

The **Office of Sustainability** guides and supports the university in its sustainability commitment by developing strategic goals that prioritize institutional commitment to sustainability, catalyzing our campus community around a shared vision for a sustainable world.

The goal of this green purchasing guide seeks to increase and streamline procurement of environmentally preferred and socially responsible products, specifically office supplies, within the university's departments and offices.

## WHAT IS SUSTAINABLE PURCHASING?

Sustainable purchasing is the practice of purchasing goods that serve the same functional purpose as traditional products but mitigate negative effects on human health and the environment. This includes evaluating products throughout their entire life-cycle, known as a life-cycle assessment, from extraction, production, use, and disposal, re-use or recycling. Sustainable products often share some or all of the following characteristics:

- Low-emitting volatile organic compounds (VOCs)
- Made from some or all recycled content
- Reduced energy and water usage
- Minimized waste and pollution
- Produced using renewable energies
- Locally sourced
- Socially responsible



## WHY DOES PURCHASING SUSTAINABLE PRODUCTS MATTER?

Earth has a finite amount of resources. From a material perspective, purchasing sustainable products can reduce the extraction of raw materials. Sustainable goods, especially cleaning products, may improve human health by increasing indoor air quality and reducing human exposure to toxic chemicals. Often, green products use less electricity, are made more efficiently, or are made using renewable energy sources, all of which reduce carbon emissions. Financially, these products are often less expensive than traditional goods when considering the product's entire life cycle.

## APPSTATE'S SUSTAINABLE PURCHASING GOAL

Sustainable Purchasing is one of many initiatives the Office of Sustainability is pursuing to support the university's sustainability goals. Every purchase should consider sustainably sourced products over traditional products. As a general rule: if a sustainable product has equivalent functionality compared to a traditional product and is the same price or cheaper, always choose the sustainable option.

## ZERO WASTE

Through thoughtful purchasing decisions, reducing consumption and increasing recycling we can reduce what we send to the landfill. Using this purchasing guide helps reduce unnecessary and wasteful purchasing.

## CLIMATE NEUTRALITY

App State is striving to be a climate neutral campus. To help us reach these goals, we must practice responsible, sustainable purchasing in the products that we use on campus every day. Responsible purchasing includes considering the life cycle of each product.

## HOW TO PARTICIPATE:

Anyone can participate, it's easy! Whether you are buying goods for the office, or even your home or a friend, finding sustainably sourced products is usually just a keyword and click away. The following guide denotes how to find these products and what to look for when shopping from your favorite suppliers.

## GENERAL PURCHASING TIPS:

### *Do you really need that?*

- Look first for surplus items before ordering new items.
- Does another department have a surplus of this product they are willing to share?
- Does another department have this product but they are not using it?
- Can the existing product be economically and sustainably refurbished?
- Consider sustainability when printing to try to minimize materials printed.
- Social Responsibility- Consider supporting businesses owned by marginalized populations (Women, Black, Indigenous, and Persons of Color)
- Research and request information related to environmental and social responsibility of products before ordering (Forest Stewardship Council, Green Seal, Green Guard, And Cradle to Cradle). ECOLOGO, FSC, Energy STAR, EPEAT (for computers and electronics).



### *What to look for in a product*

- Durable and expected to last
- Made from recycled material(s) or material derived from a renewable resource
- Made from material that can be fully recycled after use or at end of life
- Failure parts can be replaced and recycled or returned to the manufacturer for reuse or remanufacture
- Easily disassembled for appropriate recycling at end of life
- Energy and water efficient
- Uses soy-based inks and the paper has a high recycled material content
- Little or no volatile organic compounds, formaldehyde, lead or mercury
- Biodegrades readily in an industrial composting system

### *Thoughtful Purchasing*

- Order supplies in bulk to reduce deliveries and packaging waste.
- Is the product available used? Consider purchasing used or remanufactured products whenever practical and cost effective without compromising safety, quality or performance.
- Choose paper products that are tree free, or at least 50% post-consumer recycled content.
- Choose organic or recycled content fabrics when ordering shirts and uniforms.
- Look for electronics that are Energy Star rated.
- Use recycled or refillable ink and toner cartridges.
- Request that suppliers use the minimum amount of packaging necessary and ensure that everything possible is recycled.
- Routinely support local vendors and products.
- Utilize Appalachian's online marketplace (Yo-Mart, Central Warehouse).

## ENVIRONMENTALLY PREFERABLE PURCHASING (EPP)

<https://www.naspo.org/green/index.html>

Incorporating EPP in the procurement process considers raw materials acquisition, production, fabrication, manufacturing, packaging, distribution, reuse, operation, maintenance, and disposal of the product. This term includes sourcing recyclable products, recycled products, reusable products, and products that conserve energy or natural resources.



*"As adopted on January 22, 2009, the NASPO Green Purchasing Policy Statement seeks to leverage the purchasing power of state and local government to conserve energy and national resources, limit environmental pollution and waste, improve public health, encourage clean technologies, and create cost savings opportunities and a balanced economy. NASPO will accomplish this through the development of policies, programs, and information resources that educate procurement decision makers on environmental issues and solutions."*

## HELPFUL LINKS

# STAPLES®

### Staples

- Staples offers a number of ways to search for and find eco friendly products. The best way is to go to their Sustainable Products page (Services & Solutions > Sustainability Services > Sustainability Center > Sustainable Products) and search for products from there
- [This web page](#) offers additional information on what each filter means and the assortment of eco friendly certifications Staples offers.
- Alternatively, Staples also offers a number of environmentally friendly filters when searching for products. On the left side of the search screen, select the environmental tab and choose between Eco-certified, Eco-conscious, and/or recycled. You can also type in keyword "Eco" or "Recycled" to pull up eco friendly products.
- Look for this symbol when shopping for green products:



# Office DEPOT®

### Office Depot/Office Max

- Similar to Staples, Office Depot/OfficeMax has a page dedicated to eco friendly and recycled products called [GreenerOffice](#). From this page, users can easily search for green products by category.
- This page also offers a green products educational slide show called the Green Book, as well as links to their green purchasing guide.
- Alternatively, you can also sort out eco friendly and recycled products by Finding the Eco-conscious tab on the left list of filters and choosing one or all the sub tabs (examples: recycled content, leadership forestry, chlorine-free, carbon-balanced, or plant-based materials).
- Look for these two symbols under the item description and price:

 Eco-Conscious

 Recycled Content

### Yo-Mart

- To access Yo-Mart, go to <https://systems.appstate.edu/yo-mart>
- Enter the supplies you need in the "Shop" search bar, or click on an individual supplier below.
- Click the "Green" or "Recycled" product flag filters to view environmentally friendly supplies.
- Under the item description and price, look for: Green & Recycled