Chapter 132.

Public Records.

§ 132-1. "Public records" defined.

(a) "Public record" or "public records" shall mean all documents, papers, letters, maps, books, photographs, films, sound recordings, magnetic or other tapes, electronic data-processing records, artifacts, or other documentary material, regardless of physical form or characteristics, made or received pursuant to law or ordinance in connection with the transaction of public business by any agency of North Carolina government or its subdivisions. Agency of North Carolina government or its subdivisions shall mean and include every public office, public officer or official (State or local, elected or appointed), institution, board, commission, bureau, council, department, authority or other unit of government of the State or of any county, unit, special district or other political subdivision of government.

(b) The public records and public information compiled by the agencies of North Carolina government or its subdivisions are the property of the people. Therefore, it is the policy of this State that the people may obtain copies of their public records and public information free or at minimal cost unless otherwise specifically provided by law. As used herein, "minimal cost" shall mean the actual cost of reproducing the public record or public information.

(c) Article 17 of Chapter 120 of the General Statutes shall govern all records and information of the legislative branch which shall be exempt from this Chapter, including documents as defined by G.S. 120-129.

(d) No political subdivision of this State may enter into a nondisclosure agreement in order to restrict access to public records subject to disclosure under this Chapter. The contract by which a political subdivision of this State agrees not to disclose information deemed confidential under State law shall be a public record, unless the existence of the contract is also deemed confidential under State law. If a nondisclosure agreement is associated with one or more closed session meetings under Article 33C of Chapter 143 of the General Statutes, the nondisclosure agreement shall be included in the minutes of each closed session meeting. (1935, c. 265, s. 1; 1975, c. 787, s. 1; 1995, c. 388, s. 1; 2023-134, s. 27.7(f); 2023-138, s. 5(b).)