

CHARLESTON COUNTY DIVERSITY PHILOSOPHY

Diversity—the respect and understanding of the integrity and worth of all people, lifestyles and cultures—is a key to the success of Charleston County. Charleston County Government is committed to eliminating the physical, attitudinal, and organizational obstacles that prevent individuals, businesses, and organizations from contributing to the future success of the county. We must provide effective government services in an increasingly demanding and diverse environment. Our capabilities will be enhanced by contributions from the widest variety of sources. If we are to be successful, we must embrace the value of diversity as being critical to the achievement of our mission. Furthermore, the more diverse our presence is in the community, the more effectively we will be able to conduct business and provide services to the entire community.

Diversity transcends race, gender, affirmative action, and Equal Employment Opportunity. It goes beyond compliance with federal law, statutory guidelines, and court decisions. Diversity means respecting and valuing differences such as those based on age, disability, ethnicity, gender, language, race, color, ancestry, national origin, marital status, veteran status, medical condition, and socio-economic status, as well as respecting each individual's right to privacy in areas such as religious faith, political beliefs, and sexual orientation. In order to successfully serve our diverse community, we must recognize and be respectful of our differences. Consequently, we must rethink our approach to diversity. No longer are such issues merely matters of social policy or historical reciprocity. Diversity is today, and will continue to be, simply good government.

Policy:

Charleston County is committed to diversity, and this commitment is demonstrated in the way in which it provides services, through its employment practices, through its procurement procedures, and through its funding decisions. County-funded services will be provided, and funding decisions will be made in a manner that recognizes, addresses, and reflects the diverse makeup of the community. Services, programs, and activities will be provided in ways that are sensitive and responsive to our diverse community.

Charleston County recognizes that diversity and inclusion are prominent factors that can maximize the success of our business community. Therefore, Charleston County sets a goal of 10 percent for minority and disadvantaged business participation. Through the procurement process, Charleston County provides opportunity for all businesses to participate in the pursuit of County contracts. Assistance is available to any Disadvantaged Business. The Procurement Ordinance Section 2-273 states that: "Disadvantaged Business shall mean a small business, which is owned or controlled by a majority of persons, not limited to members of minority groups, who have been deprived of the opportunity to develop and maintain a competitive position in the economy because of social disadvantages."

Charleston County also recognizes that diversity and inclusion are prominent factors that can maximize the success of our workplace. Therefore, Charleston County sets a goal of 10 percent for minority representation for positions earning in excess of \$50,000 annual base pay in the County Government. Workplace diversity will be accomplished through the implementation of the Work Force Diversity Plan, affirmative action plans, and by providing cultural sensitivity and awareness training for employees. Additionally, County Council will ensure that all County board, commission, and committee appointments reflect the diversity of the Charleston County population.

November 1, 2005