GREEN PURCHASING INITIATIVE

BEST PRACTICES

**WHAT IS GREEN PURCHASING?**

“Going green” is no longer an obscure point somewhere near the bottom of a priorities list. Also knows as “Environmental Preferable Purchasing (EPP) or sustainability, green purchasing has become a major focus of government, industry and the general public all over the world. The green program involves the purchase of products and services that minimize negative effects to the environment. It entails buying products that have a smaller impact on the environment than comparable products. Green program items include services that conserve energy, minimized generated waste; products made from recycled materials that can be reused or recycled; products used as alternatives to hazardous or toxic chemicals. Alternative fuel vehicles, bio-based products, energy efficient products and non-ozone depleting substances are other EPP products. A successful EPP or green purchasing program typically starts with a few carefully targeted purchasing changes. With established procedures and methods, those purchasing changes allow the selection of green products that are safe to use and benefit the environment. Using these products creates markets for processed and used materials, thus conserving natural resources and energy. Also, buying recycled products results in reduced solid waste, less air pollutants, reduced water pollutants and decreased greenhouse gases that contribute to global warming.

*Buying green helps to reduce pollution, conserve natural resources and energy, improve awareness of environmental stewardship and provide potential cost savings. We are to be good stewards of the environment by preventing pollution and conserving energy and natural resources.*

Specific circumstances might arise that preclude the purchase of products made with recovered materials. These circumstances are the price of a designated item made with recovered materials is unreasonably high; there is inadequate competition; unusual and unreasonable delays would result

from obtaining recovered products; the recycled content item does not meet the reasonable performance specifications requested by the requisitioner.

Why buy green or recycled products? Recycling is more than just dropping off cans, bottles and newspapers at the curb or local collection facility. Diverting recyclables from the waste stream is the first of three steps in recycling or going green. The second step occurs when companies use recycled products to manufacture new products. The third step comes when buyers purchase items made from recycled materials.

Buying green is important to the reduction of pollution, the conservation of natural resources and energy and the creation of awareness to the environment. Inadequate knowledge about the subject of green purchasing is usually the key barrier to implementing a green purchasing program.

**GREEN PURCHASING GOALS**

In order to establish a successful green procurement program, the procurement department must engage high level management for support of the program, establish clear program policies and goals, provide incentives and offer education about green purchasing. The university’s commitment should translate to the buying staff strategically procuring green items that have a decreased negative effect on the environment.

The key factors in establishing the university’s green program are awareness, commitment and attainable goals set for using recycled products. The starting point of the program is to begin with a foundational list of items that can be made or are made with recovered materials, and then grow the list as procurements become available. Products should be purchased with the highest recycled content level practicable developed from a list of core items which have been researched to determine their percentage of post-consumer and total recovered content.

The basic structure of Procurement Services’ green program results from gathered information from peer universities and the US government. The program will be geared to maximize the use of green products while maintaining the ability to acquire cost effective goods and services. This results in purchase orders for products and services that are made with recovered materials. A green program commands participants to be good stewards of the environment by preventing pollution and conserving natural resources, since most waste is generated through procurement. The buying staff must consider the environment, performance and price in their procurement decisions. This will improve the ability of the university to meet environmental goals and requirements and help to create and sustain university support for recycled content products.

Green products are no longer limited to recycled paper or remanufactured toner cartridges. The strategy for achieving green purchasing goals begins with the procurement process. The “greening” of Procurement Services’ procurements helps to heighten awareness of the program, eventually resulting in significant savings for the university. The savings may not be immediate but they will happen.

The goal of the green program for Procurement Services is to help reduce the level of pollution and waste in the landfills by encouraging the reduction, reuse or recycling of goods and services. Green purchasing is a growing trend but a primary barrier to this endeavor is the opposition to the cost of implementing environmentally friendly purchasing practices. Buyers must always be cognizant of the green products trend and consider requesting green products when working requisitions for items such as furniture, carpet, office products, janitorial products and alternative fuels. Buyers should also use sustainability language in Invitations for Bid (IFBs), Requests for Proposals (RFPs), Requests for Information (RFIs) and any other form of solicitation to emphasize to suppliers the commitment Texas A&M has to Environmentally Preferable Purchasing.

**GREEN PURCHASING SOLICITATION LANGUAGE**

**Solicitation language**

“In adherence with Texas A&M University’s strong commitment to sustainability, Texas A&M Procurement Services actively researches and solicits quotes on environmentally preferable goods and services. Environmentally preferable goods and services are those which have a reduced negative effect on human health and/or the environment when compared to comparable products and services. Such goods and services include, but are not limited to, those which are made from recycled content, conserve natural resources, minimize pollution, reduce the use of water and energy, reduce environmental health hazards to workers and our community, support strong recycling markets, reduce materials that are landfilled and increase the use and availability of environmentally preferable products.

Texas A&M is committed to purchasing products that have earned industry approved ecolabels and certifications or that meet the standards of ecolabels and certification programs wherever possible and practical. Example so such programs include, but are not limited to, Energy Start ([www.energystar.gov](http://www.energystar.gov)); Greenguard ([www.greenguard.org](http://www.greenguard.org)); Green Seal ([www.greenseal.org](http://www.greenseal.org)); Forest Stewardship Council Certification ([www.fscus.org](http://www.fscus.org)); Veriflora ([www.veriflora.com](http://www.veriflora.com)); Scientific Certification Systems (<http://www.scscertified.com/>).

All suppliers are encouraged to visit the websites for these ecolabeling and certification programs for complete product specifications and updated lists of qualifying products.

In an effort to track the environmental characteristics of the companies with which the university works, Texas A&M requests that suppliers list and describe their specific sustainability initiatives as they related to manufacturing processes and corporate practices.

**Include the following statement when considering the purchase of electronic products:**

“Texas A&M University is committed to purchasing products that have earned the Energy Star label, and have me the Energy Star specifications for energy efficiency, wherever possible and practical. All vendors are encouraged to visit [www.energystar.gov](http://www.energystar.gov) for complete product specifications and updated lists of qualifying products.”

**GREEN PURCHASING INITIATIVE**

Communication for Organization of Green Program

* Establish attainable standards and goals for procurements, where practicable
* Influence Procurement Services buying staff to strategically procure green products
* Demonstrate commitment to environment
* Create green purchasing committee consisting of Procurement Services buyers
* Recognize aspects of procurement that pertain to sustainability
* Include sustainability language in all solicitations
* Incorporate EPP into policies and procedures
* Initiate an outreach program in partnership with the Sustainability Committee
* Create EPP guide, website and newsletter
* Survey top suppliers about their green capabilities

**EPP Importance**

* Defines university’s commitment to green purchasing
* Has potential cost savings
* Helps create and sustain markets for recycled content products
* Helps reserve natural resources
* Emphasizes pollution prevention in the purchasing process
* Includes environmental considerations as part of the normal purchasing process

**Texas A&M University Procurement Services responsibilities:**

* Procure goods and services
* Provide customer service, training and quality assurance for procurement tools
* Invitation for Bid
* Request for Proposal
* Request for Quote
* University-wide contracts and agreements
* TXMAS
* DIR
* Create best overall value of goods and services
* Offer e-commerce solution to save time and money

**GREEN PURCHAISNG BEST PRACTICES**

Identify items for core list and determine basic recycled content

Set attainable purchasing goals for green products

Include blanket sustainability statement in RFPs, RFIs and IFBs

Survey vendors for green product certifications

Request vendor presentations about green products

Host green procurement vendor forums

Create guide to EPP products

Assist departments with sourcing and identifying green products

Train buying staff on green purchasing

Work with sustainability committee to identify green products to meet university goals

Establish a Procurement Services green program committee using buying staff

Identify green products that are available from HUB vendors

Identify green products for inclusion to master agreements

Review and evaluate existing master agreements to determine if green products language should be negotiated and added to supplier requirements

Create informational green procurement website

**GREEN PURCHASING DEFINITIONS**

1. **Energy Star** – Lower operating impact designation.
2. **Environmental Preferable Purchasing** – Also referred to as EPP, Involves buying products/services whose environment impacts have been considered and found to be less damaging to the environment when compared to competing products and services.
3. **Green Purchasing** – Also known as affirmative procurement. Procurement of products or services considered to be environmentally preferable, meaning those products that have a comparatively smaller negative effect on the environment. The aim is to eliminate waste, prevent pollution and improve the quality of the environment.
4. **Green Purchasing Plan** – A green purchasing plan is the strategy for maximizing purchases of green products and services. The plan should be developed in a manner that ensures that green products and services are purchased to the maximum extent practicable and demonstrates that the green purchasing plans include purchasing the products, monitoring implementation of the green purchasing programs and taking corrective action.
5. **Green Seal Product Standard** – An independent non-profit organization dedicated to safeguarding the environment and transforming the marketplace by promoting the manufacture, purchase and use of environmentally responsible products and services.
6. **Post Consumer Material** – A material or finished product that has served its intended use and has been diverted or recovered from waste destined for disposal, having completed its life as a consumer item.
7. **Pre**-**consumer Materials** – Materials generated in manufacturing and converting processes such as manufacturing scrap and trimmings/cuttings.
8. **Recovered Material** – Waste materials and byproducts that have been recovered or diverted from solid waste stream, but does not include materials and byproducts generated from, and commonly reused within, an original manufacturing process.
9. **Sustainability** – The ability to meet the needs of the present while living within the carrying capacity of supportive ecosystems and without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.