



## Glossary

**absentee ballot:** an official list of candidates on which voters who cannot get to the polling place on election day indicate their votes (p. 96)

**alien:** a person living in a country where he or she is not a citizen (p. 6)

**allocate:** to set aside money for a specific purpose (p. 29)

**annexation:** the legal process of extending municipal boundaries and adding territory to a city or town (p. 16)

**appropriate:** to assign government funds to a particular purpose or use (p. 81)

**assessed value:** the value assigned to property by government to establish its worth for tax purposes (p. 84)

**assessment:** a charge imposed on property owners for building streets, sidewalks, water lines, sewers, or other improvements that government makes (p. 90)

**ballot:** the list of candidates on which you cast your vote (p. 95)

**bond:** a contract to repay borrowed money with interest at a specific time in the future (p. 82)

**budget:** a plan for raising and spending money (p. 78)

**business development corporation:** a group of people legally organized as a corporation to encourage economic development (p. 57)

**capital:** land, buildings, and other equipment used to make other goods and services (p. 82)

- chamber of commerce:** a group of business people formed to promote business interests in the community (p. 55)
- charter:** the document defining how a city or town is to be governed and giving it legal authority to act as a local government (p. 16)
- citation:** an official summons to appear before a court to answer a charge of violating a government regulation (p. 76)
- citizen:** a person who has a legal right to full rights in a country because he or she was born there or has been given those rights by the country (p. 6)
- civil:** concerns government's role in relations among citizens (p. 76)
- coastal plain:** the eastern region of North Carolina, extending approximately 150 miles inland from the coast; includes 41 counties. The western border of the region is usually defined as the western boundaries of Northhampton, Halifax, Nash, Johnston, Harnett, Hoke, and Scotland counties (p. 23)
- compost:** decayed material that is used as fertilizer (p. 43)
- community:** people who share important interests, such as living in the same area or identifying with each other (p. 6)
- contract:** an agreement made between two or more people or organizations (p. 15)
- corporation:** a group of persons formed by law to act as a single body (p. 15)
- council–manager plan:** an arrangement for local government in which the elected legislature hires a professional executive to direct government activities (p. 18)
- crime:** an act that is forbidden by law; an offense against all of the people of the state, not just the victim of the act (p. 65)
- debt service:** payments of principal and interest on a loan (p. 82)
- desalinization:** the process by which the salt is taken out of water (p. 39)
- developer:** a person or business that builds houses or prepares land for building (p. 73)
- dispatcher:** a person who gives emergency workers information so that those workers can respond to emergencies (p. 49)
- economic development:** activities to create new jobs and additional sales and other business (p. 27)
- expenditures:** money spent (pp. 29, 78)
- extraterritorial land use planning jurisdiction:** the area outside city limits over which a city has authority for planning and regulating use of the land (p. 66)
- favoritism:** showing partiality; favoring someone over others (p. 98)
- federal system:** the sharing of power between the central and state governments (p. 2)
- fiscal year:** the 12-month period used by the government for record keeping, budgeting, taxing, and other aspects of financial management (p. 80)
- food stamps:** a program to help people with financial need buy food; vouchers to be used like money for purchasing food; federal program, but administered by county departments of social services in North Carolina (p. 30)
- fund balance:** money a government has not spent at the end of the year (p. 79)
- gasoline tax:** a tax placed on purchases of gasoline (p. 87)

- general election:** a regularly held election for public offices (p. 95)
- general obligation bond:** a loan that a government agrees to repay using tax money, even if the tax rate must be raised (p. 82)
- grant:** money given by state or federal government to local governments to fund local projects (p. 4)
- greenspace:** an area that is kept undeveloped to provide more open land in or near a city (p. 73)
- groundwater:** water that collects underground (p. 39)
- immigrant:** a person who comes to live in a country from another country (p. 59)
- impurities:** materials that pollute (p. 41)
- incident report:** a report that a police officer writes describing a crime or other problem situation (p. 49)
- incineration:** the safe burning of wastes (p. 46)
- incorporate:** to receive a state charter, officially recognizing the government of a municipality (p. 15)
- inflation:** a continuing rise in prices (p. 82)
- initiative:** a way in which citizens propose laws by gathering voter signatures on a petition; only a few cities and no counties in North Carolina have provisions for this (p. 76)
- installment–purchase agreement:** an arrangement to buy something in which the buyer gets to use the item while paying for it in regularly scheduled payments (p. 84)
- interest:** a charge for borrowed money that the borrower agrees to pay the lender (p. 82)
- interest rate:** a percentage of the amount borrowed that the borrower agrees to pay to the lender as a charge for use of the lender's money (p. 84)
- intergovernmental assistance:** money given to local governments by state and federal governments to help meet specific needs (p. 88)
- jurisdiction:** the right to use legal authority, or the territory over which a government can use its authority (p. 2)
- levy:** to impose a tax by law (p. 15)
- liability:** something for which one is obligated according to law (p. 15)
- local act:** a state law that applies only to the local government specified in the law (p. 16)
- mandate:** a legal order by which one government requires actions by another government (p. 4)
- mandated service:** a program that local governments must provide because of requirements from state or federal government (p. 21)
- Medicaid:** a program designed to pay for medical care for people in financial need; federal program, but administered by county departments of social services in North Carolina (p. 30)
- merit:** hiring or promoting based on a person's qualifications, ability, and performance (p. 99)

- mountain counties:** the western region of North Carolina, extending eastward from the Tennessee border to the eastern boundaries of Alleghany, Wilkes, Caldwell, Burke, and Rutherford counties; includes 23 counties (p. 23)
- mulch:** material spread around plants that prevents the growth of weeds and protects the soil from drying out (p. 43)
- municipality:** a city, town, or village that has an organized government with authority to make laws, provide services, and collect and spend taxes and other public funds (p. 6)
- mutual aid agreements:** commitments by local governments to assist each other in times of need (p. 5)
- nepotism:** hiring or giving favorable treatment to someone based on kinship (p. 98)
- nonpartisan:** not affiliated with a political party (p. 98)
- opponent:** one who is against something (p. 62)
- optional service:** a program that a government decides to provide to meet the needs or requests of its residents (p. 22)
- ordinance:** a law, usually of a city or county (p. 16)
- partisan:** involving political parties (p. 97)
- patronage:** hiring or giving favorable treatment to an employee because he or she is a member of one's political party (p. 98)
- per capita:** by or for each person (p. 27)
- personal property:** things people own other than land and buildings (p. 84)
- personnel:** the people who work for a government, company, or other organization (p. 18)
- petition:** a request for government action signed by a number of voters who support the same request (p. 62)
- piedmont:** the central region of North Carolina including Surry, Yadkin, Alexander, Catawba, and Cleveland counties on the west to Warren, Franklin, Wake, Chatham, Lee, Moore, and Richmond counties on the east; includes 36 counties (p. 24)
- political party:** an association of voters with broad common interests who want to influence or control decision making in government by electing the party's candidates to public office (p. 97)
- poll tax:** tax people had to pay in order to be allowed to vote (p. 58)
- polling place:** an official place for voting (p. 95)
- pollutant:** anything that harms the quality of air, water, or other materials it mixes with (p. 41)
- population:** the total number of people living in a designated area such as a city or county (p. 6)
- Powell Bill:** a North Carolina state law that allocates part of the state's gasoline tax to municipal governments to build and repair city streets (p. 87)
- precinct:** a geographic area that contains a specific number of voters (p. 95)
- primary election:** an election in which voters select candidates for a general election (p. 95)

- principal:** the amount of money borrowed (p. 82)
- privatization:** government buying a service from a business instead of producing the service itself (p. 37)
- property tax:** a tax placed on the assessed value of property to be paid by the owner of that property (p. 84)
- property tax base:** the total assessed value of all taxable property (p. 84)
- property tax rate:** a percentage of the assessed value of property that determines how much tax is due for that property (p. 84)
- proponent:** one who is in favor of something (p. 62)
- proposal:** a suggestion put forward for consideration or approval (p. 61)
- rationing:** controlled distribution of scarce resources (p. 104)
- real property:** land and buildings, and improvements to either (p. 84)
- references:** people who know how well someone did on a previous job or about that person's other qualifications for a job (p. 101)
- referendum:** a way for citizens to vote on state or local laws (p. 83); an election in which citizens vote directly on a public policy question (p. 76)
- regional council:** an organization of local governments established to deal with mutual challenges; 17 exist in North Carolina (p. 5)
- resident:** a person who lives in a designated area such as a city or county (p. 6)
- revenue:** the income that a government collects for public use (p. 78)
- revenue bond:** a loan that a government pays off with fees collected through operating the facility built with that loan (p. 83)
- rural:** of or relating to the countryside; area where fewer people live (p. 13)
- sales tax:** tax levied on a product at the time of sale (p. 87)
- septic tank:** a container in which wastes are broken down by bacteria (p. 42)
- sludge:** the solid material separated from sewage (p. 42)
- subdivision regulation:** rules for dividing land for development (p. 69)
- subsidize:** to reduce the amount users pay for a service by funding some of the cost from another source (p. 88)
- subsidy:** a payment that reduces the cost to the user (p. 88)
- sue:** to ask a court to act against a person or organization to prevent or pay for damage by that person or organization (p. 15)
- surface water:** all waters on the surface of the Earth found in rivers, streams, lakes, ponds, and so on (p. 39)
- tax base:** the assessed value of the property, sales, or income being taxed (p. 87)
- Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF):** federal government program of support for families in need; provides small payments to cover basic living expenses and assistance to help adults find and keep jobs (p. 31)
- total assessed value:** the sum of the assessed value of all the property a city or county can tax (p. 84)
- unincorporated:** the part of a county outside the cities and towns in that county (p. 22)
- urban:** area where people live close together; most are incorporated as municipalities (p. 14)

**variance:** permission to do something different from what is allowed by current regulations (p. 72)

**volunteers:** people who donate their time and effort (p. 54)

**ward:** a section of a jurisdiction for voting, representative, or administrative purposes (p. 97)

**watershed:** an area that drains water into a stream or lake (p. 39)

**zoning:** rules designating different areas of land for different uses (p. 69)