

Sustainable Purchasing Practices

Administrative Procedural Guidance for Purchasing Policy (R2022-23)

The District acknowledges that a product or service's cost of ownership entails more than purchase price. The District will consider factors including lifespan, energy efficiency, maintenance, reuses, and end-of-life disposal costs to determine the total economic value of procurement over the product or service's life cycle.

The District's sustainable purchasing objectives are to:

- Conserve natural resources
- Eliminate or reduce toxic hazards to our staff and our community
- Support strong recycling efforts and utilize products where a high likelihood of recycling exists (e.g. steel and paper products)
- Reduce materials that are placed in landfills
- Increase the use and availability of environmentally preferable products
- Encourage vendors to reduce environmental impacts in their production and distribution systems
- Favor a long-term lower cost. This includes evaluation of total cost expected during the time a product is owned, extended warranties, operation, supplies, maintenance, disposal cost and expected lifetime compared to other alternatives.

It is not the intent of the Purchasing Policy to require a department, buyer, or contractor to take any action that conflicts with local, state or federal requirements, procure products that do not perform adequately for their intended use, exclude adequate competition, or pursue products not available at a reasonable cost in a reasonable period of time.

Each District department shall cooperate in information gathering for the purposes of tracking, reporting, and evaluating the sustainable purchasing program as required by the Climate Commitment. Buyers shall provide evidence of sustainable purchasing choices upon request for producing summaries of the District's environmentally responsible purchasing actions.

Procurement Sustainability Guidelines:

Facilities and Janitorial

All cleaning or disinfecting products (for janitorial use) shall meet the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency [EPA Safer Choice Standard](https://www.epa.gov/saferchoice/products) (<https://www.epa.gov/saferchoice/products>).

When maintaining buildings, the District shall strive for the lowest amount of VOC's (volatile organic compounds), highest recycled content and low to no formaldehyde when purchasing materials such as paint, carpeting, adhesives, furniture and casework.

Purchases should strive to accomplish the following goals:

Energy Efficiency

- Purchases of appliances and electronics for which Energy Star certification is available

when practicable

- Energy efficient lighting, including LED and other energy saving bulbs
- High efficiency heating and cooling (HVAC) systems and equipment
- Zero emission vehicle and equipment acquisition

Water Conservation

- Purchase of water saving products, including low flow faucets and toilets and efficient irrigation systems

Elimination of products that contribute to the formation of dioxins and furans

This restriction includes, but is not limited to:

- Purchasing paper, paper products and janitorial paper products that are unbleached or that are processed without chlorine or chlorine derivatives, whenever practicable;
- Eliminating the purchase of products that use polyvinyl chloride (PVC) such as office binders, furniture and flooring, whenever practicable.

Support of Overall Sustainable Practices in Purchasing

- Utilize existing cooperative contracts that offer products and services which meet the objective of this policy.

Office Supplies

When purchasing office supplies, departments will first consider the use of recycled content paper, toner cartridges and other supplies which either contain post-consumer recycled materials or may be recycled at the end of its useful life. Purchases should strive to accomplish the following goals:

- 100% recycled paper for use in all District departments, with exceptions granted only for equipment related issues
- Minimum 20% post-consumer recycled content cardboard and paper office supplies such as envelopes, file folders, planners, boxes, etc.
- Business cards shall be printed on recycled card stock and shall display the recycling symbol
- No purchase of bottled water except in emergency situations
- Reusable cutlery shall be used except in emergency situations
- Exclusive purchases of 100% remanufactured laser toner cartridges

Current benchmarks and standards will be utilized for all products for which the United States Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA) has established minimum recycled content standard guidelines, such as those for printing and office paper, janitorial supplies, construction, landscaping, miscellaneous and non-paper office products, shall contain the highest post-consumer content practicable, but no less than the minimum recycled content standards established by the [U.S. EPA guidelines](https://www.epa.gov/smm/comprehensive-procurement-guidelines-paper-and-paper-products) (https://www.epa.gov/smm/comprehensive-procurement-guidelines-paper-and-paper-products).

Use of Bid Alternates

When appropriate, the District will draft Requests for Proposals (“RFPs”) seeking bid alternates for applicable sustainability criteria. This will give vendors the opportunity to communicate the range of products and services they can offer, and give the District the ability to make more informed purchasing decisions.

Factors to consider when comparing bids and proposals and for determining if a product or service has environmentally preferable attributes:

- Minimization of virgin material used in product or service life cycle
- Maximization of recycled materials used in product or service life cycle
- Life cycle economics of products and services
- Reuse of existing products or material in product or service life cycle
- Reduction of energy and fuel consumption
- Durability and minimal maintenance requirements
- Ultimate disposal of the product
- Buying locally to reduce emissions and transportation costs

Achievement of Relevant Certifications

When possible, the District’s RFPs will define relevant environmental certifications from government agencies and/or reputable nonprofit organizations as threshold conditions. Examples of relevant certifications may include:

- *Energy Star*: (U.S. EPA and U.S. Department of Energy), certification for energy efficient products.
- *Safer Choice*: (U.S. EPA), certifying that chemical ingredients in cleaning products.
- *Water Sense*: (U.S. EPA), program both certifying products for water efficiency, and providing information on water saving practices.
- *Forest Stewardship Council*: certifying that construction products are sourced from responsibly managed forests.

As environmental and sustainability practices become more widespread, more standards and benchmarks will be available. At this time, the United States Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA) is a recognized leader in developing baseline standards for the use of environmentally friendly and/or sustainable products and will be called upon when procuring these items.

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