

be issued on a serial maturity plan providing for the maturity of the series in consecutive annual installments, no one of which shall be less than fifty percent of the amount of any other installment of the series; and the last installment of the series shall become due not later than thirty years after the date of issuance. If at any time the Council shall have failed to appropriate and to make available sufficient funds to provide for the timely payment of the interest and principal then due upon all County indebtedness, it shall be the duty of the Director of Finance to pay, or to make available for payment, to the holders of such indebtedness from the first revenues thereafter received applicable to the General funds of the County, a sum equal to such interest and principal.

Section 313. *Purchasing*

The Council shall prescribe by law a centralized system of purchasing and contracting for all goods and services used by the County. The centralized purchasing system shall be administered under the professional supervision of the Chief Administrative Officer subject to the direction of the County Executive.

Section 314. *Competitive Bidding*

The Council shall prescribe by law for competitive bidding for any single purchase by, or contract with, the County of three thousand dollars or more, except contracts of professional services customarily negotiated.

Section 315. *Audit*

The Council shall contract with, or otherwise employ, a certified public accountant to make annually an independent post audit of all financial records and actions of the County, its officials and employees. The complete report of the audit shall be presented to the Council and copies of it shall be made available to the public.

Section 316. *Public Access to Fiscal Documents*

All fiscal documents required by this Charter shall be public records, and copies shall be made available to the public. Any estimates, reports, or justifications on which they are based shall be open to public inspection subject to reasonable regulations.

**ARTICLE 4. MERIT SYSTEM AND
CONFLICTS OF INTEREST**

Section 401. *Merit System*

The Council shall prescribe by law a merit system for all officers and employees of the County government except members of the Council, the County Executive, the Chief Administrative Officer, the County Attorney, the heads of the several departments, special legal counsel employed pursuant to this Charter, and members of boards and commissions and other officers authorized by law to be appointed to serve in a quasi-judicial capacity. Salaries and wages of all classified employees in the merit system shall be determined pursuant to a uniform salary plan.

Section 402. *Personnel Administration*

Subject to the laws and regulations of the merit system, the Chief Administrative Officer, under the direction of the County Executive, shall be responsible for administering the County's merit system.