10 Steps to Starting a Sustainable Purchasing Program

1. **Assemble a Sustainable Purchasing Team**
   - Identify key players and other resources
   - Assign responsibilities
   - Get input early from end-users and other stakeholders
   - Get support from the top

2. **Establish a process for working together**
   - Create goals, a timeline and a meeting schedule

3. **Define the scope of the sustainable procurement initiative(s)**
   - Target environmental problems to solve under the program
   - Review existing policy drivers and practices
   - Adopt or revise your Sustainable Procurement Policy, if needed

4. **Prioritize contracts to change**
   - Look for products with greatest impact
   - Identify low-hanging fruit (including products for which there are existing specifications, certifications or cooperative purchasing opportunities)
   - Determine contract re-bid schedule

5. **Research environmentally preferable alternatives**
   - Evaluate availability, price, environmental attributes and performance of potential substitutes
   - Conduct pilot tests with end-users, if desirable or necessary
   - Develop a strategy for incorporating environmental considerations into your bid solicitation process

6. **Revise bid specifications**
   - Identify potential vendors of products that meet your specifications and solicit their feedback
   - Develop bid specifications, bid forms, and bid evaluation criteria
   - Develop contract language for information disclosure, product take-back, packaging requirements, etc.

7. **Evaluate bids**
   - Assess both mandatory requirements and desirable attributes
   - Issue new contracts

8. **Advertise the availability of sustainable products on new contracts**
   - Educate using web sites, “list serves”, purchasing bulletins, EPP guides
   - Publicize through Cooperative Purchasing Programs
   - Inform end-users about existing environmental policies and goals
   - Encourage vendors to educate and market environmental goods and services

9. **Get feedback from end-users**
   - Address problems as soon as they arise

10. **Track and publicize successes**
    - Quantify economic and environmental benefits
    - Celebrate and reward participants!
    - Identify obstacles and additional work to be done