

# Alachua County Sustainable Procurement

## **Purpose**

The purpose of this procedure is to support sustainability, fiscal efficiency, and waste prevention at Alachua County Board of County Commissioners and to provide guidelines, information, and resources in procuring products that will minimize negative impacts on society and the environment to the greatest extent practicable.

## **Alachua County's Zero Waste Goal**

Alachua County takes a life cycle evaluation approach to zero waste, using five guiding principles:

1. Keep Resources Local
2. Foster Job Growth
3. Emphasize and Support Upstream Solutions
4. Mitigate Climate Change
5. Address Environmental Justice and Create Equity of Service

A key principle of Zero Waste is the establishment of a circular economy. Through this process, less raw materials are consumed for production, more manufactured materials remain in use, and commodities are recycled to continue to maximize the value of material.

Procurement of products made from recycled material is only part of the life cycle. Staff must recycle whenever possible. For more information about the different recycling programs available in Alachua County, visit the Solid Waste Department, Office of Waste Alternatives website: <https://alachuacountyrecycles.com/> or call [352-374-5213](tel:352-374-5213).

Nothing in this directive should be construed as requiring the purchase of products that do not perform adequately or are not available at a reasonable price.

## **Responsibilities of Departments**

- Develop and maintain information about environmentally and socially preferable products. Departments should use the list composed in this document as a guideline and may add or modify the list as needed.
- Inform employees of their responsibilities under this procedure; provide them with information about sustainable procurement opportunities. Contact [Procurement](#) for frequent updates on vendor commitments to sustainability, including new and existing contracts that address integrate sustainable principles.
- Manage decision-making around Sustainable Procurement procedure implementation and compliance for internal procurement and purchasing
- Submit new ideas, problems or concerns to the Zero Waste Committee

## **Zero Waste Committee**

Alachua County will form and maintain an ad hoc committee that meets at least quarterly, led by a representative of the Resiliency Office. The committee will be staffed by representatives of multiple departments as appropriate for the tasks and must include one representative from the Procurement Office. The committee will have the following responsibilities:

- Fulfill training requirements around Life Cycle Evaluation and Life Cycle Cost Analysis
- Review requests from Directors regarding specific Procurement, Product, and Services

questions using Life Cycle Evaluation and Life Cycle Cost Analysis frameworks.

- Provide recommendations to Directors on best practices for ensuring Procurement, Product, and Service decisions align with the content of this administrative procedure.
- Generate and/or compile an annual report outlining the County's sustainable procurement decision making.
- Ensure any procedure updates that impact multiple departments are shared to impacted departments through appropriate channels.
- Include representatives from the Resiliency Office, Procurement Office, Solid Waste & Resource Recovery Department, a member of the administrative team, and other departments as appropriate for decision making, with a maximum of seven committee members.

### **Best Practices and Procurement Strategies**

#### Reduce waste at the point of purchase

Staff can help achieve the County's waste prevention and reduction goals by practicing the three R's: reducing, reusing, and recycling. Priority should be given to upstream waste prevention by purchasing products made from recycled material that can be reused or recycled.

- Office paper, letterhead stationery, envelopes, and business cards made from recycled paper
- Office supplies
- Recycled, remanufactured, or re-filled toner cartridges
- Furniture made with a percentage of postconsumer or postindustrial material and/or Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) 50% certified wood to reduce disposal costs and waste, choose items that can be remanufactured, recycled, or composted.

Many products made from recycled materials are available and are being included in the Alachua County contracts or piggy-backed agreements.

#### Purchase durable and reusable goods

Using life-cycle cost analysis, rather than automatically choosing goods with the lowest purchase price, can help departments identify 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.
- Invest in goods with extended warranties. Conduct routine maintenance on products/equipment.
- Save money and minimize waste by eliminating single-use items, such as non-rechargeable batteries, in favor of rechargeable batteries.
- Before buying new, staff should check the County's surplus inventory and

repurpose items when possible.

#### Lease and rent when appropriate

Consider an operating lease or rental rather than a purchase or capital lease. Lease and rental contracts give vendors the responsibility for the upkeep of goods such as copiers, and for managing them at the end of their useful life. Businesses that lease equipment tend to manufacture more durable items, salvage reusable parts, refurbish, recycle, or donate used equipment that can no longer be leased. Renting is a cost-effective option for short-term equipment needs.

#### Specify product and packaging take-back

Increasingly, product vendors are offering to take back the products they sell when they become obsolete. By utilizing vendors who offer an Extended Product Responsibility (EPR) program, especially take-back, recycle, and disposal programs, departments are ensured equipment and products are disposed of properly whether recycled, donated, refurbished or disposed of without the added cost.

Other vendors will take back used items, such as carpeting and toner cartridges, when purchasers buy new products. For example, several carpet manufacturers have invested in sophisticated recycling facilities that turn old carpet into new carpet or other goods and toner cartridges are disposed of properly or sent to be recharged and sold at a lower cost.

Departments should require vendors to assume responsibility for some of their shipping materials, such as wooden pallets and excess packaging materials. When ordering large furniture or computer shipments, request products ship blanket- wrapped or using reduced packing material.

#### Buy goods in bulk or concentrated form

This practice can significantly reduce the packaging associated with lower product quantities and save costs. Carefully estimate demand when purchasing in bulk; purchasing more than is needed can create excess that becomes waste.

#### Manage surplus effectively

Clean out office supply cabinets and send re-usable items for other County departments to use. Departments should utilize Surplus for disposing of larger unwanted, outdated property, a program run by the Alachua County Clerk of the Court. Surplus will effectively redistribute, recycle, or dispose of surplus property through regular auctions to nonprofits, local businesses, and other community members. Vehicle surplus is managed through a Fleet surplus program separate from the County Clerk.

#### Procure commodities that are certified to meet sustainability standards

The following certifications are approved as meeting Alachua County sustainability standards.

##### *Paper and Forest Products*

- Forest Stewardship Council - [www.fsc.org](http://www.fsc.org)
- Chlorine Free Products Association - [www.chlorinefreeproducts.org](http://www.chlorinefreeproducts.org)

##### *Electronics and Appliances*

- Energy Star - [www.energystar.gov/purchasing](http://www.energystar.gov/purchasing)
- Electronic Product Environmental Assessment Tool (EPEAT) - [www.epeat.net](http://www.epeat.net)
  - EPEAT has tiers of environmental performance. Alachua County ITS bundled computers

will meet at least the EPEAT silver standard. Alachua County's preference is that when the certification is available on the products being purchased, all purchases of computers and monitors meet or exceed the silver EPEAT certification.

*Cross-sector: (examples: cleaning supplies)*

- Green Guard - <https://www.ul.com/services/ul-greenguard-certification>
- Ecologo - [www.ecologo.org](http://www.ecologo.org)
- Green Seal - [www.greenseal.org](http://www.greenseal.org)
- Scientific Certification Systems - [www.scscertified.com](http://www.scscertified.com)

*Carpet, Adhesives and Cushion*

- CRI Green Seal and Green Seal Plus - [www.carpet-rug.org](http://www.carpet-rug.org)

*Renewable Energy*

- Green-e - [www.green-e.org](http://www.green-e.org)

*Building Practices and Indoor Air Quality*

- Building Air Quality Guide - <https://www.epa.gov/indoor-air-quality-iaq/building-air-quality-guide-guide-building-owners-and-facility-managers>

*Food*

- USDA Organic
- Food Alliance Certified
- Rainforest Alliance Certified
- Protected Harvest Certified
- Fair Trade OR Marine Stewardship Council's Blue Eco-Label

*Energy-Efficient Laboratory Equipment Acquisition*

- EH&S Green Lab Program

Procure remanufactured goods and use refurbishing services

It is generally much less expensive to buy remanufactured goods such as remanufactured toner cartridges, or to use refurbishing services for computer upgrades, carpet repair, and furniture reupholster, than to buy new items. "Recharged" toner cartridges typically save departments 30 to 50 percent per sheet of paper. Remanufactured items should be compatible and require no sacrifice in performance.

Purchase goods containing fewer toxic constituents

By procuring goods with fewer or no toxic chemicals, departments can reduce their hazardous waste disposal, future liability concerns, and the risk of occupational exposure and spills. Low-toxicity products such as mercury-free medical supplies, low mercury light bulbs/lamps with a content of 90 picograms per lumen-hour or less, printing ink low in volatile organic compounds (VOCs), and chrome and chlorine free cleaning supplies are increasingly available and cost-competitive. See the Cross-sector certifications to help select products. The County prefers that all cleaning products purchased are either Green Seal or EcoLogo certified.

Reduce paper use

- Set all printers, copiers, and fax machines to the default duplex mode if the function is available.
- Purchase office equipment that has duplex capability.

- Purchase paper with recycled content
- Utilize technology to send and store information electronically.
- Utilize internet fax when available.
- Instead of having forms preprinted and stored, fill out forms online and print as needed when available and feasible.
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#### Current Guidelines in Place

- All Alachua County BOCC personnel will purchase recycled and environmentally preferable products whenever practicable.
- Alachua County BOCC Departments will purchase hybrid or alternative fuel vehicles whenever practicable.
- Alachua County BOCC has established guidelines and requirements when purchasing recyclable and single use supplies from Amazon.
- Alachua County BOCC will have a recycle container available within a reasonable distance of soda machines, staff break rooms, and in all locations where canned or bottled drinks are served.
- Alachua County should promote the use of recycled and other environmentally preferable products by publicizing its sustainable procurement program. Materials produced for advertising, conferences, trade fairs, press releases, and other communications with clients and citizens may refer to Alachua County Board of County Commissioner's commitment and leadership in the use of recycled and environmentally/socially preferable products.
- The Alachua County Procurement Office and Departments will make every effort to secure goods and services with vendors that are socially and environmentally conscientious, and certified green whenever practicable.
- Alachua County should install water bottle filling stations in lieu of traditional water fountains when practicable.
- Alachua County should install outdoor solar lighting when practicable.

#### **Glossary**

Circular Economy is a whole-system approach based upon repositioning disposal and reuse opportunities. Through this process, less raw materials are consumed for production, more manufactured materials remain in use, and commodities are recycled to continue to maximize the value of material. This concept allows resources to have a continuous life cycle through multiple uses and purposes, rather than limiting their life space to simple production that results in waste.

Environmentally Preferable Products are products that have a lesser impact on human health and the environment when compared with competing products. This comparison may consider raw materials acquisition, production, manufacturing, packaging, distribution, reuse, operation, maintenance, or disposal of the product.

Sustainable Procurement means purchasers take into consideration the environmental impact of products when making purchasing decisions, giving preference to more environmentally friendly products when quality and price are equal or superior.

Recycled Products/Materials are products manufactured with waste material that has been

recovered or diverted from solid waste. Recycled material may be derived from post-consumer waste (material that has served its intended end-use and been discarded by a final consumer), industrial scrap, manufacturing waste, or other waste that would otherwise have been wasted.

Sustainability means meeting today's needs without compromising the ability of future generations to satisfy their needs.

Waste Prevention means any action undertaken by an individual or organization to eliminate or reduce the amount or toxicity of materials before they enter the municipal solid waste stream. This action is intended to conserve resources, promote efficiency, and reduce pollution.

Reuse means repairing what is broken or giving it to someone who can repair it or use it in its current state.

Reduce means using less of products and utilizing other means of doing business when available to reduce the amount and toxicity of trash discarded.

Recycle means to reprocess and reuse used material.

Life Cycle Evaluation is an evaluation of the major environmental impacts in each life-cycle stage of a product category including resource extraction, production, distribution, use, and eventual disposal or recycling. The evaluation considers energy, resource use, and emissions to air, water, and land, as well as other environmental and health impacts. The purpose of this evaluation is to identify significant life-cycle stages to be addressed.

Life Cycle Cost Analysis is an economic evaluation technique that determines the total cost of owning and operating a building or equipment.

Rechargeable means to replenish the amount of electric power in something, especially a battery.

Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) is vendors taking on the responsibility for the environmental impacts of their products through the entire product's life cycle; especially the take-back, recycle, and disposal programs.

Leasing is a legal rental contract allowing somebody exclusive possession of another's property for a specific time in return for a payment.

Certification an official document or seal providing evidence and details of something that is authentic and verified by a third party.

Zero Waste is the conservation of all resources by means of responsible production, consumption, reuse and recovery of products, packaging, and materials by minimizing discharges to land, water, or air that threaten the environment or human health.

## **Environmentally Preferable Procurement (EPP) Resources**

### Resources

- EPA's EPP Web Site (<https://www.epa.gov/greenerproducts/about-environmentally-preferable-purchasing-program>)
- INFORM ([www.informinc.org](http://www.informinc.org))
- Office of the Federal Environmental Executive (<https://www.sustainability.gov/>)

### Examples of environmentally preferred products

- Recycled paper and paper products
- 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 biosolid products
- Re-manufactured and/or low or VOC-free paint
- Cleaning products with lowered toxicity
- Energy saving products
- Waste-reducing products
- Water-saving products

### **Socially Responsible/Ethical Procurement Standards**

In demonstrating a commitment to sustainability and seeking to ensure safe and healthy workplaces for the people who make products for Alachua County BOCC, purchasers should strive to ensure that the products they purchase meet International Labor Organization (ILO) manufacturing standards and Fair Trade Labeling standards. Learn more about the importance of ethical purchasing:

- Verité ([www.verite.org](http://www.verite.org))
- Workers Rights Consortium ([www.workersrights.org](http://www.workersrights.org))