ETHICS IN PURCHASING PRACTICES

PERCEPTION – Essential to the involvement between purchasing professionals and suppliers is the avoidance of activity that in any way diminishes or appears to diminish, open and fair treatment of suppliers.

RESPONSIBILITIES TO THE COUNTY – It is the duty of the buyer to ensure that actions taken as an agent for the County will benefit the best interests of the County to the exclusion of personal gain. This requires the sound judgment and consideration of both the legal and the ethical implications of a buyer's actions.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST – Buyers must not use their positions in any way to induce another person to provide any benefit to themselves, or persons with whom they have family, business, personal or financial ties. Even though technically a conflict may not exist, buyers should avoid even the appearance of such a conflict.

GRATUITIES – Gratuities include any material goods or services offered with the intent of, or providing the potential for influencing the buying decision. As such, gratuities may be offered to the buyer, or to other persons involved in purchasing decisions. Caution must be used in evaluating the acceptance of gratuities, even if of nominal value, and the frequency of such actions to ensure that the buyer is abiding by the spirit of ethical practices. The County does not allow buyers to accept gratuities.

CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION – Buyers and others in positions that influence buying decisions deal with confidential and proprietary information of both the County and the suppliers. The buyer is responsible for ensuring that such information is treated in a confidential manner.

Information from one supplier should not be shared with another supplier, unless laws and government regulations require purchasing to disclose such information.

Buyers must also realize that certain information about the County's needs is to be kept strictly within the organization. A buyer must be careful that one's restraint in describing the intended use of a product does not result in an unintentional waiver of the benefits that might come from the implied warranty of fitness for a particular purpose. The supplier that is not informed as to the intended use is obligated only to conform to the specifications set forth in the order.

TREATMENT OF SUPPLIERS – The buyer is responsible for promoting mutually agreeable business relationships with all suppliers. In addition to courtesy the purchasing professional should extend the same fairness and impartiality to all legitimate business concerns within the scope of ones' purchasing responsibility and the laws and regulations which may affect such practice.

RECIPROCITY – Reciprocity is the practice that is prohibited under the provisions of the Sherman Antitrust Act. It refers to arrangements between purchasers and suppliers to deal exclusively with one another.

The affect of reciprocal buying is that it limits the purchaser's freedom to select goods and services based on price, quality and service.

FEDERAL AND STATE LAWS – Buyers should pursue and retain an understanding of the essential legal concepts governing conduct as agents for the County.

RESPONSIBILITIES TO THE PROFESSION – Buyers have an obligation to support only those activities that uphold the high ethical standards of the profession.