

Alachua County Sustainability Policy

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to affirm Alachua County's commitment to sustainability, fiscal efficiency, and waste prevention by integrating environmental and social responsibility into procurement and operational practices. This policy supports the County's Zero Waste goals and ensures that purchasing decisions minimize negative impacts on society and the environment to the greatest extent practicable.

Vision

By embedding sustainability into everyday decisions, Alachua County will reduce environmental impacts, strengthen the local economy, and create a healthier, more resilient community for current and future generations.

Guiding Principles

Alachua County adopts a life cycle approach to decision-making and supports the establishment of a circular economy. The County's objectives are guided by five principles:

1. Keep Resources Local
2. Foster Job Growth
3. Emphasize and Support Upstream Solutions
4. Mitigate Climate Change
5. Sustainability Principles

Scope

This policy applies to all Alachua County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) departments, employees, contractors, and vendors engaged in procurement, operations, and service delivery.

Policy Commitments

1. Sustainable Procurement

- Products and services that are environmentally and socially responsible, durable, recyclable, reusable, or remanufactured are preferred where practicable.
- Products should meet recognized third-party certifications when practicable (e.g., FSC, Energy Star, EPEAT, Green Seal, USDA Organic, Fair Trade).
- Department and Procurement decisions shall consider life cycle cost analysis in addition to purchase price, factoring in energy use, maintenance, and disposal costs.

- Toxic and hazardous products will be avoided whenever feasible, with preference for low-toxicity alternatives.

2. Waste Reduction and Circular Economy

- Departments should prioritize waste prevention by reducing, reusing, recycling, and composting materials wherever possible.
- Surplus property and reusable items shall be redistributed or repurposed through County surplus programs.
- Vendors are encouraged to provide take-back programs for products and packaging.

3. Resource and Energy Efficiency

- Departments shall purchase energy- and water-efficient equipment and vehicles when practicable.
- Renewable energy and energy-efficient building practices shall be incorporated into County operations where feasible.

Paper use shall be reduced through digital solutions, duplex printing, and the use of recycled-content paper.

4. Continuous Improvement

- Training will be provided to employees on sustainable procurement and life cycle evaluation practices.
- This policy will be reviewed and updated periodically to reflect evolving sustainability standards and best practices in the Alachua County Sustainable Procurement Procedures.

Implementation Responsibilities

- **Departments:** Ensure compliance with this policy, train staff, and identify sustainable procurement opportunities.
- **Procurement Office:** Support departments in identifying sustainable vendors, contracts, and certifications.
- **Employees:** Practice waste reduction, resource conservation, and sustainable purchasing in daily activities.

Communications

Alachua County will promote its sustainability leadership by publicizing the use of recycled, environmentally preferable, and socially responsible products through reports, public outreach, and communications with citizens and vendors.

Our Commitment

Alachua County is committed to integrating sustainability, fiscal efficiency, and waste prevention into all operations and purchasing decisions. We will lead by example in protecting the environment, supporting our local economy, and being fiscally responsible.