



# Sustainable Procurement Guidelines

Revised March 2022

# 1. Introduction

Washington University's Sustainable Procurement Guidelines provides recommendations for an approach to purchasing products and services on behalf of the university and identifies product attributes that are strongly preferred.

In general terms, the WU Sustainable Procurement Guidelines document outlines the Office of Sustainability's targets for sustainable procurement and practices that relate to sustainable procurement. The guidelines below outline what the University considers to be more sustainable at the product, product category, service, or industry level.

# 2. Environmentally Preferred Purchasing

Environmentally Preferred Purchasing (EPP) is the practice of purchasing of products or services that have a less negative effect on human health and the environment when compared with competing products or services that serve the same purpose. EPP contributes to WU's overall sustainability initiatives and efforts.

At the scale of an institution like WashU, the purchase and use of environmentally preferable products can have a profound impact – and not just on the environment. Some tangible benefits are:

- Buying less-hazardous products can reduce regulatory liability, improve worker safety and lower disposal costs.
- Using energy-efficient and water-conserving products can save money and resources.
- Products that are reusable, refillable, more durable or repairable create less waste and may be more cost-effective in the long-run than disposable or single-use products.
- Buying products with recycled content keeps our home and workplace recycling programs going and saves natural resources.
- Increased support of recycling programs can expand the recycling industry and create a more competitive environment that will cause pricing of recycled products to come down, relative to non-environmentally friendly competitive products.
- Improved ability to meet existing environmental goals.

While WashU departments manage their own budgets and purchasing decisions, Resource Management and the Office of Sustainability encourage the consideration of social and environmental impacts when weighing purchasing decisions, in addition to other factors, like quality and price. In some cases, products or services that are more environmentally responsible have a higher price tag. Strategies such as avoiding or reducing consumption in the first place or considering lifecycle costs for energy use, disposal and replacement can mitigate the impact of a higher purchase price.

To assist purchasing managers and others faced with purchasing decisions, Resource Management and the Office of Sustainability have published guidelines which will help users effectively seek out and evaluate environmentally preferable products.

Common commodity areas that offer a wide range of comparable, environmentally preferable options are listed below. If you don't see what you are looking for, you can contact Resource Management or the Office of Sustainability for guidance.

## 3. Reporting

Reporting will be requested annually from suppliers in each category. Reporting will be requested for the fiscal year, based on the percentage of spend in each of the following categories and compared to the total addressable spend in each category.

## 4. Category Guidance

### Apparel

See Promotional Products and Apparel

### Bottled Water

Washington University prohibits the sale and/or distribution of individual servings of bottled water\*. Bottled water will not be sold in campus vending machines or retail outlets. University funds may not be used to purchase individual servings of bottled water.

Bottled water is defined as an individual serving of water in any type of single-use packaging.

\*From time to time, the need for exceptions to this policy may arise. In such cases, requests for exceptions to the policy should be made to Resource Management and the Office of Sustainability. In cases where individual/single servings of water must be provided, the package of choice should be boxed water. The Medical School Campus is currently exempt from this policy.

More information about the university's bottled water policy can be found [here](#).

### Cleaning and Janitorial Supplies

Cleaning products include general purpose bathroom, glass and carpet cleaners; degreasing agents; biologically-active cleaning products (enzymatic and microbial products); floor-care products (e.g. floor finish and floor finish strippers); hand soaps and hand sanitizers, disinfectants, and metal polish and other specialty cleaning products. In addition, janitorial paper products such as toilet tissue, tissue paper, paper towels, hand towels, napkins and menstruation supplies.

- Cleaning solvents purchased and or used by WashU personnel and by janitorial contractors shall be biodegradable and phosphate free, unless such requirements will compromise quality of service. Citrus-based or electrolyzed water cleaning is preferable versus other chemical cleaners.
- Industrial and institutional cleaning products purchased and or used by WashU personnel and by janitorial contractors shall carry recognized third-party sustainability certifications such as: Green Seal, Blue Angel, Cradle to Cradle, ECOLOGO, EU Ecolable, FOrest Stewardship Council (FSC) certified, Good Environmental Choice Australia (GECA), Nordic Swan, US EPA Safer Choice.
- Total expenditures on cleaning and janitorial paper products and expenditures on certified green cleaning and janitorial paper products for the fiscal year must be reported annually.

### Copy Paper

Products that offer the best environmental performance are ranked as follows:

- (1) FSC Recycled, 100% FSC, 100% Recycled or Tree-free/agricultural residue
- (2) FSC Mixed label
- (3) As high recycled content as possible, with post-consumer being preferable to pre-consumer fibers.

WashU Sustainability recommends copy paper with a minimum of 30% post-consumer recycled content, including but not limited to:

- (1) All 8.5"x11"
- (2) All 8.5"x14"
- (3) All 11"x17"

All paper should be Processed Chlorine Free (PCF) and be Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certified.

Definitions:

- The Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) is an independent, non-profit organization that protects forests for future generations. FSC Chain-of-Custody certification traces the path of products from forests through the supply chain, verifying that FSC-certified materials is identified or kept separated from non-certified material throughout the chain.
- FSC Recycled – All timber or fiber in FSC Recycled product is pre-consumer or postconsumer reclaimed.
- FSC 100% - All timber or fiber in an FSC 100% product comes from an FSC certified forest.
- FSC Mix – Contain a minimum of 70% FSC certified wood/fiber and/or post-consumer input, and the balance must be controlled wood and/or pre-consumer reclaimed material.
- Agricultural residue – Consistent with the Environmental Paper Network, agricultural residues are defined as: residues leftover from food production or other processes (cereal straws like wheat straw, rice straw, seed flax straw, sorghum stalks, sugar can bagasse, and rye seed grass straw (plants do not replace forest or cropland)).

Preferred suppliers will provide a breakdown of recycled content of all printer paper purchases for each fiscal year, as well as the total printer paper purchases. [More information.](#)

## Electronics

Includes any product for which an EPEAT certification is available.

- The life of electronic products is to be extended by repairing and refurbishing products that break. Purchasing electronics with replaceable and rechargeable options help improve its longevity and should be prioritized when making new purchases. For older products that can't be repaired, they should continue being used for less intensive roles until no longer able to perform.
- Computers and computer accessories may be donated if they are still functional, but security protocols must be followed to ensure data security (contact Office of Sustainability for more information).
- Electronics are to be recycled when no longer able to be repaired through R2, E-Stewards certified programs or comparable recycling programs.
- Products containing Mercury are prohibited, unless there are no commercially available mercury-free products for a specific application.
  - If there are no mercury free products, the supplier must offer products that contain the least amount of mercury necessary to meet performance requirements.
- Printers must be compatible for double side printing and work with specified PCRC content requirements for printing materials.
- Shipping of electronics must be done in a way that minimizes disposable packaging while maximizing recyclable and reusable products
  - Styrofoam and other hard to recycle components are prohibited.
  - Reusable crates and pallets should be used over boxes when able
  - Cardboard used for packaging must be 25% minimum PCRC

- Vendors should provide details about the recycled content, third-party sustainability certifications such as EPEAT, ENERGY STAR, and TCO, and other environmental attributes of products and services sold
- Products must meet ENERGY STAR certification at minimum
- [More Information](#)

## Food

Preference shall be given to food and food service suppliers that provide local and or community-based products and healthy and nutritional foods.

Preference shall also be given to products that are sustainably and or ethically produced as determined by one or more recognized third party food and beverage sustainability standards.

Sample certifications include:

- Sustainable Agriculture
  - Biodynamic Certified
  - Bird friendly Coffee
  - Certified Organic under any IFOAM-endorsed standard
  - Certified Sustainability Grown (SCS)
  - LEAF Marque
  - Rainforest Alliance Certified
- Sustainable Seafood
  - Marine Stewardship Council blue ecolabel
  - Monterey Bay Aquarium Seafood Watch (Best Choices, Good Alternatives, and Recommended Eco-Certifications)
- Fair trade/labor
  - Ecocert Fair Trade
  - Fair for Life
  - Fairtrade mark (Fairtrade International)
  - Fair Trade Certified (Fair Trade USA)
  - FairWild certified
  - Guaranteed Fair Trade (WFTO)
  - Hand in Hand (Rapunzel)
  - Small Producers' Symbol (SPP)
- Human Animal Care
  - Animal Welfare Approved (A Greener World)
  - Certified Humane Raised and Handled
  - Global Animal Partnership Certified

Additional resources: [Food third party certifications](#)

## Food Serviceware

Food serviceware items are products that are used to serve or transport ready-to-consume food or beverages, including cups, bowls, plates, and hinged containers, as well as accessory items (see definition below). This does not include prepackaged, sealed food that is mass-produced by a third-party vendor off-premises for resale at University locations (e.g., grab-and-go items, such as prepackaged sandwiches and snacks resold in campus stores).

Preference is given to food serviceware products that are reusable or refillable.

- Serviceware made from expanded polystyrene, or styrofoam, including, but not limited to cups, to go containers, and plates, shall not be purchased or used by WashU personnel and/or suppliers unless elimination of these materials compromises health and safety or interferes with research functions.
- Compostable food serviceware that does not contain PFAs receives preference when single-use food service ware must be used, as long as it meets performance needs.
  - When compostable food serviceware that is able meet performance needs is unavailable, easily recyclable products or products containing high levels of post-consumer recycled content shall be used.

## Ink Toner

WashU Sustainability recommends purchasing monochrome toner cartridges based upon the following priority order:

- Priority 1 - Remanufactured High-yield Cartridges
- Priority 2 - High-yield Original Equipment Manufacturer (OEM) Cartridges
- Priority 3 - Remanufactured Standard Cartridges
  - Note: The purchase of “clone” or “compatible” toner cartridges (new builds) as defined in this specification is discouraged.
- All remanufactured toner cartridges should meet or exceed original equipment manufacturer (OEM) cartridge standards for quality and performance and meet approved remanufactured toner cartridge industry standards. All remanufactured toner cartridges should meet or exceed:
  - The latest ASTM remanufactured toner cartridge standards;
  - The guidelines of UL EcoLogo CCD-039, Blue Angel, Nordic Swan, or equivalent Eco label; or
  - The results of third-party performance testing by the Rochester Institute of Technology Imaging Products Laboratory (RIT), Buyers Lab, or equivalent independent laboratory.
- Remanufactured toner cartridges should not be manufactured or remanufactured with, or contain any hazardous substances in concentrations that cause the toner or cartridge to be classified with any of the following risk phases according to Annex I of the European Union Directive 67/548/EEC
- Remanufactured toner cartridges should not be manufactured or remanufactured with azo-colorants (dyes or pigments) that may contain carcinogenic aromatic amines, as defined in Underwriter’s Laboratory (UL) 2785 Standard for Sustainability for Printing Cartridges.

Additional resources: [Approved EO 4 Specification: Monochrome Toner Cartridges](#)

## Lab Supplies

Visit the [Green Labs Resources](#) for specific guidance.

## Office Supplies

WashU’s preferred office supply vendor hosts a suggested green office supplies list of most commonly ordered supplies that meet sustainability criteria. They also have search filters and icons which identify office supplies with recycled content or that have green certifications or are made by diverse suppliers/manufacturers. Offices can also avoid the purchase of new supplies all together by first checking the [Office Supply Exchange](#), where university surplus supplies are posted, or by sharing a common pool of supplies among the department.

General sustainability guidelines and considerations include:

- (1) Already used/repurposed (see Office Supplies Exchange)
- (2) Durable & high quality
- (3) Reusable/refillable
- (4) Post-consumer recycled content or biodegradable
- (5) Pre-consumer or non-specified recycled content
- (6) Recyclable
- (7) Non-toxic

## Promotional Products & Apparel

In order to promote consistent, quality representations of Washington University, all apparel (including uniforms) and novelty merchandise (promotional products) displaying university logos and trademarks must be purchased from a supplier licensed to produce such merchandise. In addition, all trademark use must be approved by the university's [licensing office](#).

Washington University's Trademark Licensing Program protects the university's registered trademarks and goodwill, and supports fair treatment of workers across the globe. When you support the university's [licensed suppliers](#), you simultaneously support just and humane working conditions around the world. WashU is affiliated with two organizations – the Fair Labor Association and the Workers Rights Consortium – that work for lasting solutions to abusive working conditions.

Most licensed suppliers offer some environmentally preferable products, while some specialize in it. In general, seek out durable, high-quality products that are likely to be fully utilized by the intended audience. Some suggested considerations include:

Fabric and textiles

- (1) Organic and/or plant-based (2) recycled content (3) biodegradable (4) recyclable

Other

- (1) Useful & durable (2) Reusable/refillable (3) Post-consumer recycled content or biodegradable (4) recyclable

## Refrigerants

General appliances and equipment that require refrigerants:

- Vendors shall provide equipment containing low global warming potential (GWP) substitutes approved under United States Environmental Protection Agency's Significant New Alternative Policy (SNAP) program and permissible under state regulations.
- Vendors shall provide products with a lower global warming potential to the maximum extent practicable where such products are cost-effective (using life cycle-climate performance (LCCP) and meet form, function, and utility requirements.
- Vendors installing new refrigerators, freezers, or other appliances and removing old appliances shall certify that old products are properly recycled or disposed of.

Recycling can be done through EPA Responsible Appliance Disposal partnership or through WashU EH&S department.

Ultra low temperature freezer (ULTs) policy:

- Per the High Efficiency Ultra-Low Temperature (HE ULT) Freezer Policy, all new ULT freezer purchases must be high-efficiency models.
  - Prior to purchasing, explore options such as sharing ULT freezers. If unable to do so, ensure that the ULT freezer being purchased is an appropriate size.
- ULTs more than 10 years old should be decommissioned as soon as possible and properly recycled by the WashU EH&S Department. Do not repurpose within the lab or donate elsewhere.
- Read the full policy [here](#).

Additional resources:

<https://ehs.wustl.edu/waste-disposal/>

<https://sustainability.wustl.edu/greenlabs/green-labs-resources/>

## Toxic Materials and Chemicals

Of available and comparable options, preference shall be given to products that perform best when evaluated against the International Living Future Institute's [Red List](#).

Products and equipment purchased shall not contain lead or mercury unless there is no available alternative. For products that contain lead or mercury, preference shall be given to those products with lower concentrations of these metals and to suppliers with established lead and mercury recovery programs

Pest control shall be managed through prevention, physical and mechanical, and through the purchase of environmentally friendly products. As a last resort, use of the least toxic pest control substance is required. See Integrated Pest Management Program for more detailed guidance.

Additional resources:

<https://ehs.wustl.edu/waste-disposal/>

<https://sustainability.wustl.edu/greenlabs/green-labs-resources/>

## Vehicles

Declining purchase costs for electric vehicles and other low-/no- emission vehicles, combined with lower fuel and maintenance costs, offer potential cost savings in many applications. Prioritize electric vehicles over other options, where cost effective. In cases where there is no electric model to suit the operational needs for the vehicle being purchased, or there is no cost-effective electric alternative, prioritize according to the following hierarchy:

(1) Plug-in hybrid vehicle

(2) Hybrid-electric vehicle

(3) Alternative fuel or other vehicle with demonstrated lower emissions than a comparable conventional vehicle.

The purchase of a no-emissions vehicle will be considered cost-effective if its estimated life-cycle cost is within 5% of the cost of a comparable conventional vehicle. Life-cycle cost is defined as all capital costs, including vehicle purchase/lease cost, acquisition and installation of any associated fueling infrastructure, operating costs over the expected life of the vehicle – including fuel and maintenance costs, and the estimated environmental benefits of avoided greenhouse gas emissions.

This guideline aligns with and is modeled after the Clean Vehicle Purchase Executive Order implemented by the City of St. Louis. Click [here](#) for more detailed purchase and prioritization information.