

Sustainable Purchasing Guidelines

Purpose

Washington County is committed to minimizing negative environmental impacts and reducing operating costs in our purchasing practices. By incorporating environmental considerations in purchasing decisions, along with our traditional concerns regarding price, performance, and availability, we are able to promote practices that improve health, conserve natural resources, and encourage environmentally responsible behaviors.

The objective of the Sustainable Purchasing Guidelines is to identify and implement “best practices” that support the purchase of goods and services that contain the following environmental attributes: 1) reusable, 2) remanufactured or refurbished, 3) recycled content, and/or 4) recyclable. Please see the “Definitions” section for further descriptions of these attributes.

Guidelines

The guidelines for all County buyers support the recycling hierarchy of reduce-reuse-recycle through minimizing the creation of waste, reusing materials, recycling materials that cannot be source-reduced, and purchasing recycled content and environmentally preferred products when practical. Because the County is committed to reducing waste and conserving resources, office supplies that are in reusable and in working condition are inventoried at the County’s Re-Use Store (Suite 270, Public Services Building). These supplies are available free of charge to all employees for use in the office.

There are trusted, third-party certifications available for many products. Buyers may be able to identify “green” products based on certification logos. Commonly found certifications include: FSC certified, EcoLogo, EnergyStar, Green Seal, and Green-e.

The County shall include a questionnaire in each of its bids for products and services to have bidders describe their recycling efforts and provide additional recycling information on the product or service they are providing. All requests for proposals shall require vendors to use recycled products when possible.

All County buyers are encouraged to consider and select “green” products that support the objective of this guideline. *The County will support best efforts to obtain environmentally preferred products at a reasonable cost.*

Scope

These guidelines apply, but are not limited, to products and goods including standard office supply purchases.

Best Practices

The Purchasing Department in conjunction with the Sustainability Program has developed the following best practices. Departments and Divisions shall follow these criteria when ordering unless a performance issue with a specific product arises or the cost of the product is unreasonably expensive.

1. Purchase printing and writing papers, including all imprinted letterhead paper, envelopes, copy paper, and business cards, with a minimum of 30 percent post-consumer recycled content.
2. Purchase paper products including janitorial supplies, shop towels, hand towels, facial tissue, toilet paper, seat covers, corrugated boxes, file boxes, hanging file folders, and other products composed largely of paper shall contain recycled content where feasible.

3. Purchase remanufactured laser printer toner cartridges and remanufactured or refillable inkjet cartridges.
4. Purchase remanufactured paint when available and suitable for the task.
5. Include recycled and environmentally sensitive specifications for all janitorial cleaning supplies.
6. Include Energy Star ratings in the specifications for all appliances, small household good purchases.
7. Other best practices that may be designated by the Department.

Responsibilities

All buyers are responsible for applying this guideline to their purchases to the best of their abilities. Purchasing approvers are asked to monitor the purchases that fall under this guideline to ensure its application.

Purchasing Division will review specifications to eliminate barriers to recycled-content products such as outdated or overly stringent product specifications and specifications not related to product performance.

Purchasing will continuously evaluate the bidding and contracting processes to look for ways to reduce consumption of paper and related energy (gas, postage, etc) in order to provide the needed information with the minimum expenditure of resources.

Exemptions

Nothing in this guide shall be construed as requiring the purchase of products that do not perform adequately or are not available at a reasonable price.

Definitions


Recycled Content – Made with materials that have been recovered from the solid waste stream, either during the manufacturing process (pre-consumer) or after consumer use (post-consumer). Purchasers may want to consider whether the material contains pre-consumer or post-consumer recycled content (EPA Environmentally Preferable Purchasing Glossary of Terms). Post-consumer recycled content products and materials are preferred above pre-consumer products and materials as long as other factors such as cost, quality, and availability are not compromised.

Recyclable – Products or materials that can be collected, separated, and processed to be used as raw materials in the manufacture of new products.

Remanufactured or Refurbished– Products that could have been disposed of as solid waste. These products have completed their life cycle as consumer items, and they are then refurbished for reuse without substantial alteration of their form. Refurbishing includes renovating, repairing, restoring, or generally improving the appearance, performance, quality, functionality, or value of a product (CalRecycle).

Reusable – The use of a product more than once for any purpose.

Approved:



Signature

4-10-12

Date