

Green Purchasing Program

The City of Gainesville is committed to promoting environmental stewardship and reducing greenhouse gas emissions when buying goods, materials, services and capital improvements. The Green Purchasing Program supports several City policies and goals, and provides useful guidelines to help City departments be a model for local citizens, businesses and other governmental agencies.

This policy does not require the purchase of products that do not perform adequately or are not available at a reasonable price.

Reduce waste at point of purchase

Priority should be given to purchasing products made from recycled material. Some examples:

- Calendars, file folders, clip boards, scissors, notepads, pens, hanging folders, bins, baskets, desk accessories, glue sticks and many other office supplies using recycled materials are available for purchase.
- Office paper, letterhead stationery, envelopes and business cards from recycled paper; all paper purchases should be made of 30% post-consumer content, with a goal of using 100% post-consumer content, whenever possible.
- Recycled, remanufactured or re-filled toner cartridges. Make sure the product you purchase meets or exceeds OEM (Original Equipment Manufacturer) standards.
- Buy eco-friendly, biodegradable, and compostable cups, napkins, straws, plates, stir sticks, cutlery and clamshell to-go boxes. These are typically made from plant-based plastics or wood.
- Furniture made with a percentage of post-consumer or post-industrial material and/or Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) 50% certified wood. Purchase LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) green furniture.

Specify eco-friendly product packaging

- Ask vendors to minimize use of packing materials.
- Request biodegradable or compostable packing materials (bioplastics or paper-based fillers) – avoid use of Styrofoam or other non-biodegradable (petrochemical based) packing peanuts, etc.
- When ordering large items, request that they are shipped blanket wrapped or using reduced biodegradable or compostable packing material.
- When shopping request paper bags or use reusable bags – avoid plastic bags.

Purchase goods containing few toxic elements

By procuring goods with fewer or no toxic chemicals, the City can reduce hazardous waste disposal, lower future liability concerns and minimize the risk of occupational exposure and spills. Purchase low-toxicity products such as:

- low mercury light bulbs/lamps
- printing ink low in Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs)
- look for products with the EPA authorized “Safer Choice” logo which indicates that the products meet EPA standards for safety for humans and the environment

Purchase eco- and human-friendly cleaning supplies

- made with renewable resources, such as biobased solvents from citrus, seed, vegetable and pine oils. (Avoid cleaning products that contain chrome, phosphate, nitrogen, fragrance or chlorine, when possible.)
- that are sold in spray pumps bottles rather than aerosols
- available in concentrated formulas, with appropriate handling safeguards and use refillable bottles for diluting the formula for use

Purchase durable and reusable goods

Using life-cycle cost analysis, rather than automatically choosing goods with the lowest purchase price can help determine the best long-term value. Factor in a product's estimated life span as well as its energy, maintenance, consumable supplies and disposal costs.

- Consider durability and reparability of products prior to purchase
- Save money and minimize waste by eliminating single-use items, such as non-rechargeable batteries, in favor of rechargeable batteries. Use rechargeable ink and toner cartridges.
- To reduce disposal costs and waste, choose items that can be remanufactured, recycled, or composted.

Reduce Paper Use

- Purchase office equipment that:
 - Allows for printing on both sides of paper automatically. Allows for the sending and storage of information electronically.

Examples of environmentally preferred products (EPP) include:

- Recycled paper and paper products that are processed without Elemental Chlorine. **Chlorine Dioxide is acceptable.*
- Remanufactured laser printer toner cartridges.
- Energy Star Rated computers and appliances.
- Rechargeable batteries.
- Re-refined lubrication, hydraulic oils, and antifreeze.
- Recycled plastic outdoor-wood substitutes including plastic lumber, benches, fencing, signs and posts.
- Recycled content construction, building and maintenance products, including plastic lumber, carpet, tiles and insulation.
- Re-crushed cement concrete aggregate and asphalt.
- Cement and asphalt concrete containing glass cullet, recycled fiber, plastic, tire rubber, or fly ash.
- Compost, mulch and other organics including recycled bio solid products.
- Re-manufactured and/or low or VOC-free paint.
- Cleaning products with lowered toxicity.
- Energy saving products.
- Waste-reducing products.
- Water-saving products.

“Green” Definitions:

- **Biodegradable** – Items that have the ability to break down safely and relatively quickly, (one year or less) by biological means, into the raw materials of nature and disappear into the environment. To be truly biodegradable, a substance or material should break down into carbon dioxide (a nutrient for plants), water and naturally occurring minerals that do not cause harm to the ecosystem (salt or baking soda, for example, are already in their natural mineral state and do not need to biodegrade). Plastics made from petrochemicals are NOT biodegradable.
- **Bioplastics** – Plastics made from starch, cellulose, wood and sugar used as a substitute for fossil resources more typically used in the production of plastics.
- **Compostable** - A product that is capable of disintegrating into natural elements in a compost environment, leaving no toxicity in the soil. This typically must occur in about 90 days. Fruits, vegetables, dead leaves, branches, grass clippings and most food scraps are compostable if they contain only food product.
- **Eco-friendly** – (Environmentally Friendly) – Not harmful to the environment; practices that conserve water and energy and prevent contributions to air, water and land pollution
- **Environmentally Preferable Purchasing (EPP)** – the purchase of a product that has a lesser or reduced negative effect or increased positive effect on human health and the environment, when compared with competing products that serve the same purpose. Incorporating EPP in the procurement process considers raw materials acquisition, production, fabrication, manufacturing, packaging, distribution, reuse, operation, maintenance, and disposal of the product. This term includes sourcing recyclable products, recycled products, and reusable products.
- **LEED** – Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design is a green building certification program which is administered by the U.S. green building Council – committed to building sustainable buildings.
- **Life Cycle Cost Analysis/Total Cost of Ownership (TCO)** – A method for assessing the total cost of ownership that takes into account all costs associated with a purchase; including the cost of acquisition, maintenance, operation, supply and disposal of the product.
- **Petrochemicals** – Petroleum based products and packaging. Items made of petrochemicals are not compostable or biodegradable.
- **Pre-Consumer** – A product made from pre-consumer recycled content – manufacturer waste like scraps, rejects and trimmings.
- **Post-Consumer** – A product made from waste that has been used by a consumer, disposed of and diverted from landfills – like aluminum cans and newspapers
- **Post-Industrial (aka Pre-Consumer)** – Materials diverted from the solid waste stream during the manufacturing process.
- **Recycled** – materials that have been recovered or otherwise diverted from the waste stream, either during the manufacturing process (pre-consumer) or after consumer use (post-consumer). Ex. recycled raw material, recondition and re-manufactured components.
- **Recyclable** – materials (such as plastics in bottles, glass in jars, and non-contaminated paper) that can be collected, separated or otherwise recovered from the waste stream through an established recycling program for reuse or use in manufacturing or assembling another item.
- **VOCs – Volatile Organic Compounds** - VOCs are industrial solvents often found in petroleum fuels, paints, paint thinners, and dry cleaning agents. The most common VOCs are emitted by consumer products such as cleaning solvents, paints, and printers

in an indoor environment. Many building materials such as paints, adhesives, wall boards, and ceiling tiles, new furnishings, wall coverings, and office equipment such as photocopy machines can also push VOC particles into the air.

For More Information

Energy Star	https://www.energystar.gov/
Environmental Protection Agency	https://www.epa.gov/recycle/recycling-basics
EPA Safer Choice Program	https://www.epa.gov/saferchoice
Forestry Stewardship Council:	https://us.fsc.org/en-us
LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design)	https://www.usgbc.org/help/what-leed
NASPO Green Purchasing Guide	http://www.naspo.org/green/index.html#sectionthree
U.S. Green Building Council/Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED)	https://new.usgbc.org/leed