

# Colorado College Sustainable Purchasing Guidelines

## A. Goal

Colorado College is committed to stewardship of the environment and to reducing the college's dependence on non-renewable energy. These "sustainable purchasing" guidelines are intended to help the Colorado College community align purchasing decisions with the Colorado College mission objectives. These procurement decisions include economic criteria as well as strong commitments towards environmental protection.

The goal of these guidelines is to reduce the adverse environmental impact of our purchasing decisions by buying goods and services from manufacturers and vendors who share our commitment to the environment. Sustainable purchasing is the method whereby environmental and social considerations are given equal weight to the price, availability, and performance criteria that colleges and universities use to make purchasing decisions.

These guidelines will:

- Conserve natural resources by minimizing the consumption of non-replaceable natural resources through the review of current and proposed future usage; and evaluation of the pros and cons of alternatives
- Minimize pollution and waste, including: any packaging, waste produced by the product (or service), and waste generated by the eventual disposal of the product
- Reduce the use of water and energy
- Reduce materials that are land filled
- Maximize the reuse and recycling of materials
- Increase the use and availability of environmentally preferable products
- Reward vendors who reduce environmental impacts in their production and distribution systems or services (??)
- Create a model for successfully purchasing environmentally preferable products that encourages other purchasers in our community to adopt similar goals
- Stimulate demand for "environmentally friendly" products by educating manufacturers and suppliers about the college's expectations of environmental performance in products.
- Support "locally produced" goods and services
- Educate ourselves, our vendors, and our end users

## **B. Areas of Focus**

### **1. Source Reduction**

Reducing unnecessary waste at the source allows the College to both mitigate the inefficient use of our natural resources and benefit economically from decreased handling and disposal costs.

Procurement activity may include:

- Develop practices that reduce waste, resulting in the purchase of fewer products whenever practicable and cost-effective, without sacrificing safety or work quality.
- Purchase remanufactured products such as laser toner cartridges, tires, furniture, equipment and automotive parts when practicable, without sacrificing quality or effectiveness.
- Purchase products that are durable, long lasting, reusable or refillable.
- Request that vendors eliminate packaging or use the minimum amount necessary for product protection.
- Request packaging that is reusable, recyclable, or compostable.
- Reuse pallets and packaging materials.

### **2. Energy and Water Savings**

The College values products that reduces the generation of electricity and recognizes that water is a finite resource.

Procurement activity may include:

- Energy efficient equipment with energy efficient functions and high-efficiency heating and cooling systems.
- Efficient lighting with energy efficient equipment.
- Water saving products
- Programmable thermostats
- Energy efficient window treatments
- Energy efficient building products

Tools to consider using when making these procurement decisions are:

- Electronic Product Environmental Assessment Tool (EPEAT): EPEAT is a system designed to help purchasers evaluate, compare, and select desktop computers, notebooks, and monitors based on their environmental attributes.
- Energy Star: A program of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) that aims to reduce energy usage by identifying products that meet specific standards for energy efficiency and features.
- Green Seal: Uses scientific criteria to choose environmentally preferable options from a wide range of consumer products, which are then identified with the Green Seal Logo.

### **3. Landscaping**

Supporting low maintenance and environmentally sensitive landscapes minimizes the unnecessary use of fertilizers and water resources, therefore reducing the College's impact on the natural resources.

Procurement activity may include:

- Use of sustainable landscape management techniques for design, construction and maintenance. Some of these techniques may include drip irrigation, composting, and procurement of mulch and compost.
- Place preference on native and drought tolerant plants that require no or minimal watering.
- Procure permeable substitutes such as permeable asphalt or pavers for walkways, patios or driveways.
- Utilization of non-potable water as a watering source
- Utilization of programmable weather stations for control over irrigation operation systems.

### **4. Toxics and Pollution**

The use of toxics and the generation of pollution should be minimized to reduce risks to health, safety, and the environment.

Procurement activity may include:

- Procure products with the lowest amount of volatile organic compounds (VOCs) and low or no formaldehyde in materials such as paint, carpeting, adhesives, furniture and casework.
- Consider vehicle procurement alternatives to diesel such as bio-based fuels, hybrids and electric battery powered vehicles.

### **Guidelines and Criteria for Commodities:**

#### **1. Office Supplies:**

- \* Eliminate virgin paper by purchasing only recycled content paper when possible
- \* Print and copy double-sided to decrease paper use when practicable.
- \* Purchase recycled content paper goods (i.e., file folders)
- \* Purchase refillable and reusable products (such as pens and pencils) made from recycled materials.
- \* Purchase re-furbished and / or remanufactured toner cartridges.

#### **2. Furniture:**

- \* Require approved furniture vendors to provide a minimum warranty on chairs, office panels, work stations and filing systems.

- \* Ensure that all wood and wood contained within the products that the college purchases is certified to be sustainably harvested by a comprehensive, performance-based certification system.
- \* Purchase or use of previously used or salvaged wood and wood products is encouraged.
- \* Request that the furniture can be fully recycled at the end of its useful life.
- \* Request sustainable fabrics for modular systems and chairs. Some of these fabrics include recycled content and are designed to be biodegradable after their useful life.
- \* Specify products that are made from materials containing the maximum amount of post-consumer and post-industrial recycled content.
- \* Require vendors and installers to provide a recycling or recovery service for the responsible reuse, remanufacture, or recycling of old furniture.

**3. Electronics, Appliances, and Computers:**

- \* Purchase Energy Star rated equipment and specifies that energy saving features is enabled as the default factory setting.
- \* Centralize and share appliances such as refrigerators, copiers, printers, and faxes.
- \* Recycling of old computers and electronic appliances.

**C. Request for Proposals / Quotes, Contracts, and Purchase Orders:**

Include sustainability language and specifications environmentally preferable products and services into documented purchasing processes. By including such criteria, vendors will be required to accommodate these needs in an agreed manner. Creation of a general clause that is included in all agreements, and incorporating the appropriate language as needed on a commodity-by-commodity basis may increase the flow of sustainable products to the CC Campus.

**D. Performance Contracts:**

Performance contracting is an option to consider to ensure that promised savings from energy efficiency investments truly materialize. A performance contractor, known as an “energy service company,” may install high-efficiency lighting systems, air handling systems, boilers and so forth. The ESCO guarantees that a certain minimum level of savings will accrue to the client. If the savings do not materialize, the company pays the difference and makes improvements until the installations perform properly. If such contracts are structured appropriately, the savings from the efficiency improvements will be sufficient to service the debt to pay for the efficiency measures. The debt can also cost less as the result of the lender understanding performance contracting and energy savings that are virtually guaranteed by the ESCO.

## **E. Renewable Energy**

Power Purchase Agreements (PPA) can be used for renewable energy system designs. PPA's are used to stabilize energy costs for 20 or more years, depending on the life expectancy of the systems. Wind and solar systems have 40 years of life expectancy. PPA's pays out the cost of the system in 10 years or less.

## **F. Green Building / Materials**

Green purchasing concepts shall be integrated into architectural designs, final construction documents, and the final construction of all college buildings and renovations of property or facilities owned by the college. All buildings and renovations undertaken by the college shall follow green building practices for design, construction, and operations, where appropriate, as described in the LEED Rating System.

When maintaining buildings, products such as paint, carpeting, adhesives, furniture and casework with the lowest amount of volatile organic compounds (VOC's), highest recycled content, and low or no formaldehyde shall be used when practicable.

All carpet distributors and/or manufacturers of carpet installed at the college shall have a carpet recycling plan that is approved by Facilities Services.

The use of chlorofluorocarbon and halon-containing refrigerants, solvents, and other products shall be phased out, and new purchases of heating/ventilating/air conditioning, refrigeration, insulation, and fire suppression systems shall not contain them.

### Types of Purchase may Include:

- Recycled carpet
- \* Flooring Material
- \* Ceiling Tiles
- \* Roofing Materials