

Guidelines Toward Sustainability for CSA

Principles

"The aim and challenge of sustainable procurement is to integrate environmental and social considerations into the procurement process, with the goal of reducing adverse impacts upon health, social conditions and the environment."

- United Nations Procurement Practitioner's Handbook

Our purchasing practices are a reflection of our values and mission. The practices suggested in this document are designed to reflect our congregational commitment to Laudato Si' and our understanding that how we live impacts everything because everything is connected. Being transparent about our purchasing and measuring our changes over time will help us see the impact of our efforts. In general, when considering a purchase

- Source from local businesses whenever possible
- Purchase certified eco-friendly, efficient, and ethical products.
- Avoid plastic and other single-use containers and packaging
- Consider the future disposal of the item
- Choose nontoxic materials
- Consider if it is necessary
- Consider items that may be used over and over as much as possible (circular economy)
- Refuse, Reduce, Reuse, Repurpose, Recycle
- In addition to financial cost, factor in how the purchase will impact staff, sisters, associates
- Ensure contractors and supplies are aware of our mission and use as many eco-friendly materials as possible

The guidelines are designed to be reviewed and revised as needed in response to the ever-changing times and understandings. The categories and recommendations below are reflective of current best practices to the best of our knowledge.

Water Management

Purchasing

- Do not purchase bottled water; use boxed or canned water or metal water bottles.
- Conserve water with the installation of efficient toilets (1.5 GPF), water efficient showerheads, and faucet aerators, accounting for water pressure requirements.
- Plant native drought-tolerant plants and use water conserving irrigation systems using soaker hoses.

Practices

- Prevent stormwater pollution by directing downspouts to water plants or into rain barrels, mulching leaves, cleaning cars in a car wash, and reporting leaking dumpsters to waste hauler.

- Report leaky faucets and toilets to maintenance as soon as they are discovered.
- Ensure that wastewater from washing floor mats, grease filters, grills, etc. flows through a grease trap or interceptor.
- Thaw frozen food items in refrigerator, not with running water.

Food Management

Purchasing

- Purchase food with minimal packaging, especially plastic.
- Purchase salad dressings, pasta sauces and other items in glass containers.
- Purchase canned soda rather than soda in bottles.
- Choose bulk packaged items rather than individually wrapped food items, such as pastries, crackers, dried fruits, etc.

Practices

- Use certified organic fair trade, sustainably harvested and/or local grown food products and beverages whenever possible.
- Drink canned soda rather than bottled soda.

Energy Management

Purchasing

- Choose LED lightbulbs and fixtures whenever possible.
- Choose energy efficient appliances, considering EnergyStar ratings when choosing.
- Opt for natural ecologically safe refrigerants if compatible with appliances.
- Use energy-efficient double-paned windows
- Purchase the most efficient vehicles and “green” versions whenever possible.

Practices

- Use weather stripping to seal air gaps around doors.
- Use ceiling fans to promote air circulation. High edge going forward first in winter, forcing hot air down, and reverse in summer
- Use lighting controls such as occupancy sensors, bypass/delay timers, photocells, or time clocks.
- Routinely clean kitchen exhaust system filters in a sink that drains to the grease trap or interceptor.
- Turn off all appliances when not in use; unplug if reasonable.
- Ensure all computers, laptops, and monitors are turned completely off at the end of day.
- Purchase EPEAT registered computers, laptops, TVs, and monitors (www.EPEAT.net)
- Set refrigerator temperature to meet minimum health requirements (38-41°F for refrigerators and 10-20°F for freezers)
- Maintain refrigerator efficiency by keeping evaporator coils free of excessive frost and condenser coils free of dust.
- Maintain refrigerator/freezer doors by replacing worn gaskets, aligning doors, enabling automatic door closers, and replacing worn or damaged strip curtains.

- Complete regularly scheduled maintenance on HVAC and refrigeration systems annually
 - Clean/replace filter
 - Address leaks
 - Check condenser and evaporator coils
 - Maintain proper function of economizers in A/C package units
- Use programmable thermostats to control heat and AC with setbacks for unoccupied hours.
- Set hot water heaters to meet minimum sanitation requirements (140°F in kitchen and 119°F elsewhere).
- Insulate exposed hot water pipes and refrigeration cold suction lines in unconditioned spaces (garages, outdoors, etc.).
- Carpool when possible.
- Maintain vehicles properly.
- Report % saved by solar panels to the sisters.

Waste Management

Purchasing

- Choose compostable trash bags certified by Biodegradable Products Institute (BPI)
- Choose products made from natural fibers to reduce microplastics from laundering.

Practices

- If leaves cannot be left where they fall, mulch them into the soil.
- Place all food prep waste and post-plate scraps, including bones and napkins, into food diversion bins according to posted flowcharts.
- Recycle all items into recycling bins according to labels and following guidelines from the recycling provider.
- Batteries, lightbulbs, used motor oil, and e-waste must be recycled outside of the standard recycling stream. Gather these items in a separate area to be disposed of by maintenance.
- Place worn or torn cloth napkins and tablecloths in a rag bin.
- When possible, separate waste from guest rooms and public bathrooms into proper waste or recycling streams.
- To reduce the number of plastic microfibers released from washing machines, was on quick and cold cycles with a Cora ball or Guppy bag to capture the microplastics.
- Bring personal utensils and napkins to potlucks and dinners.
- Bring personal storage containers for leftovers after meals in restaurants or potlucks.

Materials Management

Purchasing

- Purchase non-toxic laundry and janitorial products by checking for any of the following:
 - Certified by Green Seal
 - ECOLOGO®
 - EPA Safer Choice or a GoodGuide.com score of 8+
 - USDA Certified Organic

- GOTS Certified (Global Organic Textile Standard)
- Oeko-Tox
- Standard 100
- Bluesign
- Purchase low volatile organic compound (VOC) paints, markers, and air fresheners
- Research products to ensure low VOCs and eliminate products containing chemicals from the Proposition 65 list (commonly seen as warnings with the phrase “known to the state of California to cause cancer.”)
- Purchase rechargeable batteries and appliances only.
- Reuse envelopes and packaging instead of buying new
- Purchase products made with at least 30% recycled content or hemp/bamboo when available.
- Copy products should be 100% recycled content or Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certified.
- Purchase washable, reusable items to eliminate the use of disposable products.
- If disposable products must be purchased, purchase Biodegradable Products Institute (BPI) certified items, which certifies products as compostable and PFAS-free. Bamboo, palm leaf, or hemp are generally great options.
- Choose products with minimal packaging; avoid plastic, polystyrene, and aerosol.
- When purchasing consumables, choose items with refillable bottles, rather than single use plastics.
- Purchase bulk coffee or biodegradable coffee pods instead of individual plastic pods.
- Use environmentally friendly carpet tiles when replacing carpet
- Purchase biodegradable garbage bags.

Practices

- Donate reusable office items to charitable organizations if applicable.
- Recycle e-waste (Sadoff) and toner cartridges (Staples or HP).
- Set printers and copiers to default to two-sided printing
- Minimize use of disinfectants on surfaces in restrooms or on door handles. Use a hydrogen peroxide-based disinfecting product with an automatic dilution system.
- Take mesh bags for produce and cloth bags when shopping to avoid single use plastic bags.
- Patronize local businesses and services as much as possible

Land Management

Purchasing

- Consider rechargeable electric options when replacing gas powered equipment
- Choose native plants when purchasing new landscaping materials. When possible, avoid native plants that have names in quotation marks, indicating the plant is a genetically altered version of the original native plant.

Practices

- Implement current Land Management plan and revise as needed

- Use Integrated Pest Management (IPM) to avoid unnecessary pesticide use

Sustainable Events

Purchasing

- Choose caterers who use reusable items, including reusable trays when possible. Avoid any plastic or Styrofoam.
- Choose bulk packaged snacks rather than individually wrapped pastries, crackers, chips, etc.
- Avoid cheap, plastic handouts and giveaways. Share digital links instead of printouts and provide a great experience instead of a branded stress ball.
- Ask for event RSVPs to avoid purchasing more food than is necessary.

Practices

- Eliminate excess waste by using standard dishes and utensils instead of disposables. If cloth napkins are an option, choose those instead of paper!
- Instead of assuming all people want meat, make plant-based the default and give people the choice to opt in to add meat.
- Use pitchers/coolers for drinks. If that is not possible, choose canned or glass containers over plastic when possible.
- Keep exterior doors closed. It is hard - and energy intensive - to maintain a target indoor temperature when exterior doors are open. Worried this will make guests feel unwelcome? Consider posting a greeter by the (closed) door.
- Prepare for food leftovers by bringing reusable storage containers to collect remaining buffet food, if allowed by the caterer.

Education

As we strive to fulfill this plan, we will endeavor to promote these policies to other religious communities, organizations, parishes, and individuals. To that end, we recommend posting our guidelines to the CSA website and referencing them in social media posts.

Suggest to various merchants and restaurant managers to replace non-recyclable and single-use plastics and Styrofoam with more eco-friendly items. Have a packet of suggestions ready to share.

To integrate our mission into our workplace, we also recommend:

- Include a reference to these guidelines in the employee handbook.
- Annual staff training to update staff on how they can be part of these efforts and to provide training on proper sorting for recycling and composting.
- Using the Laudato Si' Action Team (LSAT) as our Green Team to promote, educate, and monitor efforts.
- Using Sustainability Jungle and other similar sites to keep this guide and the "Mother Earth Recommends" guide updated with best practices and products.

Resources

Harvard University's Sustainable Purchasing Guide: https://sustainable.harvard.edu/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/Harvard-Sustainable-Purchasing-Guide_2023.pdf

Washington and Lee University's "Sustainability How To" pages: <https://my.wlu.edu/sustainability/sustainability-how-to>

Greener by Default makes plant-based food the default, while giving diners the choice to opt into meat/dairy. This link is to their event tips and suggestions page:

<https://www.greenerbydefault.com/events>

Approved by CSA Leadership Team 8/20/2024