

SECTION XIV
SUSTAINABLE PURCHASING

1. Purpose:

The purpose of this program is to minimize the negative environmental impacts of the County's activities by ensuring the procurement of products and services that:

- conserve natural resources, materials, and energy
- reduce toxicity
- reduce waste
- eliminate single-use plastics
- recognize manufacturers and vendors that reduce environmental impacts in their production and distribution systems
- support markets for recycled goods
- encourage suppliers and contractors to offer environmentally preferable options at competitive prices
- encourage providers of services to consider environmental impacts of service delivery
- align with specifications of GreenNY and the NYS Green Purchasing Communities program (GPC) and ensure Ulster County meets the requirements of the Climate Smart Communities program under PE3: Environmentally Preferable Purchasing Policy.

2. Definitions:

- a. ENERGY STAR means products that are certified by the United States Department of Energy or the Environmental Protection Agency as ENERGY STAR® or that are certified under the Federal Energy Management Program to reduce energy usage and thereby energy costs.
- b. Environmentally Preferable Products and Services means products and services that have a lesser or reduced negative effect on resource consumption, human health and the environment when compared with competing products that serve the same purpose. This comparison may consider raw materials acquisition, production, manufacturing, packaging, distribution, reuse, operation, maintenance, or disposal of the product.

- c. Life Cycle Cost means the amortized annual cost of a product, including capital costs, installation costs, operating costs, maintenance costs, and disposal costs discounted over the lifetime of the product.
- d. Practicable means the product or service is satisfactory in performance, readily available and priced comparably to alternatives when considering life cycle cost.
- e. Preferred environmental attribute means a characteristic that identifies a product or service as an environmentally preferable option for procurement.
- f. Recyclable product means a product which, after its intended end use, can demonstrably be diverted from the County of Ulster's solid waste stream for use as a raw material in the manufacture of another product as defined in NYS General Municipal Law Section 104-A.
- g. Reusable product: A product, such as a washable food or beverage container or a refillable ballpoint pen, that can be used several times for an intended use before being discarded.
- h. Recycled material means material and byproducts 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 material, 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.
- i. Disposable means the product is intended to be, or must be, discarded after use and is not refillable or reusable.

3. Environmentally Preferable Purchasing Procedure

Where Ulster County is procuring a commodity or service, whether by competitive bid or other type of procurement, that is the subject of a GreenNY procurement specification that has received final approval of the NYS GreenNY Council pursuant to Executive Order No. 22 (2022), the purchaser shall follow the GreenNY procurement specification to the maximum extent practicable and where cost is reasonably competitive as defined in General Municipal Law § 104-a. GreenNY approved procurement specifications can be found online at: <https://ogs.ny.gov/greeny/approved-greeny-specifications>.

Where a County policy exists that is more restrictive than the GreenNY specification, as referenced for specific product categories in Section 4. Table 1 below, the products purchased shall meet the County's policy requirements.

Exceptions will be made for the following:

- the product is not available competitively

- the product is not available for delivery within a reasonable time frame
- the product does not meet appropriate performance requirements or specifications

Nothing in this procedure shall be construed as requiring a department, administrative unit or contractor to procure products that do not comply with General Municipal Law, do not perform adequately for their intended use or are not readily available.

When initiating the procurement of goods via requisition, County departments shall complete the Green Purchasing Verification Form for each item procured using the Item User Defined Fields module in the New World ERP financial system. This form will require verification that the item complies with the specific procurement guidance below.

All other procurement activities shall comply with the specific and general procurement guidance listed below to the extent practicable.

4. Specific Procurement Guidance: The County shall procure environmentally preferable products and services when procuring items from the categories listed in Table 1. Compliance with this guidance must be indicated when submitting a requisition to the Purchasing Department using the Green Purchasing Verification Form in the County’s financial system.

The Purchasing Department may authorize deviations from this requirement for products or services meeting equivalent or more stringent standards, or at the discretion of the Purchasing Director.

Table 1: Specific Procurement Guidance

Cleaning products	Cleaning products used in County facilities shall meet the Green Seal <u>GS-37</u> standard, or equivalent, per <u>Resolution No. 282 of 2010</u> . Products that meet GreenNY specifications for <u>General Purpose Cleaners</u> are considered suitable equivalents.
Single Use Plastic Items	<p>Disposable Food Service Ware: For County facilities and County sponsored events, no food service containers or food service ware containing expanded polystyrene (Styrofoam) or other single-use plastic shall be procured or used at the event. Food service items such as condiment packets should be provided to end users only upon request per the County’s Skip the Straw Law. Although the preference is for compostable BPI-certified paper or fiber-based products, compostable BPI certified bio-plastics may be considered with the permission of the Director of Purchasing. Note: BPI is a third-party certification program for compostable materials. For more information, please visit: https://bpiworld.org/.</p> <p>Other Single-Use Items: The procurement of certain single-use plastic items is prohibited (e.g. single use plastic water bottles). Exceptions for certain items, or certain classes of items (e.g. consumable medical supplies) may be allowed at the discretion of the</p>

	Purchasing Director through an approved operating procedure.
Electronics	<p>Products carrying the <u>ENERGY STAR®</u> certification, or equivalent, such as the GreenNY specifications for Electronics and Appliances shall be purchased when such products are available.</p> <p>Suitable products may be identified using the EPA's website: https://www.energystar.gov/productfinder/</p>
Paints and coatings:	Products purchased must meet Low or No VOC standards and comply with <u>Resolution #283 of 2010</u> Requiring The Purchase And Use Of Low Or No Volatile Organic Compounds (VOC) Paints And Coatings In All County Facilities. See the GreenNY specifications for <u>Paint</u> for additional guidance.
Paper and printing services	<p>All printing and copier paper purchased shall contain 100% post-consumer recycled content.</p> <p>Publications and printing services procured shall comply with the <u>GreenNY specifications for Printing</u>. Publications shall be printed on 100% post-consumer recycled content paper. Where 100% post-consumer recycled paper is not available or does not meet the required form, function and utility, paper procurements shall use post-consumer recycled content to the extent practicable.</p> <p>At a minimum, printing paper products and printing services shall comply with the requirements of <u>Resolution No. 159 of 2011</u>.</p>
Products containing wood fiber (other than printing paper)	<p>Products carrying the <u>Forest Stewardship Council</u> (FSC) certification label should be purchased when such products are available, or equivalent. The <i>FSC Recycled</i> label is preferred.</p> <p>If a product option carrying the FSC label is not available, a product containing recycled material is preferred.</p>

5. General guidelines: If specific guidance is not provided above, the County shall consider the following guidelines when making procurement decisions:

- a. **NYS Office of General Services Contract:** If the item or equivalent alternative is on an OGS Contract and is the subject of a GreenNY procurement specification, the County should procure products from such contract. The County should consider if items fall within a GreenNY specification category and utilize this resource to procure products that meet such specifications where applicable. Links to these resources are provided below:

Approved GreenNY Product Specifications:
<https://ogs.ny.gov/greenny/approved-greenny-specifications>

NYS OGS Contracts:

<https://ogs.ny.gov/procurement/ogs-centralized-awards-list>

- b. **Third-party standards and ecolabels:** Where available, the County should procure products and services that meet environmental standards that have been established by governmental or other widely recognized authorities (e.g. Forest Stewardship Council, EPEAT Silver, Energy Star, EPA Eco Purchasing Guidelines).
- c. **In the absence of third-party standards:** where external authorities have not established acceptable criteria, the County should consider preferred environmental attributes when making procurement decisions.

Preferred environmental attributes include, but are not limited to:

- i. Improved energy efficiency
- ii. Product is refillable and/or reusable
- iii. Reduced life-cycle cost and emissions
- iv. Recyclability of product
- v. Product or service uses recycled materials in its life cycle
- vi. Minimized packaging
- vii. Biodegradable product
- viii. Reduced water consumption in life cycle
- ix. Toxicity reduction or elimination
- x. Product produces less waste during use
- xi. Product has improved durability, repairability and service life
- xii. Product has reduced maintenance requirements
- xiii. Product minimizes hazards to workers and the community
- xiv. Product is produced locally
- xv. Product materials were produced using organic practices

6. Department Responsibilities:

Purchasing Department

- Inform departments, administrative units and contractors of their responsibilities under this procedure and provide training for departments in collaboration with the Department of the Environment
- Ensure the green purchasing verification form in the County financial system is completed by the requisitioning department when required.
- Provide implementation assistance and referrals to the Department of the Environment when needed.

Department of the Environment

- Support the Purchasing Department in its implementation of this procedure by providing training, information when requested, and assistance in the evaluation of environmentally preferable products and services
- Support departments and administrative units in evaluation and analysis of environmentally preferable products and services
- In collaboration with the Purchasing Department and the requisitioning department or administrative unit, establish guidelines governing the review and approval of specifications for the procurement of products and services based on preferred environmental attributes and training on implementation of such guidelines.

Other Department Responsibilities:

- Inform employees of their responsibilities under this policy
- Evaluate each requested product and service to determine the extent to which the specifications could include an environmentally preferable option
- Procure products and services that meet the requirements in this procedure
- Ensure that contracts issued by the departments or administrative unit meet the guidelines contained in this procedure
- Submit new ideas or suggestions to the Purchasing Department