



SUSTAINABLE PURCHASING VENDOR RESOURCE GUIDE

The City of Tacoma seeks to do business with vendors who value our [communities' commitment to sustainability](#). This document is meant to assist vendors by sharing the knowledge and resources that guide the City's purchasing decisions.

The purpose of this guide is to provide our vendors with information and resources about the City's contracting practices. It is our hope that vendors we do business with will see this as an opportunity to become innovators and leaders in the community through integrating sustainable practices into their daily operations. The Sustainable Purchasing Policy is not intended to punish businesses that have not implemented sustainability practices, but serves as a framework to help them identify ways they can become community and environmental stewards.

POLICY OVERVIEW

The City of Tacoma recognizes its responsibility to minimize negative impacts on human health and the environment while supporting a diverse, equitable, vibrant economy and community. The City acknowledges that the types of products and services the City purchases have inherent social, human health, environmental and economic impacts. City employees will endeavor to, when feasible and practicable, procure products or services in a manner that integrates fiscal responsibility, social equity, and community and environmental stewardship.

City's **Sustainable Procurement Policy** establishes criteria under which the City may procure supplies and services in a manner that embodies the City's dedication to environmental stewardship and the quality of life of its citizens. It is not the intent of this Policy to require a department, buyer, or contractor to take any action that conflict with local, state, or federal requirements, or to procure products that do not perform to department specifications, exclude competition, or are not available at a reasonable price or lead-time. Performance is the ability of the product or service to accomplish or contribute to accomplishment of a job or task.

The Sustainable Procurement Policy is intended to:

- Encourage the purchase and use of products and services that best align with the City's fiscal, environmental, social, community and performance goals;
- Identify those sustainability factors for consideration in procurement decisions;
- Provide implementation guidance;
- Empower employees to be innovative and demonstrate leadership in procurement decisions;
- Seek opportunities for sustainable procurement;
- Communicate the City's commitment to sustainable procurement;
- Reduce the purchasing of products without reducing safety or workplace quality, and;
- Empower vendors to conduct their business on a day-to-day basis in a sustainable manner.

How is the Sustainable Purchasing policy applied?

Sustainability considerations should be integrated into all purchases of supplies and services, where feasible.

Bids and Quotes: For purchases that do not include an evaluation component (Request for Bids, three written quotes), sustainability attributes and considerations are integrated, where feasible, into the specifications.

Proposals: For purchases that have an evaluation component (Requests for Proposals, Requests for Qualifications), City staff are encouraged to allocate 10 percent of the total evaluation points to sustainability.

What do City buyers consider when planning a purchase?

There are two key considerations the City has incorporated into its Sustainable Purchasing Guide for employees:

1. How does the vendor incorporate sustainability into everyday business practices?
2. How does the vendor address sustainability in fulfilling your need for supplies or services?

Prior to making a purchase, City buyers consider the following:

- Are there impacts in the production of the product?
- Are there impacts from using the product?
- Are there impacts from the disposal of the product?
- Are there impacts from the delivery of the service?
- Are there impacts from the materials and supplies being used to provide the service?

Sustainability factors taken into consideration

City employees consider the following environmental, social equity, and fiscal factors when writing specifications for procuring products or services. These factors may include the life cycle impacts of the purchased items.

Environmental factors to be considered include but are not limited to:

- Pollutant releases, especially persistent bioaccumulative toxins (PBTs);
- Toxicity of products used;
- Waste generation;
- Greenhouse gas emissions, including transportation of products and services;
- Recycled content;
- Energy consumption;
- Depletion of natural resources; and
- Potential impact on human health and the environment.

Social equity factors to be considered include but are not limited to:

- [Use of City of Tacoma certified historically underutilized businesses \(HUB\)](#); and
- Ergonomic and human health impacts.

Fiscal factors to be considered include but are not limited to:

- Lowest total life cycle cost;
- The ability to leverage our buying power, including use of existing contracts; and
- Impact on staff time and labor.

SUSTAINABLE VENDOR BUSINESS PRACTICES

Sustainable business practices are practices that are environmentally friendly, socially equitable, and economically feasible. The City of Tacoma seeks to do business with vendors

that share the City's values of community and environmental stewardship. Depending on the industry or line of business, there are certain practices that can reduce negative impacts associated with the way a vendor operates. Consider the key environmental impacts that are specific to your industry or operating your line of business. What sustainability related best practices and measures can you implement to reduce those impacts?

The following are examples of how the City may request sustainability information from you:

Energy conservation measures

The City may ask you to describe your firm's energy plans, or ask for practices that are specific to your industry. For example, does the vendor bill electronically, have a recycling policy, have an energy conservation plan, educate employees on energy conservation and /or use of recognized certification standards, track and cite performance results?

- Other examples could include LED or energy efficient lighting, power management settings on computers, Energy Star electronics, motion sensor lighting, appliances, light fixtures, heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) and general building operations.

Renewable energy use

You may be asked to provide details of any renewable energy you use, or offset programs you are involved in. Renewable energy may include solar, wind, geothermal, biomass, hydroelectric and /or other types.

- For example, purchasing renewable energy, installing solar panels or wind turbines.

Water conservation measures

Water conservation practices can be broad or very specific depending on the industry. Think about your business and where there may be negative impacts as well as conservation opportunities. City specifications may ask you to describe your attempts to decrease those impacts or conserve water and reduce costs. Development of a water conservation management plan and goals can provide a framework. Utilizing checklists and tracking procedures will help you evaluate your progress and savings.

- Examples of water conservation measures include low flow toilets, faucet aerators, rainwater collection, process efficiencies, and low water landscaping plans.

Waste management and waste reduction

The City is interested in how your firm reduces waste in its operations and what your waste management plans look like. You may be asked to provide a copy of your waste management and recycling plans including goals, baseline measures and tracking mechanisms. You may be

asked how your company is educating employees about waste reduction plans and recycling methods.

- Examples include recycling plans, composting, reuse programs, e-waste recycling, packaging and paper reduction, mixed recyclables(metal, paper, and plastic),buying in bulk, as well as employee training plans in these areas.

Alternative fuels and transportation.

Sustainable transportation plans have financial and environmental benefits for you as our vendor and for the community in general. You may be asked what your firm does, or plans to do, in terms of your transportation plans. This may include flexible commuting options and incentives for your employees, as well as green travel and parking options.

- Examples include biodiesel and hybrid electric vehicles, bicycles, rail, bus pass program, and carpooling programs.

Sustainable purchasing

Just as the City is concerned with the things it purchases and who it purchases them from, the City wants its vendors to be just as mindful. You may be asked if your firm has any sustainable purchasing strategies and to provide a copy of the policy.

- Evaluation criteria may include whether the vendor buy supplies with recycled content, utilizes green cleaning products, and avoids toxic chemicals?

SUSTAINABILITY IN THE SERVICES BEING PROVIDED

Our City seeks to ensure that the services being provided to its citizens do not negatively impact human health or environmental quality. As City personnel develop the scope of work, they will be thinking about the materials, supplies, and processes involved in the provision of the service and impacts that could be addressed. Evaluation criteria may include how well the vendor provides details of practices and processes to deliver services in a sustainable manner. This could include considering the facilities that are used for community services, the waste management plan for events or community facilities, the types of vehicles being used to deliver community services, or the type of materials used to present trainings. Considerations you may incorporate in assessing the level of sustainability of your services include:

- How will you incorporate sustainable practices into the services you are providing?

- What are the significant negative environmental impacts in your industry? How will you mitigate these impacts in the delivery of your service?
- Are there any negative impacts to the population(s) you are serving? How will you mitigate these?
- What are the negative impacts from the delivery of service you are providing? How will you mitigate these?

Transportation

For example, fuel efficient vehicles, route optimization, idling restrictions, etc.

- Does your firm use fuel efficient vehicles (percentage of their fleet, phase-in plan)?
- How does your firm maintain its fleet (washing, servicing, and replacement, environmentally preferred fluids such as oil, anti-freeze, etc.)?
- How does your firm address emissions reduction (low emission fuels, diesel engine retrofit devices, EPA standards, idling restrictions, etc.)? These options could include hybrid or alternative fuel vehicles, carpooling, route optimization, video and teleconferencing, no-idling policies, etc. Perhaps you have one hybrid vehicle that could be used for all meetings to City facilities.

Energy conservation

For example, energy management plans, using energy efficient appliances, purchasing energy efficient materials, etc.

When operating facilities, energy efficiency is an easy way to reduce operating costs and use less electricity. This is an easy win-win for you as the provider and for the City.

- Efficient facilities can have power management settings for appliances and electronics, optimized settings for heating and cooling (HVAC), and building management policies for lighting.
- Energy audits can help with developing energy management baselines and benchmarks

Water conservation

For example, water conservation practices, using water conserving products, landscaping plan, etc.

The scope of City requirements could include one or a combination of restroom water, landscaping water, kitchen water, and appliance use, and more depending on the nature of the service.

- Does your business have laundry or kitchen facilities?
- If yes, are there low-flow faucets, showerheads, and toilets?
- Are the landscapes designed and managed in a sustainable manner? For example, are the sprinklers on when it's raining?

Waste Management Reduction

For example, recycling plan, composting program, buying in bulk, etc.

Managing waste can apply to packaging, meeting supplies, training materials, meals and refreshments, limits on giveaways, etc., and can also include recycling and composting plans to help the City reduce the waste generated from this procurement. If there will be significant waste generated, you may want to consider providing waste management and diversion practices and reporting. This can include:

- Electronic processes or solutions that minimize the use of paper, fossil fuels, and other resources/products, email, electronic document sharing, electronic invoicing, etc.
- Reusable tote programs, packaging reduction, buying in bulk, donating excess goods or products, etc.

Janitorial/Green Cleaning

For example, green cleaning plan, recycled content paper products, LEED based cleaning standards, etc.

Chemicals in cleaning products can trigger asthma, cause skin irritation, cause respiratory issues and many other negative health impacts. In addition, many cleaning products can pollute waterways. There are many resources for green cleaning. The USGBC's LEED High Performance Green Cleaning standard is a good start.

- If cleaning is a significant portion of the contracted service(s), City departments are asked to consider including green cleaning specifications in the scope of work and using the evaluation criteria to establish the respondents' experience and proposed plans for green cleaning. This could include prohibiting certain chemicals rather than requiring the use of green cleaning products.

Indoor Air Quality

For example, green cleaning products; prohibiting asthma triggering chemicals; using low VOC paints and solvents, etc.

The City would like to ensure that populations receiving City services are not adversely affected by indoor air quality issues resulting from the provision of services. Asthma and other respiratory issues can be aggravated by many chemicals. The City may prohibit known asthma triggering chemicals or request less toxic alternatives. Consider how you can offer products and practices could be less harmful.

Recycled Content

For example, purchasing products with post-consumer recycled content including paper and plastic products etc. Buying products made from recycled content helps reduce natural resource extraction and supports recycling industries ensuring that there are jobs and recycling services available to our community.

- Does your firm consider sustainability when buying the materials and supplies needed to provide services?
- Are there items that might have a negative impact on the clients or community?
- Does your firm buy recycled content paper and other products?

PRODUCT SPECIFICATIONS FOR SUPPLIES

The City wants to purchase supplies and services that will reduce the impacts on human health and the environment across the entire supply chain, such as resource extraction, production, manufacturing, labor practices, transportation, storage, handling, packaging, redistribution, and end of life (disposal). The City is interested in the way that a product could be improved, use less energy, be reusable instead of a disposable, or be made with less toxic materials.

City buyers will integrate sustainability into the product specifications where feasible.

Product Durability and Reusability

- Reusable components or features (e.g., rechargeable batteries) in place of disposable (single use) items.
- Consider the life of the product. Does your firm have a more durable item that may cost more upfront, but you will save the City money by not replacing it as often?

Resource Efficiency and Conservation

- Energy efficient options, e.g., Energy Star models, power saving models, etc.
- LED lighting.

- Water efficient options, e.g., low flow toilets, faucet aerators, auto sensors, etc.
- Products made from recycled materials, e.g., recycled plastics, paper and metals, etc.

Waste Prevention and Reduction

- Products that do not require hazardous disposal.
- Items that are recyclable in local facilities and/or can be remanufactured.
- Sustainable packaging options, e.g., supplier take back, reduced packaging, and recyclable packaging.

Toxics Reduction

- Low emission products and less toxic alternatives.
- Consider the impacts the goods will have on human and environmental health. Who will be using the products?
- Do the components emit chemicals (off gassing)?
- Consider Indoor air quality standards such as Greenguard.
- Does your firm use or provide low emission products and less toxic alternatives?
- Alternatives to certain ingredients such as BPA (in plastics), chlorine bleach (use hydrogen peroxide instead), and PVC (there are many alternatives).

Environmental Standards

- Are there third party environmental or social certifications (e.g., Green Seal, EPEAT, Energy Star, Water Wise) relevant to the items? If yes, it is preferred that the products being purchased meet or exceed those specifications.
- Be advised, the City will require demonstrable proof such as certification or valid testing results.

Best Value

The City is interested in the total cost of ownership or life cycle costing analysis for the purchase of supplies. Sometimes a product is more expensive up front but over time will save money in operating and maintenance costs. For example, an energy efficient refrigerator may cost more, but it will reduce operating costs, saving the City money long-term.

GREEN BUSINESS RESOURCES

The following resources provide assistance to businesses wanting to incorporate sustainability into their operations. Many of the tools and services are free of charge.

[The Environmental Business Alliance \(EB Alliance\)](#)

The Environmental Business Alliance (EB Alliance) is a partnership between the [Tacoma-Pierce County Chamber](#), [Citizens for a Healthy Bay](#), [Go Local](#), and the [City of Tacoma](#) that helps Pierce County businesses improve their environmental performance and increase their profitability. The Alliance provides businesses with access to resources and information about environmentally sustainable practices.

[The EnviroStars Program](#)

The mission of EnviroStars is to provide assistance and recognition for smaller businesses to reduce hazardous materials and waste through a rating system. They are a consortium of government agencies and partnership organizations which have been licensed to provide EnviroStars certification, a significant accolade for small businesses seeking recognition for their sustainability achievements.

[2011 Sustainable Energy Handbook for Business](#)

The Sustainable Energy Handbook for Business provides essential tools for energy reduction, including non-traditional ideas for energy savings. You have to establish a Sustainable Industries account to access this document, but it is free and gives you access to many great resources.

[Evergreen Fleets of Puget Sound](#)

Evergreen Fleets assists organizations both big and small in realizing lower fleet costs, reducing emissions, improving operating efficiency, and voluntary green certification for on-road vehicles. Public and private organizations and vehicle fleets in the Puget Sound Area are invited to join.

[EDF + Business Fleet Vehicles](#)

The EDF + Business guide presents a proven framework for greening your fleet. The Environmental Defense Fund is striving to improve efficiency and cut pollution in vehicle fleets by working with corporate fleets to measure and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The strategies presented here were created by a partnership between the Environmental Defense Fund, a leading national nonprofit organization, and PHH Arval, one of the world's largest fleet management services providers.

[Checklist for Greening Your Business](#)

Created by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, you can use this checklist to identify which practices are best for your business, and strive for as many as possible. You will conserve water and energy, and reduce your waste streams and carbon emissions. The

result can be substantial cost savings, and your customers will be happy to hear of your environmental commitments.

[Green Business Guide](#)

This guide is created by the U.S. Small Business Administration to encourage green business practices. These days, there's a new focus on environmental responsibility, and as a small business owner, you can make a difference too. As a "green" business, you'll not only help protect our ecosystem, but your sales could benefit among consumers who value your environmental efforts.

[Smart Steps to Sustainability: A Guide to Greening Your Small Business](#)

Produced by The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Smart Steps to Sustainability provides small business owners and managers with practical advice and tools to implement sustainable and environmentally-preferable business practices that go beyond compliance. The guide offers a framework to strategically green your business and presents realistic opportunities to improve environmental performance.

RESPONSIBLE PURCHASING RESOURCES

Responsible Purchasing Network (RPN) is an international network of buyers dedicated to socially responsible and environmentally sustainable purchasing. Below is a list of eco-label resources provided by RPN to institutional purchasers who are interested in cutting edge procurement tools and resources designed to save money, conserve resources, reduce waste, and improve efficiency. RPN is a program that is advised by a voluntary committee of procurement stakeholders from government, industry, educational institutions, standards setting organizations, and related organizations.



Biodegradable Products Institute is an organization that certifies that plastic products with "biodegradable" claims will safely break down in a typical commercial composting facility. www.bpiworld.org



Chlorine-free Products Association is a nonprofit organization that certifies chlorine-free products such as copy paper, envelopes and tissue products. www.chlorinefreeproducts.org



Green Seal is a nonprofit organization that sets standards for products (such as janitorial cleaners, floor strippers, and paints) and certifies products that meet those standards. www.greenseal.org



US Department of Agriculture allows use of its organic label for products meeting federal standards that address pesticide and fertilizer use and other approved methods used to grow, harvest and process food and other agricultural products.

www.ams.usda.gov/AMSv1.0/



EPEAT Electronic Products Environmental Assessment Tool (EPEAT) is an independent program that certifies “green” electronic equipment such as computers, monitors and laptops. www.epeat.net



Fair Trade USA is a label issued to companies that import products such as coffee, tea, chocolate, and rice, which have been manufactured and sold under fair and safe working conditions. For a list of certified products: www.transfairusa.org

FOR ASSISTANCE AND INFORMATION

Purchasing: <http://www.cityoftacoma.org/Page.aspx?nid=139>

City of Tacoma: <http://www.cityoftacoma.org/>