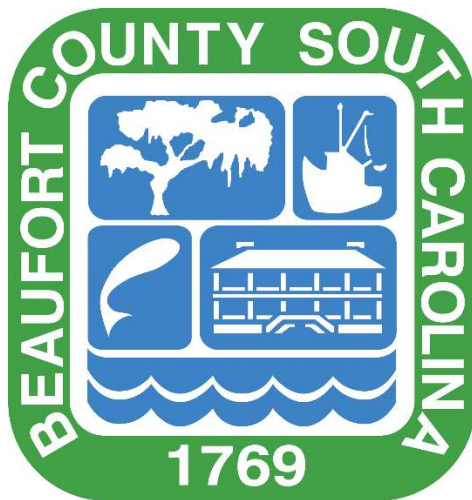


BEAUFORT COUNTY PROCUREMENT ETHICS POLICY



**This policy was officially adopted and approved by signature of the
Procurement Services Director.**

Signature: David L. Thomas

Date: August 20, 2025

Beaufort County Procurement Ethics Policy

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish clear ethical standards for all procurement activities. It ensures that procurement decisions are conducted with integrity, fairness, and transparency, safeguarding the organization's reputation and promoting responsible use of resources.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all employees, contractors, consultants, and third parties engaged in procurement or supply chain activities on behalf of the organization.

3. Principles of Ethical Procurement

All procurement activities shall be guided by the following principles:

- **Integrity** – Conduct all procurement processes honestly and responsibly.
- **Transparency** – Ensure decisions and processes are open, clear, and documented.
- **Fairness & Non-Discrimination** – Provide equal opportunity to suppliers, avoiding favoritism or bias.
- **Accountability** – Take responsibility for procurement decisions and outcomes.
- **Best Value** – Secure goods and services that best meet organizational needs in terms of quality, cost, and sustainability.
- **Sustainability & Social Responsibility** – Consider environmental, social, and ethical impacts in procurement decisions.

4. Standards of Conduct

4.1 Conflict of Interest

- Employees must disclose any personal or financial interest that may influence procurement decisions.
- Employees shall not participate in decisions where such conflicts exist.

4.2 Gifts & Hospitality

- Employees may not solicit or accept gifts, favors, or hospitality from suppliers that could influence or appear to influence procurement decisions.

- Modest and occasional hospitality may be acceptable if it is transparent, does not create obligation and is valued under \$50.

4.3 Confidentiality

- Sensitive information obtained through procurement must be kept confidential and not used for personal gain.
- Suppliers' proprietary information must be respected and protected.

4.4 Compliance with Laws & Policies

- All procurement must comply with applicable laws, regulations, and internal organizational policies.
- Bribery, fraud, collusion, or bid rigging will not be tolerated.

5. Supplier Relationships

- Treat suppliers with fairness, respect, and professionalism.
- Selection shall be based on objective criteria, including quality, capability, compliance, sustainability, and cost-effectiveness.
- Encourage supplier diversity and opportunities for small and local businesses.

6. Reporting & Accountability

- Employees are responsible for reporting suspected breaches of this policy.
- Reports may be made to [designated officer/ethics hotline].
- Breaches of this policy may result in disciplinary action, contract termination, or legal consequences.

7. Continuous Improvement

The organization is committed to reviewing procurement practices regularly, incorporating lessons learned, and updating this policy as needed to ensure continued ethical standards.