



# Sustainable Procurement Program

## Policy

In Accordance with the City of Austin's commitment to achieve zero waste and carbon neutrality, the City of Austin 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 recognizes that the types of products and services the City buys have inherent social, human health, environmental and economic impacts, and that the City should make procurement decisions that embody the City's commitment to sustainability.

City employees will procure materials, products and services in a manner that integrates fiscal responsibility, social equity and environmental and constituent health impacts. Each City Department shall comply with this policy and encourage their staff to find innovative ways to build upon the sustainable practices herein.

The Sustainable Procurement Policy is intended to:

- Identify sustainability factors that can be incorporated into procurement decisions;
- Empower employees to be innovative and demonstrate leadership by incorporating sustainability factors into procurement decisions;
- Encourage vendors to provide innovative and original products and services that value sustainability;
- Compliment Citywide and Department-specific sustainability goals and related policies; and
- Communicate the City's commitment to sustainable procurement.

This policy does not address the sustainable procurement aspects of construction and construction-related professional services.

Questions about this policy should be referred to Sustainable Procurement Program Owner and Office of Sustainability.

## Governing Policy

[Carbon Neutrality Plan, Resolution No. 20070215-023](#)

[Eliminate Purchasing of Plastic Bottles, Resolution No. 20080522-024](#)

[Air Quality Improvement Through Contracting and Business Support Operations, No. 040115-031](#)

[Sustainability Standards in Municipal Projects, Resolution No. 20071129-045](#)



[Administrative Bulletin: Sustainable Printer and Paper Policy](#)

[Administrative Bulletin 84-07: Purchasing and Contracting Authority](#)

## Related Docs

- Purchasing Office Policies & Procedures Manual – Reporting 2 Sustainability Code Explanations

## Procedure

### Reporting 2 Requirements

Procurement Specialists shall check the Sustainability/Reporting 2 flag in Advantage Financial and input the appropriate sustainability code in the header section during contract creation. Contract Managers shall be mindful of the specific sustainability standards associated with their contracts. These actions will allow Purchasing Staff, Contract managers, and other departments to run reports to track the following

- Number of Contracts with Sustainable Attributes
- Types and Frequency of Sustainable Attributes in City Contracts

For more information, refer to the Reporting 2 section of the Purchasing Office Policies & Procedures Manual

### Use of Best Practices

Procurement Staff should utilize best practices to incorporate sustainability requirements into the products and services that they purchase. As it applies to this policy, best practices in sustainable procurement are those that utilize leading sustainability standards in a way that is efficient, effective and replicable.

Departmental staff should incorporate sustainability factors when writing specifications for, or procuring, materials, products, or services. While not all factors will be incorporated into every purchase, employees should make a good faith effort to incorporate and balance these factors as much as possible.

(Move down 1 Paragraph, add note on relationship between departmental buys and PS)  
City employees should be aware that sustainable best practices can change often, and should familiarize themselves with the most current sustainability standards before incorporating them into their procurement. In general, Procurement Specialists will be the best informed of sustainability standards relevant to their commodity category, and should seek out opportunities to publicize and promote these standards to interested parties. If any employee needs guidance on the most current sustainability standards for



their commodity or service, they should contact the Sustainable Procurement Program Owner and the Office of Sustainability.

Environmental factors related to the lifecycle of products or services:

- Pollutant releases
- Toxicity, especially the use of persistent, bio-accumulative and toxic (PBT) chemicals
- Waste generation
- Greenhouse gas emission
- Energy consumption
- Depletion of natural resources
- Impacts on biodiversity

Social equity factors:

- Human health impacts
- Use of local businesses
- Payment of Living Wages
- Access to Paid Time Off
- Use of City of Austin M/WBE certified vendors
- The elimination of sweatshop produced products

Fiscal factors:

- Use of reduction and buying only what is needed
- Product performance and quality
- Life-cycle cost assessment
- Warranties as a means of extending useful life
- Sale / trade of excess to needs City material, such as expired periodicals, industrial scrap, computers, end-of-life vehicles, fire apparatus and bunker gear
- Leveraging buying power
- Impact on staff time and labor
- Long-term market changes

### **Sustainability Labels**

City employees are encouraged to incorporate independent, third-party social and environmental product or service labels when writing specifications for, or procuring materials, products, or services. Such labels should be developed and awarded by an impartial third-party, in a public and transparent process, and should represent specific and meaningful leadership criteria for that product or service category. Whenever possible, label used in product or service specifications should represent standards that consider multiple attributes and life-cycle considerations, with claims verified by an independent third-party. Refer to the below document for a list of sustainability labels



that the City of Austin considers in line with its own sustainability goals, including Energy Star, WaterSense, Green Seal and GreenGuard.

- [Sustainability Labels Associated with Various Product Categories](#)

### **Toxicity**

Procurement staff should anticipate and take protective measures when evaluating products and services that threaten to harm human health or the environment due to their quality, relative degree, or specific degree of being toxic or poisonous. These protective measures should be taken even when a specific cause and effect relationship has not been scientifically established.

This framework is known as the Precautionary Principle.

### **Sustainability Standards, Specifications and Samples**

The below documents list sustainability standards and specifications that the City of Austin considers relevant to specific commodity categories or groups.

- [Furniture](#)
- [Janitorial Supplies](#)
- [Miscellaneous](#)

### **Language to Use in Your Specification or Evaluation Factor Documents**

The language below can be added as evaluation factors in the “Section 0600” or as part of your specification documents as preferred attributes.

The City’s sustainable purchasing objectives include purchasing products and services that:

- Conserve natural resources including water, energy, and raw materials throughout the product life cycle;
- Minimize environmental impacts such as water and air pollution during usage;
- Eliminate or reduce toxins that create hazards to workers, citizens, wildlife, and the environment;
- Support up-cycling and recycling efforts as well as utilize products with high recycled content;
- Encourage vendors to reduce environmental impacts in their production and distribution systems;
- Support worker health, safety, and fair wages;
- Consider total cost of ownership during the products useful life, including operation, suppliers, maintenance, and disposal cost.

### **Additional Resources**

The below documents were created by the City of Austin to serve as reference materials and training tools for procurement staff members.



- [Departmental Sustainability Scope and Specific Guidelines](#) – A list of questions to ask while creating your specification or scope of work to promote and encourage sustainability.
- [2016 Sustainable Purchasing Overview](#) – Training material detailing product lifecycle information, high priority products and real examples from Procurement Staff.
- [2015 Sustainable Purchasing Overview](#) – Training material detailing sustainable products and certifications, and employee success stories.
- [2014 Sustainable Purchasing Overview](#) – Training material detailing the sustainable purchasing policy, and what City employees should consider when purchasing.
- [Austin Food Report](#) – Detailed review of Austin’s complex and dynamic food system.
- [2017 AIMS Refresher Training - Sustainable Purchasing \[Video\]](#)
- Sustainability in Purchasing Training – A six-part series created in cooperation with the City of Austin Sustainability Office to train procurement staff on specific sustainability topics. Each unit features a video presentation.
  - [Unit 1](#) – “Going All-In on Sustainability” and Definitions.
  - [Unit 2](#) – Product life cycle.
  - [Unit 3](#) – Product Creation.
  - [Unit 4](#) – Product Usage.
  - [Unit 5](#) – End of Life.
  - [Unit 6](#) – Labor Practices.

## Outside Resources

The below links connect to third party websites that contain sustainable procurement resources and information on sustainability standards. City employees are encouraged to review these and other third-party resources when incorporating sustainability standards into a procurement.

- [Washington, DC Office of Contracting & Procurement](#) – Sustainable specifications for various product and service categories.
- [Alternative Fuels & Advanced Vehicles Data Center](#) – US Department of Energy’s clearinghouse of data, tools and information related to advanced transportation technologies.
- [Conservatree](#) – Nonprofit organization dedicated to developing a market for ecologically sound papers.
- [GREENGUARD and ECOLOGO Product Search](#) – This free resource connects you to third-party certified products that have achieved certification/validation from UL Environment, including GREENGUARD and ECOLOGO certified products.
- [Electronic Product Environmental Assessment TOOL \(EPEAT\)](#) – Evaluates and rates PCs, monitors and notebooks based on their environmental impact.



- [Energy Star](#) – A joint program of the US EPA and US Department of Energy that helps consumers and businesses identify energy efficient products.
- [Green Seal](#) – Nonprofit organization that provides scientifically-based environmental certification standards.
- [US EPA Environmentally Preferable Purchasing \(EPP\)](#) – The EPP program helps the federal government “buy green” and stimulates market demand for green products and services.
- [Responsible Purchasing Network](#) – National network of procurement-related professionals dedicated to socially responsible and environmentally sustainable purchasing.
- [US Communities/Green](#) – A one-stop source for environmentally certified products and services.
- [Forest Stewardship Council US \(FSC\)](#) – Promotes the responsible management of forests.

## Definitions

- **Environmentally Preferable** – Products or services that 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 acquisitions, production, manufacturing, packaging, distribution, reuse, operation, maintenance, or disposal of the product or service.
- **Life Cycle Assessment or Life Cycle Analysis (LCA)** – 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)** – The comprehensive accounting of the total cost of ownership, including initial costs, energy and operational costs, longevity and efficacy of service, and disposal cost.
- **Precautionary Principal** – A framework that guides decision makers to take anticipatory and 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.
- **Sustainable Procurement** – Purchasing materials, products, and services in a manner that integrates fiscal responsibility, social equity, and community and environmental stewardship.
- **Toxicity** – The quality, relative degree, or specific degree of being toxic or poisonous.



## Library of Sustainable Language

The below paragraphs contain excerpts from past City of Austin contracts known to contain sustainability requirements. Staff members should refer to these, and other contracts which reflect the City's sustainability goals, when writing specifications for, evaluating, and procuring goods and services.

City Hall Landscaping Services, September 2014 (IFBBV 7500 PAX0052REBID)

*"...The U.S. Green Building Council awarded Austin City Hall the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Gold certification, and landscape practices shall support that designation. It is the City's intention to reduce emissions by promoting the use of cleaner-burning, reduced emissions power equipment on the contracts the City enters for these services. City Hall is also certified as a wildlife habitat through the National Wildlife Federation..."*

*...Manual, battery-powered, electric-powered, and propane-fueled equipment are the only acceptable types of equipment for this contract. No gasoline or diesel-powered equipment shall be used at any time."*

Citywide Managed Services Multifunctional Devices (RFO No. CDL0100)

**Part VIII – Sustainability:** *Provide any details on your organization's efforts to minimize the harmful effects upon the environment as well as any economic and equitable attributes. Specifically include any actions designed to:*

- *Conserve natural resources including water, energy, and raw materials throughout the product lifecycle;*
- *Minimize environmental impacts such as water and air pollution;*
- *Eliminate or reduce toxics that create hazards to workers, citizens, wildlife, and the environment;*
- *Support up-cycling and recycling efforts as well as utilize products with high recycled content;*
- *Reduce environmental impacts in your organization's production and distribution systems;*
- *Support worker health, safety, and fair wages;*
- *Consider total cost of ownership during product's useful life, including operation, supplies, maintenance, and disposal cost."*

Flooring Installation and Repairs, December 2011 (MA 7400 NA120000021)

***"DESCRIBE BELOW THE MANNER IN WHICH YOUR FIRM WILL SUSTAINABLY DISPOSE OF USED FLOORING MATERIALS.***

***PLEASE SUBMIT DOCUMENTATION TO SUPPORT YOUR CLAIM. ATTACH OTHER PAGES AS NECESSARY"***



*“In an effort to protect the indoor air quality and health of all building occupants, the City believes that there are sufficient selections of cost-competitive, durable, and environmentally responsible flooring options available in each of the following categories. Flooring products or services deemed in compliance with the intent of City’s Green Purchasing Program if they meet the following criteria”*

*“...Use of carpeting not containing a high percentage of Post-Consumer Waste (PCW) or recycled content is prohibited. Use of carpet, glue, adhesives, or backings that contain high levels of Polyvinyl Chloride (PVC) chemicals or other VOCs is prohibited. Padding or backing should be made of 100% renewable or 100% post-consumer recycled material.”*

Industrial Clothing, Supplies, and Services, November 2017 (GA140000116)

*“Preference shall be given to vendors who can provide products with sustainable attributes. Sustainable attributes can include, but are not limited to; Organic Cotton (OC), Refurbished Material (RM), Locally Harvested (LH), Locally Manufactured (LM), Recycled Content (RC), Take Back programs (TB), Fair Trade (FT), and/or Fair Labor (FL). Provide the Sustainable attribute code which best fits the item below. For example, if the uniform contains Organic Cotton, place ‘OC’ next to the corresponding item below. If the product has a sustainable attribute not listed here, clearly state what the attribute is. If no sustainable attributes are available, leave the cell blank.*

*Evaluation of Sustainable product offerings will be based on the number of line items with sustainable attributes from Attachment B, Price Proposal.”*

Custodial Supplies Agreement, July 2012 (GA1200000103)

*“The City prefers Contractors who demonstrate innovative approaches to reducing their environmental impact through use of alternative energy, low-emissions equipment, biodegradable chemicals, biodegradable products or products with recycled content. City Council resolution #20071129-045 and #20070215-023 relate to the adoption of sustainable business practices that eliminate chemical toxins, reduce green-house gas (GHG) emissions, comply with LEED standards, and promote the use of recycled content materials in goods and services purchased by the City.”*