 2.2-4302.2.A.2.”

The Rules Governing Procurement of Goods, Services, Insurance and Construction by a Public Institution of Higher Education of the Commonwealth of Virginia remains a testament to cooperation within the Commonwealth of Virginia to ensure its Institutions of Higher Education operate at the highest levels of integrity, ethics, efficiencies, effectiveness and transparency.

About VASCUPP

The Virginia Association of State College and University Purchasing Professionals (VASCUPP) was established in 1992 with the objective of identifying opportunities for cooperative procurements and cost savings for higher education institutions in Virginia, and over the years that objective has not changed. The current 13 members of VASCUPP continuously collaborate on cooperative procurements, procurement practice, and source selection, which ultimately allow for savings through leveraged spend and reduced administrative effort.

Foreword Last Updated: May 31, 2022

Rules Governing Procurement of Goods, Services, Insurance, and Construction
by a Public Institution of Higher Education of the Commonwealth of Virginia
Governed by Article 4 of the
Restructured Higher Education Financial and Administrative Operations Act, Chapter 10
(§ 21-1000 et seq.) of Title 23.1 of the Code of Virginia

In accordance with the provisions of the Restructured Higher Education Financial and Administrative Operations Act (the Act), Chapter 4.10 (§ [23-38.88](#) et seq.) of Title 23 of the Code of Virginia, and in particular § [23-38.110](#) of the Act, the governing body of a public institution of higher education of the Commonwealth of Virginia that has entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with the Commonwealth pursuant to Subchapter 3 of the Act has adopted the following Rules Governing Procurement of Goods, Services, Insurance, and Construction to govern the procurement of goods, services, insurance, and construction by the Institution:

§ 1. Purpose.

The purpose of these Rules is to enunciate the public policies pertaining to procurement of goods, services, insurance, and construction by the Institution from nongovernmental sources, to include governmental procurement that may or may not result in monetary consideration for either party. These Rules shall apply whether the consideration is monetary or nonmonetary and regardless of whether the Institution, the contractor, or some third party is providing the consideration.

§ 2. Scope of Procurement Authority.

Subject to these Rules, and the Institution's continued substantial compliance with the terms and conditions of its Management Agreement with the Commonwealth pursuant to subdivision D 4 of § [23-38.88](#) and the requirements of Chapter 4.10 of the Act, the Institution shall have and shall be authorized to have and exercise all of the authority relating to procurement of goods, services, insurance, and construction, including but not limited to capital outlay-related procurement and information technology-related procurement, that Institutions are authorized to exercise pursuant to Subchapter 3 of the Restructuring Act.

§ 3. Competition is the Priority.

To the end that the Institution shall obtain high quality goods and services at reasonable cost, that all procurement procedures be conducted in an open, fair and impartial manner with avoidance of any impropriety or appearance of impropriety, that all qualified vendors have access to the Institution's business and that no offeror be arbitrarily or capriciously excluded, it is the intent of the governing body of the Institution that competition be sought to the maximum feasible degree, that procurement procedures involve openness and administrative efficiency, that individual public bodies enjoy broad flexibility in fashioning details of such competition, that the rules governing contract awards be made clear in advance of the competition, that specifications reflect the procurement needs of the purchasing body rather than being drawn to favor a particular vendor, and that the purchaser and vendor freely exchange information

concerning what is sought to be procured and what is offered. The Institution may consider best value concepts when procuring goods and nonprofessional services, but not construction or professional services. Professional services will be procured using a qualification-based selection process. The criteria, factors, and basis for consideration of best value and the process for the consideration of best value shall be as stated in the procurement solicitation.

§ 4. Definitions.

As used in these Rules:

"Affiliate" means an individual or business that controls, is controlled by, or is under common control with another individual or business. A person controls an entity if the person owns, directly or indirectly, more than 10 percent of the voting securities of the entity. For the purposes of this definition "voting security" means a security that (i) confers upon the holder the right to vote for the election of members of the board of directors or similar governing body of the business or (ii) is convertible into, or entitles the holder to receive, upon its exercise, a security that confers such a right to vote. A general partnership interest shall be deemed to be a voting security.

"Best value," as predetermined in the solicitation, means the overall combination of quality, price, and various elements of required services that in total are optimal relative to the Institution's needs.

"Business" means any type of corporation, partnership, limited liability company, association, or sole proprietorship operated for profit.

"Competitive negotiation" is a method of contractor selection that includes the following elements:

- Issuance of a written Request for Proposal indicating in general terms that which is sought to be procured, specifying the factors that will be used in evaluating the proposal and containing or incorporating by reference the other applicable contractual terms and conditions, including any unique capabilities or qualifications that will be required of the contractor.
- Public notice of the Request for Proposal at least 10 days prior to the date set for receipt of proposals by publication in a newspaper or newspapers of general circulation in the area in which the contract is to be performed so as to provide reasonable notice to the maximum number of offerors that can be reasonably anticipated to submit proposals in response to the particular request. Public notice also shall be published on the Department of General Services' central electronic procurement website and may be published on other appropriate websites. In addition, proposals may be solicited directly from potential contractors.
- a. Procurement of professional services. The procurement of professional services for capital projects shall be conducted using a qualification-based selection process. The Institution shall engage in individual discussions with two or more offerors deemed fully qualified, responsible and suitable on the basis of initial responses and with emphasis on professional competence, to

provide the required services. Repetitive informal interviews shall be permissible. The offerors shall be encouraged to elaborate on their qualifications and performance data or staff expertise pertinent to the proposed project, as well as alternative concepts. The Request for Proposal shall not, however, request that offerors furnish estimates of man-hours or costs for services. At the discussion stage, the Institution may discuss nonbinding estimates of total project costs, including, but not limited to, life-cycle costing, and where appropriate, nonbinding estimates of price for services. Proprietary information from competing offerors shall not be disclosed to the public or to competitors. At the conclusion of discussion, outlined in this subdivision, on the basis of evaluation factors published in the Request for Proposal and all information developed in the selection process to this point, the Institution shall select in the order of preference two or more offerors whose professional qualifications and proposed services are deemed most meritorious. Negotiations shall then be conducted, beginning with the offeror ranked first. If a contract satisfactory and advantageous to the Institution can be negotiated at a price considered fair and reasonable, the award shall be made to that offeror. Otherwise, negotiations with the offeror ranked first shall be formally terminated and negotiations conducted with the offeror ranked second, and so on until such a contract can be negotiated at a fair and reasonable price. Should the Institution determine in writing and in its sole discretion that only one offeror is fully qualified, or that one offeror is clearly more highly qualified and suitable than the others under consideration, a contract may be negotiated and awarded to that offeror.

A contract for architectural or professional engineering services relating to construction projects may be negotiated by the Institution for multiple projects provided (i) the projects require similar experience and expertise, and (ii) the nature of the projects is clearly identified in the Request for Proposal. Under such contract, (a) the fair and reasonable prices, as negotiated, shall be used in determining the cost of each project performed; (b) the sum of all projects performed in one contract term shall be as set in the Request for Proposal; and (c) the project fee of any single project shall not exceed the term limit as set in the Request for Proposal. Any unused amounts from any contract term may be carried forward. Competitive negotiations for such contracts may result in awards to more than one offeror provided the Request for Proposal stated the potential for a multi-vendor award.

Multiphase professional services contracts satisfactory and advantageous to the Institution for environmental, location, design and inspection work regarding construction of infrastructure projects may be negotiated and awarded based on qualifications at a fair and reasonable price for the first phase only, when completion of the earlier phases is necessary to provide information critical to the negotiation of a fair and reasonable price for succeeding phases. Prior to the procurement of any such contract, the Institution shall state the anticipated intended total scope of the project and determine in writing that the nature of the work is such that the best interests of such Institution require awarding the contract.

b. Procurement of other than professional services. Selection shall be made of two or more offerors deemed to be fully qualified and best suited among those submitting proposals, on the basis of the factors involved in the Request for Proposal, including price if so stated in the Request for Proposal. Negotiations shall then be conducted with each of the offerors so selected. Price shall be considered, but need not be the sole determining factor. After negotiations have been conducted with each offeror so selected, the Institution shall select the offeror which, in its

opinion, has made the best proposal, and shall award the contract to that offeror. When the terms and conditions of multiple awards are so provided in the Request for Proposal, awards may be made to more than one offeror. Should the Institution determine in writing and in its sole discretion that only one offeror has made the best proposal, a contract may be negotiated and awarded to that offeror.

"Competitive sealed bidding" is a method of contractor selection, other than for professional services, which includes the following elements:

A. Issuance of a written Invitation to Bid containing or incorporating by reference the specifications and contractual terms and conditions applicable to the procurement. Unless the Institution has provided for prequalification of bidders, the Invitation to Bid shall include a statement of any requisite qualifications of potential contractors. When it is impractical to prepare initially a purchase description to support an award based on prices, an Invitation to Bid may be issued requesting the submission of unpriced offers to be followed by an Invitation to Bid limited to those bidders whose offers have been qualified under the criteria set forth in the first solicitation.

B. Public notice of the Invitation to Bid at least 10 days prior to the date set for receipt of bids by publication on the Department of General Services' central electronic procurement website. Public notice also may be published in a newspaper of general circulation or on other appropriate websites, or both. In addition, bids may be solicited directly from potential contractors. Any additional solicitations shall include businesses selected from a list made available by the Department of Minority Business Enterprise.

C. Public opening and announcement of all bids received.

D. Evaluation of bids based upon the requirements set forth in the invitation, which may include special qualifications of potential contractors, life-cycle costing, value analysis, and any other criteria such as inspection, testing, quality, workmanship, delivery, and suitability for a particular purpose, which are helpful in determining acceptability.

E. Award to the lowest responsive and responsible bidder. When the terms and conditions of multiple awards are so provided in the Invitation to Bid, awards may be made to more than one bidder.

"Construction" means building, altering, repairing, improving or demolishing any structure, building or highway, and any draining, dredging, excavation, grading or similar work upon real property.

"Construction management contract" means a contract in which a party is retained by the owner to coordinate and administer contracts for construction services for the benefit of the owner, and may also include, if provided in the contract, the furnishing of construction services to the owner.

"Covered Institution" or "Institution" means, on and after the effective date of the initial management agreement with the Commonwealth of Virginia, a public institution of higher education of the Commonwealth that has entered into a management agreement with the Commonwealth to be governed by the provisions of Subchapter 3 of the Restructuring Act.

"Design-build contract" means a contract between the Institution and another party in which the party contracting with the Institution agrees to both design and build the structure, roadway or other item specified in the contract.

"Goods" means all material, equipment, supplies, and printing, including information technology and telecommunications goods such as automated data processing hardware and software.

"Informality" means a minor defect or variation of a bid or proposal from the exact requirements of the Invitation to Bid, or the Request for Proposal, which does not affect the price, quality, quantity or delivery schedule for the goods, services or construction being procured.

"Multiphase professional services contract" means a contract for the providing of professional services where the total scope of work of the second or subsequent phase of the contract cannot be specified without the results of the first or prior phase of the contract.

"Nonprofessional services" means any services not specifically identified as professional services in the definition of professional services and includes small construction projects valued not over \$1 million; provided that subdivision 3 a of the definition of "competitive negotiation" in this section shall still apply to professional services for such small construction projects.

"Potential bidder or offeror" for the purposes of §§ 50 and 54 of these Rules means a person who, at the time the Institution negotiates and awards or proposes to award a contract, is engaged in the sale or lease of goods, or the sale of services, insurance or construction, of the type to be procured under the contract, and who at such time is eligible and qualified in all respects to perform that contract, and who would have been eligible and qualified to submit a bid or proposal had the contract been procured through competitive sealed bidding or competitive negotiation.

"Professional services" means work performed by an independent contractor within the scope of the practice of accounting, actuarial services, architecture, land surveying, landscape architecture, law, dentistry, medicine, optometry, pharmacy or professional engineering.

"Public body" means any legislative, executive or judicial body, agency, office, department, authority, post, commission, committee, institution, board or political subdivision created by law to exercise some sovereign power or to perform some governmental duty, and empowered by law to undertake the activities described in these Rules.

"Public contract" means an agreement between the Institution and a nongovernmental source that is enforceable in a court of law.

"Responsible bidder" or "responsible offeror" means a person who has the capability, in all respects, to perform fully the contract requirements and the moral and business integrity and reliability that will assure good faith performance, and who has been prequalified, if required.

"Responsive bidder" means a person who has submitted a bid that conforms in all material respects to the Invitation to Bid.

"Restructuring Act" or "Act" means the Restructured Higher Education Financial and Administrative Operations Act, Chapter 4.10 (§ [23-38.88](#) et seq.) of Title 23 of the Code of Virginia.

"Reverse auctioning" means a procurement method wherein bidders are invited to bid on specified goods or nonprofessional services through real-time electronic bidding, with the award being made to the lowest responsive and responsible bidder. During the bidding process, bidders' prices are revealed and bidders shall have the opportunity to modify their bid prices for the duration of the time period established for bid opening.

"Rules" means these Rules Governing Procurement of Goods, Services, Insurance, and Construction adopted by the governing body of the Covered Institution.

"Services" means any work performed by an independent contractor wherein the service rendered does not consist primarily of acquisition of equipment or materials, or the rental of equipment, materials and supplies.

"Sheltered workshop" means a work-oriented rehabilitative facility with a controlled working environment and individual goals that utilizes work experience and related services for assisting the handicapped person to progress toward normal living and a productive vocational status.

§ 5. Methods of procurement.

- All public contracts with nongovernmental contractors for the purchase or lease of goods, or for the purchase of services, insurance, or construction, shall be awarded after competitive sealed bidding, or competitive negotiation as provided in this section, unless otherwise authorized by law.
- Professional services shall be procured by competitive negotiation. Qualification-based selection shall be used for design services.
- Goods, services, or insurance may be procured by competitive negotiation.
- Construction may be procured only by competitive sealed bidding, except that competitive negotiation may be used in the following instances upon a determination made in advance by the Institution and set forth in writing that competitive sealed bidding is either not practicable or not fiscally advantageous to the public, which writing shall document the basis for this determination:

A. By the Institution on a fixed price design-build basis or construction management basis under § 7;

B. By the Institution for the construction, alteration, repair, renovation or demolition of buildings; or

C. By the Institution for the construction of highways and any draining, dredging, excavation, grading or similar work upon real property.

- Upon a determination in writing that there is only one source practicably available for that which is to be procured, a contract may be negotiated and awarded to that source without competitive sealed bidding or competitive negotiation. The writing shall document the basis for this determination. The Institution shall issue a written notice stating that only one source was determined to be practicably available, and identifying that which is being procured, the contractor selected, and the date on which the contract was or will be awarded. This notice shall be posted in a designated public area, which may be the Department of General Services' website for the Commonwealth's central electronic procurement system, or published in a newspaper of general circulation on the day the Institution awards or announces its decision to award the contract, whichever occurs first. Public notice shall also be published on the Department of General Services' website for the Commonwealth's central electronic procurement system and may be published on other appropriate websites.

- In case of emergency, a contract may be awarded without competitive sealed bidding or competitive negotiation; however, such procurement shall be made with such competition as is practicable under the circumstances. A written determination of the basis for the emergency and for the selection of the particular contractor shall be included in the contract file. The Institution shall issue a written notice stating that the contract is being awarded on an emergency basis, and identifying that which is being procured, the contractor selected, and the date on which the contract was or will be awarded. This notice shall be posted in a designated public area, which may be the Department of General Services' website for the Commonwealth's central electronic procurement system, or published in a newspaper of general circulation on the day the Institution awards or announces its decision to award the contract, whichever occurs first, or as soon thereafter as is practicable. Public notice may also be published on the Department of General Services' website for the Commonwealth's central electronic procurement system and other appropriate websites.

- The Institution may establish purchase procedures, if adopted in writing, not requiring competitive sealed bids or competitive negotiation for single or term contracts for goods and services other than professional services if the aggregate or the sum of all phases is not expected to exceed \$50,000; however, such small purchase procedures shall provide for competition wherever practicable.

- The Institution may establish purchase procedures, if adopted in writing, not requiring competitive negotiation for single or term contracts for professional services if the aggregate or the sum of all phases is not expected to exceed \$50,000; however such small purchase procedures shall provide for competition wherever practicable.

- Upon a determination made in advance by the Institution and set forth in writing that the purchase of goods, products or commodities from a public auction sale is in the best interests of the public, such items may be purchased at the auction, including online public auctions. The writing shall document the basis for this determination.
- The purchase of goods or nonprofessional services, but not construction or professional services, may be made by reverse auctioning.

§ 6. Cooperative procurement.

A. In circumstances where the Institution determines and documents that statewide contracts for goods and services, including information technology and telecommunications goods and services, do not provide goods and services to the Institution that meet its business goals and objectives, the Institution is authorized to participate in, sponsor, conduct, or administer a cooperative procurement arrangement on behalf of or in conjunction with public bodies, public or private health or educational institutions, other public or private organizations or entities, including public-private partnerships, charitable organizations, health care provider alliances or purchasing organizations or entities, or with public agencies or institutions or group purchasing organizations of the several states, territories of the United States, or the District of Columbia, for the purpose of combining requirements to effect cost savings or reduce administrative expense in any acquisition of goods and services, other than professional services. The Institution may purchase from any authority, department, agency, institution, city, county, town, or other political subdivision of the Commonwealth's contract even if it did not participate in the request for proposal or invitation to bid, if the request for proposal or invitation to bid specified that the procurement was being conducted on behalf of other public bodies. In such instances, deviation from the procurement procedures set forth in these Rules and the administrative policies and procedures established to implement these Rules shall be permitted.

Notwithstanding all of the above, use of cooperative contracts shall conform to the business requirements of the Commonwealth's electronic procurement system, including the requirement for payment of applicable fees. Nothing herein shall prohibit the payment by direct or indirect means of any administrative fee that will allow for participation in any such arrangement.

B. In circumstances where statewide contracts for goods and services, including information technology and telecommunications goods and services, do not provide goods and services to meet the Institution's business goals and objectives, and as authorized by the United States Congress and consistent with applicable federal regulations, and provided the terms of the contract permit such purchases:

- The Institution may purchase goods and nonprofessional services, from a United States General Services Administration contract or a contract awarded by any other agency of the United States government; and
- The Institution may purchase telecommunications and information technology goods and nonprofessional services from a United States General Services Administration contract or a contract awarded by any other agency of the United States government.

§ 7. Design-build or construction management contracts authorized.

- Notwithstanding any other provisions of law, the Institution may enter into contracts on a fixed price design-build basis or construction management basis in accordance with the provisions of this section.
- Procurement of construction by the design-build or construction management method shall be a two-step competitive negotiation process. In the first step, offerors shall be requested to submit their qualifications. Based upon the information submitted and any other relevant information which the Commonwealth may obtain, no more than five offerors deemed most suitable for the project shall be selected by the Commonwealth and requested to submit proposals.

§ 8. Modification of the contract.

A. A contract awarded by the Institution may include provisions for modification of the contract during performance, but no fixed-price contract may be increased by more than 25 percent of the amount of the contract or \$50,000, whichever is greater, without the advance written approval of the Institution's president or his designee. In no event may the amount of any contract, without adequate consideration, be increased for any purpose, including, but not limited to, relief of an offeror from the consequences of an error in its bid or offer.

B. The Institution may extend the term of an existing contract for services to allow completion of any work undertaken but not completed during the original term of the contract.

C. Nothing in this section shall prevent the Institution from placing greater restrictions on contract modifications.

§ 9. Discrimination prohibited; participation of small, women- and minority-owned business.

A. In the solicitation or awarding of contracts, the Institution shall not discriminate against a bidder or offeror because of race, religion, color, sex, national origin, age, disability, or any other basis prohibited by state law relating to discrimination in employment. Whenever solicitations are made, the Institution shall include businesses selected from a list made available by the Department of Minority Business Enterprise.

B. The Institution shall establish programs consistent with this section to facilitate the participation of small businesses and businesses owned by women and minorities in procurement transactions. The programs established shall be in writing and shall include cooperation with the Department of Minority Business Enterprise, the United States Small Business Administration, and other public or private agencies. The Institution shall submit annual progress reports on minority business procurement to the Department of Minority Business Enterprise.

C. Whenever there exists (i) a rational basis for small business enhancement or (ii) a persuasive analysis that documents a statistically significant disparity between the availability and utilization of women- and minority-owned businesses, the Governor is by law authorized and

encouraged to require the Institution to implement appropriate enhancement or remedial measures consistent with prevailing law.

D. In the solicitation or awarding of contracts, the Institution shall not discriminate against a bidder or offeror because the bidder or offeror employs ex-offenders unless it has made a written determination that employing ex-offenders on the specific contract is not in its best interest.

§ 10. Employment discrimination by contractor prohibited; required contract provisions. The Institution shall include in every contract of more than \$10,000 the following provisions:

A. During the performance of this contract, the contractor agrees as follows:

A. The contractor will not discriminate against any employee or applicant for employment because of race, religion, color, sex, national origin, age, disability, or other basis prohibited by state law relating to discrimination in employment, except where there is a bona fide occupational qualification reasonably necessary to the normal operation of the contractor. The contractor agrees to post in conspicuous places, available to employees and applicants for employment, notices setting forth the provisions of this nondiscrimination clause.

B. The contractor, in all solicitations or advertisements for employees placed by or on behalf of the contractor, will state that such contractor is an equal opportunity employer.

C. Notices, advertisements and solicitations placed in accordance with federal law, rule or regulation shall be deemed sufficient for the purpose of meeting the requirements of this section.

B. The contractor will include the provisions of the foregoing paragraphs a, b, and c in every subcontract or purchase order of over \$10,000, so that the provisions will be binding upon each subcontractor or vendor.

§ 11. Drug-free workplace to be maintained by contractor; required contract provisions.

The Institution shall include in every contract over \$10,000 the following provisions:

During the performance of this contract, the contractor agrees to (i) provide a drug-free workplace for the contractor's employees; (ii) post in conspicuous places, available to employees and applicants for employment, a statement notifying employees that the unlawful manufacture, sale, distribution, dispensation, possession, or use of a controlled substance or marijuana is prohibited in the contractor's workplace and specifying the actions that will be taken against employees for violations of such prohibition; (iii) state in all solicitations or advertisements for employees placed by or on behalf of the contractor that the contractor maintains a drug-free workplace; and (iv) include the provisions of the foregoing clauses in every subcontract or purchase order of over \$10,000, so that the provisions will be binding upon each subcontractor or vendor.

For the purposes of this section, "drug-free workplace" means a site for the performance of work done in connection with a specific contract awarded to a contractor in accordance with these Rules, the employees of whom are prohibited from engaging in the unlawful manufacture, sale, distribution, dispensation, possession or use of any controlled substance or marijuana during the performance of the contract.

§ 12. Use of brand names.

Unless otherwise provided in the Invitation to Bid, the name of a certain brand, make or manufacturer shall not restrict bidders to the specific brand, make or manufacturer named and shall be deemed to convey the general style, type, character, and quality of the article desired. Any article that the Institution in its sole discretion determines to be the equal of that specified, considering quality, workmanship, economy of operation, and suitability for the purpose intended, shall be accepted.

§ 13. Comments concerning specifications.

The Institution shall establish procedures whereby comments concerning specifications or other provisions in Invitations to Bid or Requests for Proposal can be received and considered prior to the time set for receipt of bids or proposals or award of the contract.

§ 14. Prequalification generally; prequalification for construction.

- Prospective contractors may be prequalified for particular types of supplies, services, insurance or construction, and consideration of bids or proposals limited to prequalified contractors. Any prequalification procedure shall be established in writing and sufficiently in advance of its implementation to allow potential contractors a fair opportunity to complete the process.
- Any prequalification of prospective contractors for construction by the Institution shall be pursuant to a prequalification process for construction projects adopted by the Institution. The process shall be consistent with the provisions of this section.

The application form used in such process shall set forth the criteria upon which the qualifications of prospective contractors will be evaluated. The application form shall request of prospective contractors only such information as is appropriate for an objective evaluation of all prospective contractors pursuant to such criteria. The form shall allow the prospective contractor seeking prequalification to request, by checking the appropriate box, that all information voluntarily submitted by the contractor pursuant to this subsection shall be considered a trade secret or proprietary information subject to the provisions of subsection D of § 34 of these Rules.

In all instances in which the Institution requires prequalification of potential contractors for construction projects, advance notice shall be given of the deadline for the submission of prequalification applications. The deadline for submission shall be sufficiently in advance of the

date set for the submission of bids for such construction so as to allow the procedures set forth in this subsection to be accomplished.

At least 30 days prior to the date established for submission of bids or proposals under the procurement of the contract for which the prequalification applies, the Institution shall advise in writing each contractor who submitted an application whether that contractor has been prequalified. In the event that a contractor is denied prequalification, the written notification to the contractor shall state the reasons for the denial of prequalification and the factual basis of such reasons.

A decision by the Institution denying prequalification under the provisions of this subsection shall be final and conclusive unless the contractor appeals the decision as provided in § 54 of these Rules.

- The Institution may deny prequalification to any contractor only if the Institution finds one of the following:
 - The contractor does not have sufficient financial ability to perform the contract that would result from such procurement. If a bond is required to ensure performance of a contract, evidence that the contractor can acquire a surety bond from a corporation included on the United States Treasury list of acceptable surety corporations in the amount and type required by the Institution shall be sufficient to establish the financial ability of the contractor to perform the contract resulting from such procurement;
 - The contractor does not have appropriate experience to perform the construction project in question;
 - The contractor or any officer, director or owner thereof has had judgments entered against him within the past 10 years for the breach of contracts for governmental or nongovernmental construction, including, but not limited to, design-build or construction management;
 - The contractor has been in substantial noncompliance with the terms and conditions of prior construction contracts with the Institution without good cause. If the Institution has not contracted with a contractor in any prior construction contracts, the Institution may deny prequalification if the contractor has been in substantial noncompliance with the terms and conditions of comparable construction contracts with another public body without good cause. The Institution may not utilize this provision to deny prequalification unless the facts underlying such substantial noncompliance were documented in writing in the prior construction project file and such information relating thereto given to the contractor at that time, with the opportunity to respond;
 - The contractor or any officer, director, owner, project manager, procurement manager or chief financial official thereof has been convicted within the past 10 years of a crime related to governmental or nongovernmental construction or contracting, including, but not limited to, a violation of (i) Article 6 (§ [2.2-4367](#) et seq.) of Chapter 43 of Title 2.2 of the Code of Virginia, (ii) the Virginia Governmental Frauds Act (§ [18.2-498.1](#) et seq.) of the Code of Virginia, (iii)

Chapter 4.2 (§ [59.1-68.6](#) et seq.) of Title 59.1 of the Code of Virginia, or (iv) any substantially similar law of the United States or another state;

- The contractor or any officer, director or owner thereof is currently debarred pursuant to an established debarment procedure from bidding or contracting by any public body, agency of another state or agency of the federal government;
- The contractor failed to provide to the Institution in a timely manner any information requested by the Institution relevant to subdivisions 1 through 6 of this subsection.

§ 15. Negotiation with lowest responsible bidder.

Unless canceled or rejected, a responsive bid from the lowest responsible bidder shall be accepted as submitted, except that if the bid from the lowest responsible bidder exceeds available funds, the Institution may negotiate with the apparent low bidder to obtain a contract price within available funds. However, the negotiation may be undertaken only under conditions and procedures described in writing and approved by the Institution prior to issuance of the Invitation to Bid and summarized therein.

§ 16. Cancellation, rejection of bids; waiver of informalities.

- An Invitation to Bid, a Request for Proposal, any other solicitation, or any and all bids or proposals, may be canceled or rejected. The reasons for cancellation or rejection shall be made part of the contract file. The Institution shall not cancel or reject an Invitation to Bid, a Request for Proposal, any other solicitation, bid or proposal pursuant to this section solely to avoid awarding a contract to a particular responsive and responsible bidder or offeror.
- The Institution may waive informalities in bids.

§ 17. Exclusion of insurance bids prohibited.

Notwithstanding any other provision of law, no insurer licensed to transact the business of insurance in the Commonwealth or approved to issue surplus lines insurance in the Commonwealth shall be excluded from presenting an insurance bid proposal to the Institution in response to a request for proposal or an invitation to bid. Nothing in this section shall preclude the Institution from debarring a prospective insurer pursuant to § 18.

§ 18. Debarment.

Prospective contractors may be debarred from contracting for particular types of supplies, services, insurance or construction, for specified periods of time. Any debarment procedure shall be established in writing by the Institution. Any debarment procedure may provide for debarment on the basis of a contractor's unsatisfactory performance for the Institution.

§ 19. Purchase programs for recycled goods; Institution responsibilities.

A. The Institution may implement a purchase program for recycled goods and may coordinate its efforts so as to achieve the goals and objectives set forth in §§ [10.1-1425.6](#), [10.1-1425.7](#), and [10.1-1425.8](#) of the Code of Virginia, and §§ 20 and 22 of these Rules.

B. The Department of Environmental Quality, with advice from the Virginia Recycling Markets Development Council, shall advise the Institution concerning the designation of recycled goods.

§ 20. Preference for Virginia products with recycled content and for Virginia firms.

A. In the case of a tie bid, preference shall be given to goods produced in Virginia and goods or services or construction provided by Virginia persons, firms or corporations; otherwise the tie shall be decided by lot.

B. Whenever any bidder is a resident of any other state and such state under its laws allows a resident contractor of that state a preference, a like preference may be allowed by the Institution to the lowest responsive and responsible bidder who is a resident of Virginia.

C. Notwithstanding the provisions of subsections A and B, in the case of a tie bid in instances where goods are being offered, and existing price preferences have already been taken into account, preference shall be given to the bidder whose goods contain the greatest amount of recycled content.

§ 21. Preference for Virginia coal used in the Institution.

In determining the award of any contract for coal to be purchased for use in the Institution with state funds, the Institution shall procure using competitive sealed bidding and shall award to the lowest responsive and responsible bidder offering coal mined in Virginia so long as its bid price is not more than 4 percent greater than the bid price of the lowest responsive and responsible bidder offering coal mined elsewhere.

§ 22. Preference for recycled paper and paper products used by the Institution.

A.In determining the award of any contract for paper and paper products to be purchased for use by the Institution, it shall competitively procure recycled paper and paper products of a quality suitable for the purpose intended, so long as the price is not more than 10 percent greater than the price of the lowest responsive and responsible bidder or offeror offering a product that does not qualify under subsection B.

B.For purposes of this section, recycled paper and paper products means any paper or paper products meeting the EPA Recommended Content Standards as defined in 40 C.F.R. Part 247.

§ 23. Withdrawal of bid due to error.

A.A bidder for a public construction contract, other than a contract for construction or maintenance of public highways, may withdraw his bid from consideration if the price bid was substantially lower than the other bids due solely to a mistake in the bid, provided the bid was

submitted in good faith, and the mistake was a clerical mistake as opposed to a judgment mistake, and was actually due to an unintentional arithmetic error or an unintentional omission of a quantity of work, labor or material made directly in the compilation of a bid, which unintentional arithmetic error or unintentional omission can be clearly shown by objective evidence drawn from inspection of original work papers, documents and materials used in the preparation of the bid sought to be withdrawn.

If a bid contains both clerical and judgment mistakes, a bidder may withdraw his bid from consideration if the price bid would have been substantially lower than the other bids due solely to the clerical mistake, that was an unintentional arithmetic error or an unintentional omission of a quantity of work, labor or material made directly in the compilation of a bid that shall be clearly shown by objective evidence drawn from inspection of original work papers, documents and materials used in the preparation of the bid sought to be withdrawn.

One of the following procedures for withdrawal of a bid shall be selected by the Institution and stated in the advertisement for bids: (i) the bidder shall give notice in writing of his claim of right to withdraw his bid within two business days after the conclusion of the bid opening procedure and shall submit original work papers with such notice; or (ii) the bidder shall submit to the Institution or designated official his original work papers, documents and materials used in the preparation of the bid within one day after the date fixed for submission of bids. The work papers shall be delivered by the bidder in person or by registered mail at or prior to the time fixed for the opening of bids. In either instance, the work papers, documents and materials may be considered as trade secrets or proprietary information subject to the conditions of subsection F of § 34 of these Rules. The bids shall be opened one day following the time fixed by the Institution for the submission of bids. Thereafter, the bidder shall have two hours after the opening of bids within which to claim in writing any mistake as defined herein and withdraw his bid. The contract shall not be awarded by the Institution until the two-hour period has elapsed. The mistake shall be proved only from the original work papers, documents and materials delivered as required herein.

B. The Institution may establish procedures for the withdrawal of bids for other than construction contracts.

C. No bid shall be withdrawn under this section when the result would be the awarding of the contract on another bid of the same bidder or of another bidder in which the ownership of the withdrawing bidder is more than 5 percent.

D. If a bid is withdrawn in accordance with this section, the lowest remaining bid shall be deemed to be the low bid.

E. No bidder who is permitted to withdraw a bid shall, for compensation, supply any material or labor to or perform any subcontract or other work agreement for the person or firm to whom the contract is awarded or otherwise benefit, directly or indirectly, from the performance of the project for which the withdrawn bid was submitted.

F. If the Institution denies the withdrawal of a bid under the provisions of this section, it shall notify the bidder in writing stating the reasons for its decision and award the contract to such bidder at the bid price, provided such bidder is a responsible and responsive bidder.

§ 24. Contract Pricing Arrangements.

- a.** Public contracts may be awarded on a fixed price or cost reimbursement basis, or on any other basis that is not prohibited by these Rules.
- b.** Except in case of emergency affecting the public health, safety or welfare, no public contract shall be awarded on the basis of cost plus a percentage of cost.
- c.** A policy or contract of insurance or prepaid coverage having a premium computed on the basis of claims paid or incurred, plus the insurance carrier's administrative costs and retention stated in whole or part as a percentage of such claims, shall not be prohibited by this section.

§ 25. Workers' compensation requirements for construction contractors and subcontractors.

- a.** No contractor shall perform any work on a construction project of the Institution unless he (i) has obtained, and continues to maintain for the duration of the work, workers' compensation coverage required pursuant to the provisions of Chapter 8 (§ [65.2-800](#) et seq.) of Title 65.2 of the Code of Virginia, and (ii) provides prior to the award of contract, on a form furnished by the Institution, evidence of such coverage.
- b.** The Department of General Services shall provide the form to the Institution. Failure of the Institution to provide the form prior to the award of contract shall waive the requirements of clause (ii) of subsection A.
- c.** No subcontractor shall perform any work on a construction project of the Institution unless he has obtained, and continues to maintain for the duration of such work, workers' compensation coverage required pursuant to the provisions of Chapter 8 (§ [65.2-800](#) et seq.) of Title 65.2 of the Code of Virginia.

§ 26. Retainage on construction contracts.

A. In any contract issued by the Institution for construction that provides for progress payments in installments based upon an estimated percentage of completion, the contractor shall be paid at least 95 percent of the earned sum when payment is due, with no more than 5 percent being retained to ensure faithful performance of the contract. All amounts withheld may be included in the final payment.

B. Any subcontract for a public project that provides for similar progress payments shall be subject to the provisions of this section.

§ 27. Public construction contract provisions barring damages for unreasonable delays declared void.

(a) Any provision contained in any public construction contract of the Institution that purports to waive, release, or extinguish the rights of a contractor to recover costs or damages for unreasonable delay in performing such contract, either on his behalf or on behalf of his subcontractor if and to the extent the delay is caused by acts or omissions of the Institution, its agents or employees and due to causes within their control shall be void and unenforceable as against public policy.

(b) Subsection A shall not be construed to render void any provision of a public construction contract awarded by the Institution that:

- Allows the recovery of that portion of delay costs caused by the acts or omissions of the contractor, or its subcontractors, agents or employees;
- Requires notice of any delay by the party claiming the delay;
- Provides for liquidated damages for delay; or
- Provides for arbitration or any other procedure designed to settle contract disputes.

(c) A contractor making a claim against the Institution for costs or damages due to the alleged delaying of the contractor in the performance of its work under any public construction contract of the Institution shall be liable to the Institution and shall pay it for a percentage of all costs incurred by the Institution in investigating, analyzing, negotiating, litigating and arbitrating the claim, which percentage shall be equal to the percentage of the contractor's total delay claim that is determined through litigation or arbitration to be false or to have no basis in law or in fact.

(d) If the Institution denies a contractor's claim for costs or damages due to the alleged delaying of the contractor in the performance of work under any public construction contract for the Institution, it shall be liable to and shall pay such contractor a percentage of all costs incurred by the contractor to investigate, analyze, negotiate, litigate and arbitrate the claim. The percentage paid by the Institution shall be equal to the percentage of the contractor's total delay claim for which the Institution's denial is determined through litigation or arbitration to have been made in bad faith.

§ 28. Bid bonds.

A. Except in cases of emergency, all bids or proposals for construction contracts in excess of \$1 million shall be accompanied by a bid bond from a surety company selected by the bidder that is authorized to do business in Virginia, as a guarantee that if the contract is awarded to the bidder, he will enter into the contract for the work mentioned in the bid. The amount of the bid bond shall not exceed 5 percent of the amount bid.

B. No forfeiture under a bid bond shall exceed the lesser of (i) the difference between the bid for which the bond was written and the next low bid, or (ii) the face amount of the bid bond.

C. Nothing in this section shall preclude the Institution from requiring bid bonds to accompany bids or proposals for construction contracts anticipated to be less than \$1 million.

§ 29. Performance and payment bonds.

A. Upon the award by the Institution of any (i) public construction contract exceeding \$1 million awarded to any prime contractor or (ii) public construction contract exceeding \$1 million awarded to any prime contractor requiring the performance of labor or the furnishing of materials for buildings, structures or other improvements to real property owned by the Institution, the contractor shall furnish to the Institution the following bonds:

- Except for transportation-related projects, a performance bond in the sum of the contract amount conditioned upon the faithful performance of the contract in strict conformity with the plans, specifications and conditions of the contract. For transportation-related projects, such bond shall be in a form and amount satisfactory to the Institution.
- A payment bond in the sum of the contract amount. The bond shall be for the protection of claimants who have and fulfill contracts to supply labor or materials to the prime contractor to whom the contract was awarded, or to any subcontractors, in furtherance of the work provided for in the contract, and shall be conditioned upon the prompt payment for all materials furnished or labor supplied or performed in the furtherance of the work.

"Labor or materials" shall include public utility services and reasonable rentals of equipment, but only for periods when the equipment rented is actually used at the site.

B. Each of the bonds shall be executed by one or more surety companies selected by the contractor that are authorized to do business in Virginia.

C. The bonds shall be payable to the Commonwealth of Virginia naming also the Institution.

D. Each of the bonds shall be filed with the Institution, or a designated office or official thereof.

E. Nothing in this section shall preclude the Institution from requiring payment or performance bonds for construction contracts below \$1 million.

F. Nothing in this section shall preclude the contractor from requiring each subcontractor to furnish a payment bond with surety thereon in the sum of the full amount of the contract with such subcontractor conditioned upon the payment to all persons who have and fulfill contracts that are directly with the subcontractor for performing labor and furnishing materials in the prosecution of the work provided for in the subcontract.

§ 30. Alternative forms of security.

A. In lieu of a bid, payment, or performance bond, a bidder may furnish a certified check or cash escrow in the face amount required for the bond.

B. If approved by the Institution's General Counsel or his equivalent, a bidder may furnish to the Institution a personal bond, property bond, or bank or savings institution's letter of credit on certain designated funds in the face amount required for the bid, payment or performance bond. Approval shall be granted only upon a determination that the alternative form of security proffered affords protection to the Institution equivalent to a corporate surety's bond.

§ 31. Bonds on other than construction contracts.

The Institution may require bid, payment, or performance bonds for contracts for goods or services if provided in the Invitation to Bid or Request for Proposal.

§ 32. Action on performance bond.

No action against the surety on a performance bond shall be brought by the Institution unless brought within one year after (i) completion of the contract, including the expiration of all warranties and guarantees, or (ii) discovery of the defect or breach of warranty that gave rise to the action.

§ 33. Actions on payment bonds; waiver of right to sue.

1. Subject to the provisions of subsection B, any claimant who has performed labor or furnished material in accordance with the contract documents in furtherance of the work provided in any contract for which a payment bond has been given, and who has not been paid in full before the expiration of 90 days after the day on which the claimant performed the last of the labor or furnished the last of the materials for which he claims payment, may bring an action on the payment bond to recover any amount due him for the labor or material. The obligee named in the bond need not be named a party to the action.

2. Any claimant who has a direct contractual relationship with any subcontractor but who has no contractual relationship, express or implied, with the contractor, may bring an action on the contractor's payment bond only if he has given written notice to the contractor within 180 days from the day on which the claimant performed the last of the labor or furnished the last of the materials for which he claims payment, stating with substantial accuracy the amount claimed and the name of the person for whom the work was performed or to whom the material was furnished. Notice to the contractor shall be served by registered or certified mail, postage prepaid, in an envelope addressed to such contractor at any place where his office is regularly maintained for the transaction of business. Claims for sums withheld as retainages with respect to labor performed or materials furnished, shall not be subject to the time limitations stated in this subsection.

3. Any action on a payment bond shall be brought within one year after the day on which the person bringing such action last performed labor or last furnished or supplied materials.

4. Any waiver of the right to sue on the payment bond required by this section shall be void unless it is in writing, signed by the person whose right is waived, and executed after such person has performed labor or furnished material in accordance with the contract documents.

§ 34. Public inspection of certain records.

1. Except as provided in this section, all proceedings, records, contracts and other public records relating to procurement transactions shall be open to the inspection of any citizen, or any interested person, firm or corporation, in accordance with the Virginia Freedom of Information Act (§ [2.2-3700](#) et seq.).
2. Cost estimates relating to a proposed procurement transaction prepared by or for the Institution shall not be open to public inspection.
3. Any competitive sealed bidding bidder, upon request, shall be afforded the opportunity to inspect bid records within a reasonable time after the opening of all bids but prior to award, except in the event that the Institution decides not to accept any of the bids and to reopen the contract. Otherwise, bid records shall be open to public inspection only after award of the contract.
4. Any competitive negotiation offeror, upon request, shall be afforded the opportunity to inspect proposal records within a reasonable time after the evaluation and negotiations of proposals are completed but prior to award, except in the event that the Institution decides not to accept any of the proposals and to reopen the contract. Otherwise, proposal records shall be open to public inspection only after award of the contract.
5. Any inspection of procurement transaction records under this section shall be subject to reasonable restrictions to ensure the security and integrity of the records.
6. Trade secrets or proprietary information submitted by a bidder, offeror or contractor in connection with a procurement transaction or prequalification application submitted pursuant to subsection B of § 14 shall not be subject to the Virginia Freedom of Information Act (§ [2.2-3700](#) et seq.); however, the bidder, offeror or contractor shall (i) invoke the protections of this section prior to or upon submission of the data or other materials, (ii) identify the data or other materials to be protected, and (iii) state the reasons why protection is necessary.

§ 35. Exemption for certain transactions.

A. The provisions of these Rules shall not apply to:

A. The selection of services related to the management and investment of the Institution's endowment funds, endowment income, or gifts pursuant to § [23-76.1](#). However, selection of these services shall be governed by the Uniform Management of Institutional Funds Act (§ [55-268.1](#) et seq.) as required by § [23-76.1](#).

B. The purchase of items for resale at retail bookstores and similar retail outlets operated by the Institution. However, such purchase procedures shall provide for competition where practicable.

C. Procurement of any construction or planning and design services for construction by the Institution when (i) the planning, design or construction is \$50,000 or less or (ii) the Institution

is obligated to conform to procurement procedures that are established by federal statutes or regulations, whether or not those federal procedures are in conformance with the provisions of these Rules.

D. The purchase of goods and services by the Institution when such purchases are made under a remedial plan established by the Governor pursuant to subsection C of § 9 of these Rules.

B. Where a procurement transaction involves the expenditure of federal assistance or contract funds, the receipt of which is conditioned upon compliance with mandatory requirements in federal laws or regulations not in conformance with the provisions of these Rules, the Institution may comply with such federal requirements, notwithstanding the provisions of these Rules, only upon the written determination of the Institution's President or his designee that acceptance of the grant or contract funds under the applicable conditions is in the public interest. Such determination shall state the specific provision of these Rules in conflict with the conditions of the grant or contract.

§ 36. Permitted contracts with certain religious organizations; purpose; limitations.

(a) The Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996, P.L. [104-193](#), authorizes public bodies to enter into contracts with faith-based organizations for the purposes described in this section on the same basis as any other nongovernmental source without impairing the religious character of such organization, and without diminishing the religious freedom of the beneficiaries of assistance provided under this section.

(b) For the purposes of this section, "faith-based organization" means a religious organization that is or applies to be a contractor to provide goods or services for programs funded by the block grant provided pursuant to the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996, P.L. [104-193](#).

(c) The Institution, in procuring goods or services, or in making disbursements pursuant to this section, shall not (i) discriminate against a faith-based organization on the basis of the organization's religious character or (ii) impose conditions that (a) restrict the religious character of the faith-based organization, except as provided in subsection F, or (b) impair, diminish, or discourage the exercise of religious freedom by the recipients of such goods, services, or disbursements.

(d) The Institution shall ensure that all invitations to bid, requests for proposals, contracts, and purchase orders prominently display a nondiscrimination statement indicating that it does not discriminate against faith-based organizations.

(e) A faith-based organization contracting with the Institution (i) shall not discriminate against any recipient of goods, services, or disbursements made pursuant to a contract authorized by this section on the basis of the recipient's religion, religious belief, refusal to participate in a religious practice, or on the basis of race, age, color, gender or national origin and (ii) shall be subject to the same rules as other organizations that contract with public bodies to account for the use of the funds provided; however, if the faith-based organization segregates public funds

into separate accounts, only the accounts and programs funded with public funds shall be subject to audit by the Institution. Nothing in clause (ii) shall be construed to supersede or otherwise override any other applicable state law.

(f) Consistent with the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996, P.L. [104-193](#), funds provided for expenditure pursuant to contracts with public bodies shall not be spent for sectarian worship, instruction, or proselytizing; however, this prohibition shall not apply to expenditures pursuant to contracts, if any, for the services of chaplains.

(g) Nothing in this section shall be construed as barring or prohibiting a faith-based organization from any opportunity to make a bid or proposal or contract on the grounds that the faith-based organization has exercised the right, as expressed in 42 U.S.C. (§ 2000e-1 et seq.), to employ persons of a particular religion.

(h) If an individual, who applies for or receives goods, services, or disbursements provided pursuant to a contract between the Institution and a faith-based organization, objects to the religious character of the faith-based organization from which the individual receives or would receive the goods, services, or disbursements, the Institution shall offer the individual, within a reasonable period of time after the date of his objection, access to equivalent goods, services, or disbursements from an alternative provider.

The Institution shall provide to each individual who applies for or receives goods, services, or disbursements provided pursuant to a contract between the Institution and a faith-based organization a notice in bold face type that states: "Neither the Institution's selection of a charitable or faith-based provider of services nor the expenditure of funds under this contract is an endorsement of the provider's charitable or religious character, practices, or expression. No provider of services may discriminate against you on the basis of religion, a religious belief, or your refusal to actively participate in a religious practice. If you object to a particular provider because of its religious character, you may request assignment to a different provider. If you believe that your rights have been violated, please discuss the complaint with your provider or notify the appropriate person as indicated in this form."

§ 37. Exemptions from competition for certain transactions.

The Institution may enter into contracts without competition, as that term is described in subsections A through J of § 5 (Methods of procurement) of these Rules, for:

A. The purchase of goods or services that are produced or performed by or related to:

- (1) Persons, or in schools or workshops, under the supervision of the Virginia Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired;
- (2) Nonprofit sheltered workshops or other nonprofit organizations that offer transitional or supported employment services serving the handicapped;
- (3) Private educational institutions; or

(4) Other public educational institutions.

B. Speakers and performing artists;

C. Memberships and Association dues;

D. Sponsored research grant sub-awards and contract sub-awards, not to include the purchase of goods or services by the Institution;

E. Group travel in foreign countries;

F. Conference facilities and services;

G. Participation in intercollegiate athletic tournaments and events including team travel and lodging, registration and tournament fees;

H. Royalties; or

I. The purchase of legal services, provided that the Office of the Attorney General has been consulted, or expert witnesses or other services associated with litigation or regulatory proceedings.

§ 38. Exemptions from competitive sealed bidding and competitive negotiation for certain transactions; limitations.

The Institution may enter into contracts for insurance or electric utility service without competitive sealed bidding or competitive negotiation if purchased through an association of which the Institution is a member if the association was formed and is maintained for the purpose of promoting the interest and welfare of and developing close relationships with similar public bodies, provided such association has procured the insurance or electric utility services by use of competitive principles and provided that the Institution has made a determination in advance after reasonable notice to the public and set forth in writing that competitive sealed bidding and competitive negotiation are not fiscally advantageous to the public. The writing shall document the basis for this determination.

§ 39. Definitions.

As used in §§ 39 through 46, unless the context requires a different meaning:

"Contractor" means the entity that has a direct contract with the Institution.

"Debtor" means any individual, business, or group having a delinquent debt or account with any state agency that obligation has not been satisfied or set aside by court order or discharged in bankruptcy.

"Payment date" means either (i) the date on which payment is due under the terms of a contract for provision of goods or services; or (ii) if such date has not been established by contract, (a) 30 days after receipt of a proper invoice by the Institution or its agent or (b) 30 days after receipt of the goods or services by the Institution.

"Subcontractor" means any entity that has a contract to supply labor or materials to the contractor to whom the contract was awarded or to any subcontractor in the performance of the work provided for in such contract.

§ 40. Exemptions.

The provisions of §§ 39 through 46 shall not apply to the late payment provisions contained in any public utility tariffs prescribed by the State Corporation Commission.

§ 41. Retainage to remain valid.

Notwithstanding the provisions of §§ 39 through 46, the provisions of § 26 relating to retainage shall remain valid.

§ 42. Prompt payment of bills by the Institution.

1. The Institution shall promptly pay for the completely delivered goods or services by the required payment date.

Payment shall be deemed to have been made when offset proceedings have been instituted, as authorized under the Virginia Debt Collection Act (§ [2.2-4800](#) et seq.).

2. Separate payment dates may be specified for contracts under which goods or services are provided in a series of partial deliveries or executions to the extent that such contract provides for separate payment for such partial delivery or execution.

§ 43. Defect or impropriety in the invoice or goods and/or services received.

In instances where there is a defect or impropriety in an invoice or in the goods or services received, the Institution shall notify the supplier of the defect or impropriety, if the defect or impropriety would prevent payment by the payment date. The notice shall be sent within 15 days after receipt of the invoice or the goods or services.

§ 44. Date of postmark deemed to be date payment is made.

In those cases where payment is made by mail, the date of postmark shall be deemed to be the date payment is made for purposes of these Rules.

§ 45. Payment clauses to be included in contracts.

Any contract awarded by the Institution shall include:

a. A payment clause that obligates the contractor to take one of the two following actions within seven days after receipt of amounts paid to the contractor by the Institution for work performed by the subcontractor under that contract:

(1) Pay the subcontractor for the proportionate share of the total payment received from the Institution attributable to the work performed by the subcontractor under that contract;
or

(2) Notify the Institution and subcontractor, in writing, of his intention to withhold all or a part of the subcontractor's payment with the reason for nonpayment.

b. A payment clause that requires (i) individual contractors to provide their social security numbers and (ii) proprietorships, partnerships, and corporations to provide their federal employer identification numbers.

c. An interest clause that obligates the contractor to pay interest to the subcontractor on all amounts owed by the contractor that remain unpaid after seven days following receipt by the contractor of payment from the Institution for work performed by the subcontractor under that contract, except for amounts withheld as allowed in subdivision 1b.

d. An interest rate clause stating, "Unless otherwise provided under the terms of this contract, interest shall accrue at the rate of 1 percent per month."

Any such contract awarded shall further require the contractor to include in each of its subcontracts a provision requiring each subcontractor to include or otherwise be subject to the same payment and interest requirements with respect to each lower-tier subcontractor.

A contractor's obligation to pay an interest charge to a subcontractor pursuant to the payment clause in this section shall not be construed to be an obligation of the Institution. A contract modification shall not be made for the purpose of providing reimbursement for the interest charge. A cost reimbursement claim shall not include any amount for reimbursement for the interest charge.

§ 46. Interest penalty; exceptions.

A. Interest shall accrue, at the rate determined pursuant to subsection B, on all amounts owed by the Institution to a vendor that remain unpaid after seven days following the payment date. However, nothing in this section shall affect any contract providing for a different rate of interest, or for the payment of interest in a different manner.

B. The rate of interest charged the Institution pursuant to subsection A shall be the base rate on corporate loans (prime rate) at large United States money center commercial banks as reported daily in the publication entitled The Wall Street Journal. Whenever a split prime rate is published, the lower of the two rates shall be used. However, in no event shall the rate of interest charged exceed the rate of interest established pursuant to § [58.1-1812](#) of the Code of Virginia.

C. Notwithstanding subsection A, no interest penalty shall be charged when payment is delayed because of disagreement between the Institution and a vendor regarding the quantity, quality or time of delivery of goods or services or the accuracy of any invoice received for the goods or services. The exception from the interest penalty provided by this subsection shall apply only to that portion of a delayed payment that is actually the subject of the disagreement and shall apply only for the duration of the disagreement.

D. This section shall not apply to § 26 pertaining to retainage on construction contracts, during the period of time prior to the date the final payment is due. Nothing contained herein shall prevent a contractor from receiving interest on such funds under an approved escrow agreement.

E. Notwithstanding subsection A, no interest penalty shall be paid to any debtor on any payment, or portion thereof, withheld pursuant to the Comptroller's Debt Setoff Program, as authorized by the Virginia Debt Collection Act (§ [2.2-4800](#) et seq.) of the Code of Virginia, commencing with the date the payment is withheld. If, as a result of an error, a payment or portion thereof is withheld, and it is determined that at the time of setoff no debt was owed to the Commonwealth, then interest shall accrue at the rate determined pursuant to subsection B on amounts withheld that remain unpaid after seven days following the payment date.

§ 47. Ineligibility.

1. Any bidder, offeror or contractor refused permission to participate, or disqualified from participation, in public contracts to be issued by the Institution shall be notified in writing. Prior to the issuance of a written determination of disqualification or ineligibility, the Institution shall

1. notify the bidder in writing of the results of the evaluation,
- (ii) disclose the factual support for the determination, and
- (iii) allow the bidder an opportunity to inspect any documents that relate to the determination, if so requested by the bidder within five business days after receipt of the notice.

Within 10 business days after receipt of the notice, the bidder may submit rebuttal information challenging the evaluation. The Institution shall issue its written determination of disqualification or ineligibility based on all information in the possession of the Institution, including any rebuttal information, within five business days of the date the Institution received such rebuttal information.

If the evaluation reveals that the bidder, offeror or contractor should be allowed permission to participate in the public contract, the Institution shall cancel the proposed disqualification action. If the evaluation reveals that the bidder should be refused permission to participate, or disqualified from participation, in the public contract, the Institution shall so notify the bidder, offeror or contractor. The notice shall state the basis for the determination, which shall be final unless the bidder appeals the decision within 10 days after receipt of the notice by invoking administrative procedures meeting the standards of § 55 of these Rules, if available, or in the alternative by instituting legal action as provided in § 54.

2. If, upon appeal, it is determined that the action taken was arbitrary or capricious, or not in accordance with the Constitution of Virginia, applicable state law or regulations, the sole relief shall be restoration of eligibility.

§ 48. Appeal of denial of withdrawal of bid.

1. A decision denying withdrawal of bid under the provisions of § 23 of these Rules shall be final and conclusive unless the bidder appeals the decision within 10 days after receipt of the decision by invoking administrative procedures meeting the standards of § 55, if available, or in the alternative by instituting legal action as provided in § 54.

2. If no bid bond was posted, a bidder refused withdrawal of a bid under the provisions of § 23, prior to appealing, shall deliver to the Institution a certified check or cash bond in the amount of the difference between the bid sought to be withdrawn and the next low bid. Such security shall be released only upon a final determination that the bidder was entitled to withdraw the bid.

3. If, upon appeal, it is determined that the decision refusing withdrawal of the bid was not (i) an honest exercise of discretion, but rather was arbitrary or capricious or (ii) in accordance with the Constitution of Virginia, applicable state law or regulation, or the terms or conditions of the Invitation to Bid, the sole relief shall be withdrawal of the bid.

§ 49. Determination of nonresponsibility.

1. Following public opening and announcement of bids received on an Invitation to Bid, the Institution shall evaluate the bids in accordance with element 4 of the definition of "Competitive sealed bidding" in § 4 of these Rules. At the same time, the Institution shall determine whether the apparent low bidder is responsible. If the Institution so determines, then it may proceed with an award in accordance with element 5 of the definition of "Competitive sealed bidding" in § 4. If the Institution determines that the apparent low bidder is not responsible, it shall proceed as follows:

- Prior to the issuance of a written determination of nonresponsibility, the Institution shall (i) notify the apparent low bidder in writing of the results of the evaluation, (ii) disclose the factual support for the determination, and (iii) allow the apparent low bidder an opportunity to inspect any documents that relate to the determination, if so requested by the bidder within five business days after receipt of the notice.
- Within 10 business days after receipt of the notice, the bidder may submit rebuttal information challenging the evaluation. The Institution shall issue its written determination of responsibility based on all information in the possession of the Institution, including any rebuttal information, within five business days of the date the Institution received the rebuttal information. At the same time, the Institution shall notify, with return receipt requested, the bidder in writing of its determination.
- Such notice shall state the basis for the determination, which shall be final unless the bidder appeals the decision within 10 days after receipt of the notice by invoking administrative

procedures meeting the standards of § 55 of these Rules, if available, or in the alternative by instituting legal action as provided in § 54.

The provisions of this subsection shall not apply to procurements involving the prequalification of bidders and the rights of any potential bidders under such prequalification to appeal a decision that such bidders are not responsible.

2. If, upon appeal pursuant to § 54 or 55 of these Rules, it is determined that the decision of the Institution was not (i) an honest exercise of discretion, but rather was arbitrary or capricious or 2. in accordance with the Constitution of Virginia, applicable state law or regulation, or the terms or conditions of the Invitation to Bid, and the award of the contract in question has not been made, the sole relief shall be a finding that the bidder is a responsible bidder for the contract in question or directed award as provided in subsection A of § 54, or both.

If it is determined that the decision of the Institution was not an honest exercise of discretion, but rather was arbitrary or capricious or not in accordance with the Constitution of Virginia, applicable state law or regulation, or the terms or conditions of the Invitation to Bid, and an award of the contract has been made, the relief shall be as set forth in subsection B of § 54 of these Rules.

3. A bidder contesting a determination that he is not a responsible bidder for a particular contract shall proceed under this section, and may not protest the award or proposed award under the provisions of § 50 of these Rules.

4. Nothing contained in this section shall be construed to require the Institution, when procuring by competitive negotiation, to furnish a statement of the reasons why a particular proposal was not deemed to be the most advantageous.

§ 50. Protest of award or decision to award.

A. Any bidder or offeror, who desires to protest the award or decision to award a contract shall submit the protest in writing to the Institution, or an official designated by the Institution, no later than 10 days after the award or the announcement of the decision to award, whichever occurs first. Public notice of the award or the announcement of the decision to award shall be given by the Institution in the manner prescribed in the terms or conditions of the Invitation to Bid or Request for Proposal. Any potential bidder or offeror on a contract negotiated on a sole source or emergency basis who desires to protest the award or decision to award such contract shall submit the protest in the same manner no later than 10 days after posting or publication of the notice of such contract as provided in § 5 of these Rules. However, if the protest of any actual or potential bidder or offeror depends in whole or in part upon information contained in public records pertaining to the procurement transaction that are subject to inspection under § 34 of these Rules, then the time within which the protest shall be submitted shall expire 10 days after those records are available for inspection by such bidder or offeror under § 34, or at such later time as provided in this section. No protest shall lie for a claim that the selected bidder or offeror is not a responsible bidder or offeror. The written protest shall include the basis for the protest and the relief sought. The Institution or designated official shall issue a decision in

writing within 10 days stating the reasons for the action taken. This decision shall be final unless the bidder or offeror appeals within 10 days of receipt of the written decision by invoking administrative procedures meeting the standards of § 55 of these Rules, if available, or in the alternative by instituting legal action as provided in § 54. Nothing in this subsection shall be construed to permit a bidder to challenge the validity of the terms or conditions of the Invitation to Bid or Request for Proposal. The use of Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) shall constitute an administrative appeal procedure meeting the standards of § 55 of these Rules.

B. If prior to an award it is determined that the decision to award is arbitrary or capricious, then the sole relief shall be a finding to that effect. The Institution shall cancel the proposed award or revise it to comply with the law. If, after an award, it is determined that an award of a contract was arbitrary or capricious, then the sole relief shall be as hereinafter provided.

Where the award has been made but performance has not begun, the performance of the contract may be enjoined. Where the award has been made and performance has begun, the Institution may declare the contract void upon a finding that this action is in the best interest of the public. Where a contract is declared void, the performing contractor shall be compensated for the cost of performance up to the time of such declaration. In no event shall the performing contractor be entitled to lost profits.

C. Where the Institution, an official designated by it, or an appeals board determines, after a hearing held following reasonable notice to all bidders, that there is probable cause to believe that a decision to award was based on fraud or corruption or on an act in violation of these Rules, the Institution, designated official or appeals board may enjoin the award of the contract to a particular bidder.

§ 51. Effect of appeal upon contract.

Pending final determination of a protest or appeal, the validity of a contract awarded and accepted in good faith in accordance with these Rules shall not be affected by the fact that a protest or appeal has been filed.

§ 52. Stay of award during protest.

An award need not be delayed for the period allowed a bidder or offeror to protest, but in the event of a timely protest as provided in § 50 of these Rules, or the filing of a timely legal action as provided in § 54, no further action to award the contract shall be taken unless there is a written determination that proceeding without delay is necessary to protect the public interest or unless the bid or offer would expire.

§ 53. Contractual disputes.

Contractual claims, whether for money or other relief, shall be submitted in writing no later than 60 days after final payment. However, written notice of the contractor's intention to file a claim shall be given at the time of the occurrence or beginning of the work upon which the claim is based. Nothing herein shall preclude a contract from requiring submission of an invoice for

final payment within a certain time after completion and acceptance of the work or acceptance of the goods. Pendency of claims shall not delay payment of amounts agreed due in the final payment.

□ The Institution shall include in its contracts a procedure for consideration of contractual claims. Such procedure, which may be contained in the contract or may be specifically incorporated into the contract by reference and made available to the contractor, shall establish a time limit for a final decision in writing by the Institution. If the Institution has established administrative procedures meeting the standards of § 55 of these Rules, such procedures shall be contained in the contract or specifically incorporated in the contract by reference and made available to the contractor. The Institution may require the submission of contractual claims pursuant to any contract to Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) as an administrative procedure.

□ A contractor may not invoke administrative procedures meeting the standards of § 55 of these Rules, if available, or institute legal action as provided in § 54, prior to receipt of the Institution's decision on the claim, unless the Institution fails to render such decision within the time specified in the contract.

□ The decision of the Institution shall be final and conclusive unless the contractor appeals within six months of the date of the final decision on the claim by the Institution by invoking administrative procedures meeting the standards of § 55 of these Rules, if available, or in the alternative by instituting legal action as provided in § 54.

§ 54. Legal actions.

A. A bidder or offeror, actual or prospective, who is refused permission or disqualified from participation in bidding or competitive negotiation, or who is determined not to be a responsible bidder or offeror for a particular contract, may bring an action in the appropriate circuit court challenging that decision, which shall be reversed only if the petitioner establishes that the decision was not (i) an honest exercise of discretion, but rather was arbitrary or capricious; (ii) in accordance with the Constitution of Virginia, applicable state law or regulation, or the terms or conditions of the Invitation to Bid; or (iii) in the case of denial of prequalification, based upon the criteria for denial of prequalification set forth in subsection B of § 14 of these Rules. In the event the apparent low bidder, having been previously determined by the Institution to be not responsible in accordance with § 4, is found by the court to be a responsible bidder, the court may direct the Institution to award the contract to such bidder in accordance with the requirements of this section and the Invitation to Bid.

B. A bidder denied withdrawal of a bid under § 23 of these Rules may bring an action in the appropriate circuit court challenging that decision, which shall be reversed only if the bidder establishes that the decision of the Institution was not (i) an honest exercise of discretion, but rather was arbitrary or capricious or (ii) in accordance with the Constitution of Virginia, applicable state law or regulation, or the terms or conditions of the Invitation to Bid.

C. A bidder, offeror or contractor, or a potential bidder or offeror on a contract negotiated on a sole source or emergency basis in the manner provided in § 5 of these Rules, whose protest of an award or decision to award under § 50 of these Rules is denied, may bring an action in the appropriate circuit court challenging a proposed award or the award of a contract, which shall be reversed only if the petitioner establishes that the proposed award or the award is not (i) an honest exercise of discretion, but rather is arbitrary or capricious or (ii) in accordance with the Constitution of Virginia, applicable state law or regulation, or the terms and conditions of the Invitation to Bid or Request for Proposal.

D. If injunctive relief is granted, the court, upon request of the Institution, shall require the posting of reasonable security to protect the Institution.

E. A contractor may bring an action involving a contract dispute with the Institution in the appropriate circuit court. Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the Comptroller shall not be named as a defendant in any action brought pursuant to these Rules or § [33.1-387](#) of the Code of Virginia, except for disputes involving contracts of the Office of the Comptroller or the Department of Accounts.

F. A bidder, offeror or contractor need not utilize administrative procedures meeting the standards of § 55 of these Rules, if available, but if those procedures are invoked by the bidder, offeror or contractor, the procedures shall be exhausted prior to instituting legal action concerning the same procurement transaction unless the Institution agrees otherwise.

G. Nothing herein shall be construed to prevent the Institution from instituting legal action against a contractor.

§ 55. Administrative appeals procedure.

A. The Institution may establish an administrative procedure for hearing (i) protests of a decision to award or an award, (ii) appeals from refusals to allow withdrawal of bids, (iii) appeals from disqualifications and determinations of nonresponsibility, and (iv) appeals from decisions on disputes arising during the performance of a contract, or (v) any of these. Such administrative procedure may include the use of Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) or shall provide for a hearing before a disinterested person or panel, and the opportunity to present pertinent information and the issuance of a written decision containing findings of fact. The disinterested person or panel shall not be an employee of the governmental entity against whom the claim has been filed. The findings of fact shall be final and conclusive and shall not be set aside unless the same are (a) fraudulent, arbitrary or capricious; (b) so grossly erroneous as to imply bad faith; or (c) in the case of denial of prequalification, the findings were not based upon the criteria for denial of prequalification set forth in subsection B of § 14 of these Rules. No determination on an issue of law shall be final if appropriate legal action is instituted in a timely manner. The Institution may seek advice and input from the Alternative Dispute Resolution Council in establishing an Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) procedure.

B. Any party to the administrative procedure, including the Institution, shall be entitled to institute judicial review if such action is brought within 30 days of receipt of the written decision.

§ 56. Alternative dispute resolution.

The Institution may enter into agreements to submit disputes arising from contracts entered into pursuant to these Rules to arbitration and utilize mediation and other alternative dispute resolution procedures. However, such procedures shall be nonbinding and subject to § [2.2-514](#) of the Code of Virginia, as applicable.

§ 57. Ethics in public contracting.

The Institution and its governing body, officers and employees shall be governed by the Ethics in Public Contracting provisions of the Virginia Public Procurement Act, Article 6 (§ [2.2-4367](#) et seq.) of Chapter 43 of Title 2.2 of the Code of Virginia.