

# CITY OF \_\_\_\_\_ SUSTAINABLE PURCHASING POLICY TEMPLATE

*Drafted by Responsible Purchasing Network for the Urban Sustainability Directors Network  
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## 1. Purpose

In accordance with the City of \_\_\_\_\_'s [Sustainability Policy/Plan<sup>1</sup>], the City recognizes its responsibility to minimize negative impacts on human health and the environment while supporting a diverse, equitable, and vibrant community and economy. The City also understands that the types of products and services it buys have inherent social, human health, environmental and economic impacts, and that it should make procurement decisions that embody the City's commitment to sustainability.

This Sustainable Purchasing Policy is intended to:

- Communicate the City's commitment to sustainable purchasing to its employees, vendors, and community;
- Complement and support implementation of the City's sustainability goals and policies;
- Provide implementation guidance; and
- Empower employees to be innovative and demonstrate leadership by considering sustainability benefits when making purchasing decisions.

## 2. Policy

### **2.1 General Policy Statement**

All City employees will purchase products or services in a manner that protects human health and the environment, is fiscally responsible and, and promotes social equity, disadvantaged business opportunities and other economic benefits to the community. This policy applies to all City departments and employees, vendors, contractors and grantees for all products and services provided to the City.

### **2.2 Sustainability Benefits**

City employees will encourage sustainability benefits to the maximum extent feasible when writing specifications, evaluating bids, and making other purchasing decisions.

A. *Environmental and health benefits* to be encouraged include, but are not limited to:

- Minimizing pollutant releases to air and water, particularly indoor air emissions;
- Avoiding products that contain toxic chemicals, especially persistent, bioaccumulative, and toxic (PBT) chemicals;
- Preventing acute and chronic human health risks, including cancer, asthma, reproductive toxicity, obesity, ergonomic effects, etc.;
- Reducing waste generation by choosing products that are reusable, recyclable, compostable, or made with recycled content;
- Lowering greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions associated with a product's manufacture, transportation and use;

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<sup>1</sup> If your City does not have a Sustainability Policy or Plan that you can reference in this section, you can skip the first part of the sentence and simply state that your jurisdiction recognizes its responsibility...

- Saving energy through the purchase of energy-efficient products and increasing use of renewable energy such as solar or wind;
- Conserving natural resources including water, petroleum, rare earth minerals, etc.
- Protecting biodiversity by avoiding products that contribute to deforestation, ocean pollution and other environmental destruction; and
- Promoting transparency, including disclosure of environmental, health, economic and social risks through the use of Environmental Product Declarations (EPDs), Health Product Declarations (HPDs), vendor sustainability ratings, etc.

B. *Social equity benefits* to be encouraged include, but are not limited to:

- Use of local businesses (in or within \_\_\_\_\_ miles of the City or State);
- Use of disadvantaged businesses (e.g., certified minority- and woman-owned, disabled, veteran-owned businesses, etc.);
- Use of certified B Corps, worker-owned cooperatives and non-profit organizations;
- Use of certified “green” businesses; and
- Use of products that are certified “fair trade”, sweatshop-free, or made without child labor, etc.

C. *Fiscal benefits* to be encouraged include, but are not limited to:

- Reducing consumption by choosing reusable products; leasing or renting, rather than buying; etc.;
- Ensuring performance and quality;
- Reducing impacts on staff time and lowering maintenance costs;
- Leveraging buying power by aggregating demand, cooperative purchasing, etc.;
- Promoting “Best Value” based on a life-cycle cost or total cost of ownership assessment; and
- Reducing financial risks.

While not all factors will be incorporated into every purchase, it is the intent of this policy that City employees will make a good faith effort to promote sustainability factors to the maximum extent feasible. At the discretion of the City, formal solicitations may offer a discount or additional points to bidders that offer sustainable goods and services or that deliver goods or services using sustainable practices.

Nothing in this policy shall be construed as requiring a City employee or contractor to procure goods or services that do not perform adequately for their intended use, that exclude adequate competition, or that are not available at a reasonable price in a reasonable period of time.

### ***2.3 Use of Social and Environmental Product or Service Labels***

City employees are encouraged to use independent, third-party social and/or environmental product or service labels (sustainability labels) when setting standards, writing specifications for, or procuring products or services as long as such labels:

- Were developed and awarded by an impartial third-party;
- Were developed in a public, transparent, and broad stakeholder process; and
- Represent specific and meaningful leadership criteria for that product or service category.

In addition, whenever possible, sustainability labels used in product or service specifications should be based on a standard that addresses multiple attributes and life-cycle considerations with claims verified by an independent entity. Examples of credible sustainability labels include, but are not limited to, ENERGY STAR, Green Seal, UL EcoLogo, Cradle to Cradle, Safer Choice, Forest Stewardship Council, and the Electronic Products Environmental Assessment Tool (EPEAT).

### **3. Implementation and Responsibilities**

The City will provide sufficient staffing, funding and material resources necessary to ensure that its Sustainable Purchasing Program goals and priorities are met and results are reported. The City will support employee engagement and training, professional services, product and service pilot tests, and the development and utilizations of standards, checklists, guidance on best practices, educational materials, and tracking tools.

#### ***3.1 Establishment of a Sustainable Purchasing Committee***

The City will establish and maintain a Sustainable Purchasing Committee (SPC) that will be co-chaired by the City's Procurement and Sustainability departments and include representatives designated by the Directors of the following City Departments: [LIST: e.g., Health, Facilities, Fleet, etc.]. The purpose of the SPC is to:

- Foster inter-departmental collaboration and information sharing to advance the City's sustainable purchasing program;
- Identify citywide sustainable purchasing priorities and upcoming contracting opportunities;
- Create an annual citywide Sustainable Purchasing Action Plan;
- Conduct and share the results of pilot tests and market assessments of sustainable products and services;
- Create and approve outreach and training materials, screening and tracking tools, and other resources that support the City's sustainable purchasing program;
- Develop and approve product-specific sustainable purchasing standards;
- Assist in identifying products and services on City contracts that meet its sustainable purchasing standards;
- Create an annual or biennial Citywide Sustainable Purchasing Progress Report based on reports submitted to the SPC by individual City departments; and
- Provide any other review, interpretation, and updates of this policy or related administrative guidance, as necessary.

#### ***3.2 Creation of a Citywide Sustainable Purchasing Program***

The Chief Procurement Officer shall be responsible for maintaining a Sustainable Purchasing Program (SPP) with dedicated staff and resources, including a City's Sustainable Purchasing Coordinator. The SPP Coordinator shall be responsible for:

- Co-convening the Sustainable Purchasing Committee;
- Helping each City department's Sustainable Purchasing Representative to implement the policy;
- Taking the lead on creating the City's Sustainable Purchasing website, which will include, at a minimum, the City's Sustainable Purchasing Standards, a *Sustainable Purchasing Best Practices Manual*, links to applicable policies, checklists, success

stories, annual progress reports, and other resources recommended by the Sustainable Purchasing Committee;

- Updating purchasing documents, templates, and internal procedures so they reference this policy and highlight best practices for specifying sustainable products and services that meet the intent of this policy;
- Developing and integrating sustainable purchasing boilerplate language into bid solicitation document templates;
- Ensuring that all generic solicitation language, purchasing policies, regulations, and procedures do not conflict with the goals of this sustainable purchasing procedure; and
- Developing and implementing a tracking and reporting mechanism.

The Chief Sustainability Officer with support from the SPP Coordinator shall co-convene the Sustainable Purchasing Committee and serve as an internal consulting resource to the SPC. In this capacity, it shall be responsible for:

- Assisting the SPC in creating Sustainable Purchasing Standards and a *Sustainable Purchasing Best Practices Manual*; and
- Helping City departments conduct pilot tests, evaluate applicable sustainability certifications and standards, and assess market availability and costs of sustainable goods and services.

### ***3.3 Undertaking Sustainable Purchasing Action Planning***

Each City department shall provide sufficient resources to ensure that identifies and pursues sustainable purchasing strategies that meet the City's sustainable purchasing goals and priorities.

The Chief Procurement Officer and each Department Director shall be responsible for:

- Conducting a sustainability spend analysis to identify high-spend and high-impact categories of products and services to which sustainable purchasing could be applied;
- Regularly identifying upcoming contracts to review in sufficient time to address; and
- Developing an annual Sustainable Purchasing Action Plan for their department that lists implementation strategies the City will pursue to meet its sustainable purchasing goals and priorities.

The Chief Sustainability Officer shall be responsible for:

- Notifying the SPC of any new sustainability policies and priorities to ensure that the City's sustainable purchasing activities are in alignment;
- Helping the SPC to develop a citywide Sustainable Purchasing Action Plan; and
- Assisting City departments with their sustainable purchasing action planning process.

### ***3.4 Developing Sustainable Purchasing Standards, Checklists, and a Best Practices Manual***

The City will develop and maintain minimum standards for products and services that minimize human health and environmental impacts and promote its other sustainability goals. Each sustainable purchasing standard will list applicable requirements from City policies and acceptable sustainable leadership product and service certifications and standards. In addition, the City will develop Sustainable Purchasing Checklists to guide purchasers through the steps needed to add sustainability factors into RFPs and other contract proposals. All sustainable purchasing standards and checklists will be incorporated into a *Sustainable Purchasing Best Practices Manual* as well as the City's procurement manual and training materials.

The Chief Procurement Officer with support from the SPP Coordinator shall be responsible for:

- Providing resources to coordinate the development of Sustainable Purchasing Standards, checklists, and a *Sustainable Purchasing Best Practices Manual* in collaboration with the Sustainable Purchasing Committee;
- Ensuring that its procurement manuals and internal procedures reference this policy and the City's Sustainable Purchasing Standards and best practices manual; and
- Posting Sustainable Purchasing Standards, checklists, and the *Sustainable Purchasing Best Practices Manual* on the City's Sustainable Purchasing website.

The Chief Sustainability Officer shall be responsible for:

- Notifying the SPC of new sustainability policies and priorities to ensure that the City's sustainable purchasing standards are in alignment.

City Department Directors shall be responsible for:

- Participating in developing citywide sustainable purchasing standards for approval by the City's Sustainable Purchasing Committee;
- Creating sustainable purchasing standards for products that are uniquely purchased by their Department; and
- Undertaking pilot testing for sustainable products and services, as needed.

### ***3.5 Creating Contracts for Sustainable Products and Services***

All City employees shall consult the *Sustainable Purchasing Best Practices Manual* and utilize the City's sustainable purchasing standards to develop bid specifications and contract proposals or make other purchasing decisions. In addition, City employees shall complete the appropriate Sustainable Purchasing Checklist to verify that they considered important sustainability attributes when making their purchasing decision. For competitive procurements, the Procurement Department will ensure that the *Sustainable Purchasing Checklist* has been completed before issuing a procurement tracking number. Upon request, exemptions may be granted by the Chief Procurement Officer when product or service availability, performance or cost (using a life-cycle cost assessment) hinder compliance with the standards.

The Chief Procurement Officer with support from the SPP Coordinator shall be responsible for:

- Pursuing sustainable purchasing opportunities and initiatives identified the City's annual Sustainable Purchasing Action Plan;
- Developing and integrating sustainable purchasing boilerplate language into the City's bid solicitation document templates;
- Ensuring that the Procurement Department's buyers utilize the City's product-specific sustainable purchasing standards and checklists to develop their specifications, contract proposals, bid sheets, and bid evaluation criteria to the maximum extent possible; and
- Ensuring that City-approved vendors properly identify all products and services in their offering that meet the City's sustainable purchasing standards, including clear labeling in their catalogs and price lists and in the City's online ordering system.

City Department Directors shall be responsible for:

- Including sustainable purchasing goals, priorities and actions in departmental sustainability plans;

- Ensuring internal Department policies and procedures reference this policy and the City's Sustainable Purchasing Standards and Best Practices; and
- Ensuring that specifications and other bid solicitation documents written by their Department comply with this policy and the City's Sustainable Purchasing Standards and Best Practices to the maximum extent feasible.

### ***3.6 Conducting Outreach and Training***

Each City department shall provide sufficient resources to ensure that its employees making purchasing decisions receive training about the City's sustainable purchasing policies, procedures, priorities and resources.

The Chief Procurement Officer with support from the SPP Coordinator shall be responsible for:

- Developing training materials for its buyers to highlight the City's sustainable purchasing policies, procedures, standards, tools, etc.;
- Training all Procurement Department buyers on sustainable purchasing best practices that meet the intent of this policy;
- Developing buyer competency in communicating to other City Department about this policy and opportunities for incorporating Sustainable Purchasing Standards and best practices into Departmental bid solicitations and contracts;
- Including sustainable purchasing in employee job descriptions and performance evaluations;
- Ensuring that sustainable purchasing guidance is provided in all new employee manuals and at annual OCA training events; and
- Communicating to contractors and the public about this policy and related procedures.

City Department Directors shall be responsible for:

- Building awareness of this policy and the City's sustainable purchasing standards and procedures by including information in employee training manuals and newsletters, arranging regular employee trainings, posting information on their department's website;
- Designating at least one employee to develop competency and communicate to other employees in their department the City's sustainable purchasing policy, standards, and procedures; and
- Including sustainable purchasing in employee job descriptions and performance evaluations.

The Chief Sustainability Officer shall be responsible for:

- Assisting with the development of sustainable purchasing training materials; and
- Helping City departments to conduct employee training events.

### ***3.7 Collecting Data and Reporting Results***

Each City department shall cooperate in collecting data for the purposes of tracking and reporting results, and evaluating the sustainable purchasing program.

The Chief Procurement Officer with support from the SPP Coordinator shall be responsible for:

- Collecting and compiling information from the City's e-procurement system and vendors needed to track the City's sustainable purchasing performance;
- Compiling information submitted by city departments in their sustainable purchasing progress reports;
- Producing an annual summary of the Procurement Department's sustainable purchasing actions, results and benefits;
- Issuing an annual or biennial progress report on sustainable purchasing activities and the effectiveness of this policy. This may be a stand-alone report or integrated into a broader citywide sustainability report; and
- Documenting success stories to include in the City's annual sustainable purchasing progress report and post on the City's sustainable purchasing website.

The Chief Sustainability Officer shall be responsible for:

- Helping the CPO and Sustainable Purchasing Program Manager collect and analyze purchasing data for the purpose of tracking and reporting on the City's sustainable purchasing activities and results; and
- Producing an annual summary of the Sustainability Department's sustainable purchasing activities and results.

City Department Directors shall be responsible for:

- Gathering information for the purposes of tracking, reporting, and evaluating their department's sustainable procurement activities and results; and
- Reporting the amount of sustainable products and services that were purchased by their department to the Procurement Department by March 31 of each year.

## ***4. Supporting Other Related Local, State and Federal Policies***

It is the intent of this policy to support and complement all relevant City laws, regulations, resolutions and plans as well as applicable state and federal laws and regulations. [See examples of the types of policies that can be referenced in a City's sustainable purchasing policy.]

- City Code and Related Regulations
  - City Environmental Code
  - City Procurement Code
- City Ordinances
  - Environmentally Preferable Purchasing Policy
  - ENERGY STAR Purchasing Policy
  - Bottled Water Policy
  - Buy Recycled Policy
  - Green Building Policy
  - Green Cleaning Policy
  - Green Chemistry/Precautionary Purchasing Policy
  - Green Fleet Policy
  - Healthy and Sustainable Food Policy

- Local Business Initiative
- Sustainable Paper Use and Reduction Policy
- Sustainable Lighting Policy
- Sweatshop Free Procurement Policy and Code of Conduct
- Zero Waste Policy
- Sustainability Plans
  - Climate Action Plan
  - Sustainable City Principles and Plan
  - Toxics Reduction Strategy
- State/Federal Laws
  - Clean Air and Clean Water Act
  - Equal Employment Opportunity Law
  - Minimum Wage Law

## **APPENDIX A: DEFINITIONS**

- “Biodiversity” is the total diversity of all organisms and ecosystems at various spatial scales (genes, populations, species, ecosystems, and biomes). Biodiversity is often used as a measure of the health of biological systems.
- “Environmentally Preferable” products or services have a lesser or reduced effect on human health and the environment when compared with competing products or services that serve the same purpose. This comparison may consider raw materials acquisition, manufacturing, packaging, distribution, reuse, operation, maintenance, or disposal of the product or service.
- “Life Cycle Assessment or Life Cycle Analysis (LCA)” is the comprehensive examination of a product’s environmental and economic effects throughout its lifetime including new material extraction, transportation, manufacturing, use, and disposal.
- “Life Cycle Cost Assessment (LCCA)” is the comprehensive accounting of the total cost of ownership, including initial costs, energy and operational costs, longevity and replacement costs, and end of life management costs.
- “Persistent, Bioaccumulative, and Toxic (PBT) Chemicals” are toxic, persist in the environment, and bioaccumulate in food chains.
- “Precautionary Principle” is a framework that guides decision makers to take protective measures when an activity raises threats of harm to human health or the environment, even if some cause and effect relationships are not fully established scientifically.
- “Sustainability” is a concept that promotes a future that meets today's needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs.
- “Sustainable Procurement” is the process of purchasing products and services in ways that promote fiscal responsibility, social equity, and community and environmental stewardship.