



STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA  
DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATION

ROY COOPER  
GOVERNOR

MACHELLE SANDERS  
SECRETARY

**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Health and Human Services  
Representative Josh Dobson, Chair  
Representative Donny Lambeth, Chair  
Senator Louis Pate, Chair

**FROM:** Secretary Machelles Sanders

**RE:** Report per S.L. 2018-5, Section 31.1

The Department of Administration, in accordance with Session Law 2018-5, provides the following report as evidence of our progress and compliance with Section 31.1, which requires that all employees involved in the procurement of goods and services as well as those employees responsible for awarding contracts or monitoring contract compliance are trained and certified. Because of our partnership with you and with key agency leaders, we are well on our way to the creation of the State's first ever Procurement and Contract Management Training and Certification – a tool to further enhance contract management and ensure that we achieve the absolute best value for North Carolina taxpayers.

**Background:**

In conjunction with NC State University, the National Association of State Procurement Officials, and UNC School of Government, the Division of Purchase and Contract began to develop a certification program in Spring of 2017 to enable **all** state agency purchasing, purchasing officers and contract management professionals to become trained and certified by the State's procurement experts. With only three existing trainers, the Department requested additional FTE to further develop and rollout the certification program. To prepare, we conducted extensive research, monitored the work of other state and non-state certification programs, identified best practices and documented lessons learned. In developing and implementing the North Carolina Procurement Certification (NCPC) program the Department consulted with and employed the assistance of the following partners--all are critical to our success:

Entity	Responsibility
Office of State Human Resources	Deliver electives required to complete certification; Provide in-depth Cornerstone (LMS) functionality training to DOA
UNC School of Government	Provide review and assessment of program plan; develop and deliver local government-specific courses
NC State University	Provide consultation on curriculum, course development, and testing; Provide students as test question evaluators; Modify courses from Supply Chain Management and Project Management curriculum for elective offerings
Department of Health and Human Services	Participate in Train-the-Trainer sessions; Provide DHHS-specific examples; Develop and prioritize list of participants; Avail time for participant attendance; Provide mentors for practical skills application

### **Curriculum Development:**

The State Procurement Officer has engaged a vendor to assist in the development of a rigorous contract management training and certification program. The consultant is specifically tasked with developing the framework and curriculum for the Contract Administrator Certification pathway using NCMA standards.

The extensive coursework required for each certification pathway will demand a significant commitment from program candidates, taking an estimated 8 to 12 months for completion and requiring a passing score of 85% or higher on all exams. Pathways to certification are in various stages of development for purchasers, officers, and contract administrators.

1. **100 Level: NC Purchaser certification (NCP)** coursework will be geared toward individuals in the purchasing or procurement role. Candidates must hold an Associate's degree or higher and have one year or more job-related experience, or have equivalent job-related experience of three or more years, and complete 102 credit hours of coursework.
2. **200 Level: NC Purchasing Officer certification (NCPO)** will be geared toward individuals in a managerial or supervisory position in public procurement. Candidates must hold a Bachelor's degree or higher and have 1 year or more job-related experience, or have equivalent job-related experience of 3 or more years, have managerial or supervisory experience of 2 or more years, and complete 150 credit hours of coursework.
3. **300 Level: NC Contract Administrator certification (NCCA)** will be geared toward individuals in the role of contract administration. The specialized coursework is designed to train contract managers to properly oversee the project scope, schedule and budget of specific projects. Candidates must hold an Associate's degree (minimum), have 1 year or more job-related experience, or have equivalent job-related experience of 3 or more years, and complete 156 credit hours of coursework.

The Department has posted two Staff Development positions at a cost of \$166,000 in General Fund appropriations. Both positions will be dedicated to work associated with Level 300 Contract Management Certification.

We are excited about the curriculum supported by our strategic partnership and look forward to enrolling our first cohort for certification.

### **Timeline**

<b>Task</b>	<b>Planned Completion</b>
Contract for NCCA course and exam development	<b>Completed</b> ✓
Onboard two Staff Development employees	December 2018
Develop course and exams for NCCA	May 2019
Advertise program launch and rollout NCCA	May 2019
Accept NCCA and NCP applications	July 2019
Develop framework and additional courses for NCPO pathway	August 2019
Administer first certification exams	October 2019