

## Johnson County, Kansas Environmental Purchasing Guidelines

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Guidelines establishing a Johnson County, Kansas Purchasing Program for Environmentally Preferable Products and Services. Dated \_\_\_\_\_

### **1.0 Purpose**

Johnson County, Kansas recognizes that it is a large consumer of goods and services in a variety of categories. Each of our purchases has an environmental impact resulting from the combined impact of a product's manufacture, use, and disposition. As a result, the daily purchasing decisions of our staff and contractors can positively or negatively affect the environment.

The objective of these guidelines is to reduce the adverse environmental impact of purchasing decisions by buying goods and services from manufacturers and suppliers who share our commitment to the environment. By including environmental considerations in everyday purchasing decisions, along with the traditional concerns of price, performance, and availability, we will remain fiscally responsible while promoting practices that improve public health and safety, reduce pollution, conserve natural resources, and reward manufacturers and suppliers that reduce the adverse environmental impact of their production and distribution systems.

### **2.0 Definition of "Environmental Preference"**

Buying the most environmentally preferable products or services means that Johnson County will seek to have a reduced effect on human health and the environment when compared with competing products and services serving the same purpose. This comparison will consider all phases of the product's life cycle, including raw materials acquisition, production, manufacturing, packaging, distribution, operation, maintenance, and disposal including potential for reuse or ability to be recycled.

In practical application, this means that Johnson County should seek products that have a reduced environmental impact because of the way they are made, used, shipped, stored, packaged and finally disposed of at the end of product life. It means we should seek products that do not harm health, that are less polluting, and that minimize waste.

### **3.0 Balancing Environmental Considerations with Performance, Availability, and cost**

Johnson County will be committed to buying more environmentally preferable goods and services as long as they meet our performance needs and are available within reasonable periods of time and at reasonable costs. Nothing in these guidelines should be construed as requiring a purchaser to procure products that do not perform adequately for their intended use, that exclude adequate fair competition, or are not available at reasonable prices or in reasonable time frames.

It is important to note that when comparing cost, Johnson County should not focus exclusively on initial price alone. Instead, comparisons should be calculated over the life of the item. This means calculating not only initial cost, but also maintenance, operating costs, insurance, disposability, replacement cost, and potential liability costs. Considering total life cycle costs can save money by ensuring that the total cost of ownership is quantified before making final purchasing decisions.

It is also important to note that Johnson County recognizes that competition exists not only in prices, but also in the technical competence of suppliers. This involves their ability to make timely deliveries of products with the quality and performance required. This should include environmental performance as well. This can mean paying more for higher performing goods and/or services including those with superior environmental performance, but who present a better longer term life cycle cost.

#### **4.0 Environmental Purchasing Work Group.**

As part of the County's Sustainable Committee, a green procurement work group has been established. The Office of Financial Management (OFM) Purchasing Division Manager will act as the green procurement work group leader. This work group will be comprised of members from the Purchasing Division as well as interested staff from other diverse groups within the County. The green procurement work group shall work with the Purchasing Division and the Sustainable County Committee to determine goals and direction for environmentally preferable purchasing within Johnson County. Some areas that the green procurement work group shall be responsible for are:

- ❖ Providing assistance to the Purchasing Division when required in reviewing specifications to ensure they include environmental considerations.
- ❖ Tracking development of environmental standards and specifications of Johnson County including those developed by independent third party organizations such as Green Seal and Energy Star.
- ❖ Assist in prioritizing environmentally preferable purchasing goals and objectives.
- ❖ Identifying environmentally preferable purchasing opportunities.
- ❖ Assist in developing tracking metrics for measuring progress of the implementation of the goals of these guidelines.
- ❖ Education and training of Johnson County staff to ensure everyone is aware of the County's desire to buy more environmentally preferable goods and services.
- ❖ Recommending ways to integrate adherence to the requirements of the environmental purchasing guidelines into employee performance reviews.
- ❖ Encourage inclusion of sustainability and environmentally preferable purchasing as topics for new employee orientation.
- ❖ Develop educational and outreach materials to promote the environmentally preferable purchasing guidelines within the County.
- ❖ Work with other Sustainable County Committee work groups in collaborative manner.

#### **5.0 Purchasing Division Responsibilities**

OFM-Purchasing Division staff shall be responsible for working in collaboration with the Sustainability County Committee, the green procurement work group and County staff in general to ensure the goals and objectives of environmentally preferable purchasing in Johnson County are met. Some specific responsibilities of the Purchasing Division shall be:

- ❖ Develop and maintain information about environmentally preferable products and services.
- ❖ Develop and implement monitoring and tracking tools to confirm compliance with environmentally preferable purchasing guidelines.
- ❖ Advise departments and train staff as necessary about their responsibilities in environmentally preferable purchasing.
- ❖ Advise and inform County suppliers about our goals in obtaining and using environmentally preferable products and services.
- ❖ Encourage manufacturers and suppliers to reduce environmental impacts in their production and distribution systems.
- ❖ Review existing specifications, solicitation language, and purchasing regulations to ensure that environmentally preferable purchasing is enabled.
- ❖ Create a model for successfully purchasing environmentally preferable products that encourages other purchasers in our community to adopt similar goals.
- ❖ Review contracts, bids, proposals, and specifications for both goods and services to ensure that, whenever possible and economical, they are amended to provide for the expanded use of products and services that environmentally preferable.
- ❖ Seek new suppliers and encourage existing suppliers to review the manner in which their goods are packaged and distributed.
- ❖ Use cost/benefit analysis to arrive at the correct sourcing decision. This should be a solution that remains economically practical, reflects effective purchasing practices, and satisfies the requirements of the user department as well as the environmentally preferable goals of the County.

- ❖ Work with other governmental purchasing groups and agencies as well as professional associations such as MARC, MACPP, KAPPP, NACO, US Communities and others to determine appropriate standards for green purchasing and keep abreast of the latest information.

## 6.0 Promoting Environmentally Preferable Purchasing

It should become the goal of every department within Johnson County to ensure its employees are familiar with the goals and objectives of the environmentally preferable purchasing guidelines. This can be done through education and training. Every department and employee should be aware of Johnson County's desire to buy more environmentally preferable goods and services from companies that share our environmental interests and commitment.

## 7.0 Environmental Purchasing Definitions

**Acute toxicity** – Capable of producing illness from a single dose or minimal exposure.

**Biodegradable** – The ability of a substance to decompose in the natural environment into harmless raw materials. To be truly biodegradable, a substance or material should break down into carbon dioxide, water and naturally occurring minerals that also do not cause harm to the ecosystem.

**Buyer** – Anyone authorized to purchase on behalf of the organization or its subdivisions.

**Carcinogen** – A substance known to cause cancer in humans.

**Chlorine free** – Manufactured without chlorine or chlorine derivatives.

**Chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs)** – Any of a group of compounds that contain carbon, chlorine, fluorine, and sometimes hydrogen and have been used as refrigerants, cleaning solvents, aerosol propellants and in the manufacture of plastic foams. The use of CFCs is being phased out because they destroy the planet's stratospheric ozone protection layer.

**Chronic health risks** – Detrimental, long term health effects from repeated exposure to a product.

**Chronic toxicity** – Capable of producing illness from repeated exposure.

**Compostable** – A product that can be placed into a composition of decaying biodegradable materials and eventually turned into a nutrient rich material.

**Cooperative purchasing** – A system for allowing organizations to combine their purchasing power in order to negotiate better prices and reduce the purchasing costs of a formal bid process.

**Durable** – A product that remains useful and usable for a long time without noticeable deterioration in performance.

**Energy efficient product** – A product that is in the upper 25% of energy efficiency for all similar products, or that is at least 10% more efficient than the minimum level meeting US federal government standards.

**Environmentally preferable products and services** – Products or services that have reduced negative effects or increased positive effects on human health and the environment when compared with competing products that serve the same purpose. This comparison may consider raw materials acquisition, production, fabrication, manufacturing, packaging, distribution, reuse, operation, maintenance and final disposal of the product. The term includes, but is not limited to, recyclable products, recycled products and reusable products.

**Greenhouse gases** – Any of several dozen heat-trapping trace gases in the earth’s atmosphere that absorb infrared radiation. The two major greenhouse gasses are water vapor and carbon dioxide. Lesser greenhouse gases include methane, ozone, CFCs, and nitrogen oxides.

**Greenwash/greenwashing** – The act of misleading consumers regarding the environmental practices of a company or the environmental benefits of a product or service.

**Green Seal** – Is an independent, non-profit environmental labeling organization. Green Seal standards for products and services meet the US EPA’s criteria for third-party certifiers. The Green Seal is a registered certification mark that may appear only on certified products. There are numerous other third party labeling and certifying organizations that present excellent opportunities to avoid greenwashing. Some are: EcoLogo, Energy Star, EPEAT, Forest Stewardship Council, Green Guard, Chlorine Free Products Association and a number of others.

**LEED rating system** – LEED stands for “Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design”. It is a self-assessment system developed by the US Green Building Council for rating the environmental preferability of new and existing commercial, institutional, and high-rise residential building.

**Life cycle cost** – The amortized annual cost of a product or service, including capital costs, installation costs, operating costs, maintenance costs, and disposal costs discounted over the lifetime of the product or service.

**Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS)** – Written or printed material about a product that includes information on the product’s physical and chemical characteristics; physical and health hazards; exposure limits; whether the product contains carcinogenic ingredients above a certain threshold; precautions for safe handling and use; control measures; emergency and first aid procedures; the date of preparation of the MSDS or the last change to it; and the name, address and telephone number of the manufacturer.

**Post-consumer recycled content** – Percentage of a product made from materials and by-products recovered or diverted from the solid waste stream after having completed their usefulness as consumer items and used in place of raw or virgin material. Post-consumer recycled content includes materials such as paper, bottles and cans that are often collected for recycling.

**Practicable** – Sufficient in performance and available at a reasonable price.

**Product life cycle** – The culmination of environmental impacts for a product, including raw material acquisition, manufacturing, distribution, use, maintenance, and ultimate disposal of the product.

**Recovered product** – Waste materials and by-products that have been recovered or diverted from the solid waste stream.

**Recycled materials** – Material and by-products that have been recovered or diverted from solid waste and have been utilized in place of raw or virgin material in manufacturing a product. It is derived from post-consumer recycled materials, manufacturing waste, industrial scrap, agricultural waste, and other waste material, but does not include material or byproducts generated from, and commonly reused within an original manufacturing process.

**Refurbished product** – A product that has been completely disassembled and restored to its original working order while maximizing the reuse of its original materials.

**Renewable materials** – Materials made from plant-based feedstock capable of regenerating in less than 200 years such as trees and agricultural products. Rapidly renewable resources regenerate in less than two years.

**Sustainable** – An action is sustainable if it satisfies present needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs.

**Sustainable product** – A product that achieves performance objectives while respecting the County’s values and balancing environmental stewardship, social equity, fiscal responsibility and community enhancement.

**Waste reduction** – 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.