

■ **Testimonials**

Employees may not give special treatment in referrals and testimonials.

*A county employee may not give a testimonial in his official capacity as a county employee for use on a vendor's brochure, but may be listed as a reference related to work performed for the county.*

*An employee may refer a citizen to a private business using a county referral list, but the listing must be free and unrestricted, with distribution open to the public; there may be no financial interest between the employee and the businesses.*

■ **Post-Employment Restrictions**

For one year after leaving county employment, a former employee may not work as a contractor or subcontractor, or have a financial or beneficial interest, in matters in which they had responsibilities or participated in while a county employee.

*A former county employee goes to work for a consultant who has a contract with the county on a particular project. Since the former employee worked on that project as a manager less than a year ago, she informs the consultant that she must wait until one year has passed before she can take part in this project. The consultant assigns her to other work.*

■ **Consultant Disclosure Requirement**

If you are a consultant entering into a contract with the county to provide professional or technical services costing over \$2,500, you must file a consultant disclosure form with the executive and ethics office. You must file an amended statement if circumstances change making your responses inaccurate or

incomplete. Our Web site has forms available and tells you all you need to know about this requirement under the heading "Disclosure Programs," or you may call the Ethics office.

■ **Advisory Opinions Available**

Please visit our Web site to find out more about the King County Board of Ethics and the services it provides. You'll find all advisory opinions issued by the board at:

<http://www.kingcounty.gov/ethics>

■ **Board of Ethics Mission**

To ensure the highest standards of public service by developing, disseminating and promoting readily understandable ethics requirements for King County employees and agencies.

**Seek advice before you act.**

**Call the Ethics Help Line at  
206-296-1586**

*King County appreciates your business  
and thanks you for helping us maintain  
high ethical standards!*



King County

Department of Executive Services

**Board of Ethics**

The Chinook Building,  
401 Fifth Avenue, Suite 131  
Seattle, WA 98104-1818  
CNK-ES-0131

206-296-1586 Fax 206-205-0725  
TTY Relay: 711

board.ethics@kingcounty.gov  
www.kingcounty.gov/ethics/

Alternative Formats Available

King County is an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Employer  
and complies with the Americans with disabilities Act.



# Code of Ethics

Helping  
Employees  
Make  
Ethical  
Decisions

You and King County:  
Doing Business  
with Contractors,  
Vendors, Clients,  
and Customers



King County  
Department of  
Executive Services  
**Board of Ethics**

*You are a valued contractor, vendor, client, or customer. We believe the contents of this brochure will be helpful to everyone doing business—or seeking to do business—with King County.*

### **Good Ethics Is Good Public Service**

King County believes that public confidence in government is essential. The Code of Ethics is a county law that supports this policy by setting standards to make sure all transactions and decisions are fair and honest. When its provisions are followed, the Code ensures that the personal and financial interests of employees and elected officials do not present a real or apparent conflict of interest in our service to the public.

### **Good Ethics Means Fair Dealings**

This brochure highlights sections of the Code that affect the way we do business with our contractors, vendors, clients, and customers. Because it is important that you know that all business dealings are impartial and fair, employees and elected officials are bound by certain rules in the way we interact with you. There are clear county rules guiding us in what we can and cannot do. Both employees and those who do business with the county will benefit from knowing and following those rules.

#### ■ **Gifts**

Employees may not accept gifts or things of value from those doing business—or seeking to do business—with the county. They may receive only their legal compensation for doing their job. If you want to acknowledge great work performed by a county employee, send a letter or note of commendation to his or her supervisor.

Please don't send flowers or candy. The written acknowledgement will be of greater benefit to the employee. If you do give or send a gift, it will be returned or donated.

*A licensing employee cannot accept your gift of a food basket "for a job well done" and must donate it to a food bank.*

*A county administrator may not accept your gift of a desk clock for orders he has placed with you on behalf of the county. He must return the clock to you.*

#### ■ **Refreshments and Meals**

If you are holding a business meeting or conducting official business, county employees may accept light refreshment, such as coffee and a doughnut. However, the county employee must pay for meals.

*During a day long business meeting in your office, you offer county employees a box lunch. Employees may accept the lunch, but must pay for it.*

#### ■ **Possible Conflict of Interest**

County employees may not participate in any county business when they have a personal or financial interest in the matter. These interests would be in conflict with the proper discharge of their official duties or could impair their independent judgment on a county matter. Employees are required to disclose these interests to their supervisors and recuse themselves from working on those matters.

*If a county manager learns that her spouse's employer is one of the consultants competing for a contract with her agency, she must notify her supervisor immediately and remove herself from working on any part of the transaction.*

#### ■ **Use of County Facilities and Resources**

County property or facilities, such as conference rooms and bulletin boards, may be used if the general public is allowed to use these facilities. They may not be used for personal convenience or profit. County equipment, including computers and vehicles, may be used only for official business.

*A subcontractor using a county computer may not send e-mail or download Web sites except in connection with official county business.*

*A business may not use a county conference room to conduct classes or sell products unless specified by written agreement with the county.*

#### ■ **Conferences or Seminars**

Employees may attend vendor conferences or seminars as long as they are educational programs that benefit the county, are not directed at a specific group of decision-makers, and if fees for attendance are paid by the county. Employees may leave with educational materials, but not promotional items.

*A county engineer may attend an educational seminar for which the county has paid the fee; she may take informational handouts, but must leave without hats, mouse pads, calendars, or other items carrying the vendor's logo.*

#### ■ **Solicitation**

County employees may not solicit items from you for personal or county use.

*A county employee may not ask a coffee shop for free coffee for an employee meeting or to donate to a county program.*