

Responsible Purchasing Network: Guidance and Resources



1. Overview of Organization

Name of Organization: Responsible Purchasing Network (RPN)

Website: <http://www.responsiblepurchasing.org/>

Email: membership@responsiblepurchasing.org

Funding Sources: Membership Dues, Consulting Services, Grants

Organization Type: Non-profit

Partners: <http://www.responsiblepurchasing.org/about/partners.php>

Location: USA

Mission: "Promote and practice responsible purchasing by identifying best practices, developing effective purchasing tools, educating the market, and using their collective purchasing power to maximize environmental stewardship, protect human health, and support local and global sustainability." ¹

2. Sustainable Purchasing Activities and Resources

1. RPN's Green Building Initiative

<http://www.responsiblepurchasing.org/buildings/>

2. Green Hardware Supplies Fact Sheets

<http://www.responsiblepurchasing.org/resources/greenHardwareSuppliesFactSheets/index.php>

3. Green Purchasing State Profiles

<http://www.responsiblepurchasing.org/resources/stateProfiles/index.php>

4. RPN Publications

<http://www.responsiblepurchasing.org/publications/index.php>

3. Sustainable Purchasing Guidance Materials

1. 10 Steps to Starting a Sustainable Purchasing Program

<http://www.responsiblepurchasing.org/publications/tensteps.pdf>

Lists 10 steps in bullet point format that are involved in starting a sustainable purchasing program.

Year Guidance was Published: Unknown

Access: Full public access

Types of Purchasers: Unspecified

Regional Focus: Unspecified

Languages: English

Topics covered:

✓ environmental sustainability

social sustainability

economic sustainability

Steps:

- ✓ Assemble a sustainable purchasing team; ✓ Establish a process for working together;
- ✓ Define the scope of sustainable procurement initiatives; ✓ Prioritize contracts to change;
 - ✓ Research environmentally preferable alternatives; ✓ Revise bid specifications;
- ✓ Evaluate bids; ✓ Advertise the availability of sustainable products on new contracts;
 - ✓ Get feedback from end-users; ✓ Track and publicize success

2. Green 101 Purchasing Guides

http://www.responsiblepurchasing.org/purchasing_guides/all/

RPN produces Purchasing Guides for a range of products and services.

Year Guidance was Published: Unknown

Access: Members only

Types of Purchasers: Unspecified

Regional Focus: Unspecified

Languages: English

Topics covered:

✓✓✓ environmental sustainability ✓✓✓ social sustainability ✓✓✓ economic sustainability

Steps:

- ✓✓✓ Form a stakeholder team; ✓✓✓ Establish baseline data; ✓✓✓ Set goals for procurement;
- ✓✓✓ Adopt a policy with clear guidance; ✓✓✓ Evaluate standards and specifications;
- ✓✓✓ Improve staff and end-user practices; ✓✓✓ Measure progress towards social and environmental goals

Product categories covered:

✓✓✓ Bottled water; ✓✓✓ cleaners; ✓✓✓ computers; ✓✓✓ copy paper; ✓✓✓ fleets; ✓✓✓ light-duty tires and wheel weights;
✓✓✓ lighting; ✓✓✓ office electronics; ✓✓✓ paint; ✓✓✓ toner cartridges.

Service categories covered:

✓✓✓ Carbon offsets; ✓✓✓ food services; ✓✓✓ green power.

3. NASPO-RPN Purchasing Guides

http://www.responsiblepurchasing.org/resources/naspo_rpn_purchasing_guides/index.php

"In partnership with the National Association of State Procurement Officials (NASPO) and on behalf of the Washington State Department of Enterprise Services (DES) and Washington State Department of Ecology, RPN has prepared a set of new Green Purchasing Best Practices Guides, designed to promote environmentally preferable purchasing at the state level." ⁱⁱ The NASPO-RPN Guides include a range of product category guides summarized below, as well as a General Green Purchasing Best Practices Guide. The steps discussed in the General Guide are listed below.

Year Guidance was Published: 2012 & 2013

Access: Full public access

Types of Purchasers: State

Regional Focus: Unspecified

Languages: English

Topics covered:

✓✓✓ environmental sustainability ✓✓✓ social sustainability ✓✓✓ economic sustainability

Steps:

- ✓✓✓ Prioritize green purchasing opportunities; ✓✓✓ Investigate cooperative purchasing opportunities for green products; ✓✓✓ Avoid green washing; ✓✓✓ Use green product certifications and other eco-labels in bid specifications;
 - ✓✓✓ Add green products to bid solicitations; ✓✓✓ Use easy green purchasing language; ✓✓✓ Evaluate vendors; ✓✓✓ Spend analysis; ✓✓✓ Evaluate green products and services offered by bidders; ✓✓✓ Life cycle cost analysis; ✓✓✓ Promote green products on state contracts; ✓✓✓ Track and report green purchasing activities, achievements and impacts

Product categories covered in additional NASPO-RPN guidance documents:

✓✓✓ Architectural paints; ✓✓✓ compostable service ware; ✓✓✓ deicers; ✓✓✓ furniture; ✓✓✓ imaging equipment; ✓✓✓ traffic paint

4. Observations

RPN offers guidance on sustainable and green purchasing – some public, some for its members. Guidance is generally geared towards US state and local government agencies, but may be useful to other organizations. The 10-step program level guidance follows similar steps to the other guidance documents reviewed, but doesn't provide detail on how organizations implement the advice. More detail is given on product category guidance, tools such as life cycle costing, and case studies on US states' Environmentally preferable purchasing (EPP) programs. The extent of marketplace adoption of this guidance is unclear.

ⁱ RPN. *Mission and Values*. Accessed from: http://www.responsiblepurchasing.org/about/mission_values.php

ⁱⁱ RPN. *NASPO-RPN Purchasing Guides*. Accessed from: http://www.responsiblepurchasing.org/resources/naspo_rpn_purchasing_guides/index.php