



Oregon
Environmental
Council
It's Your Oregon

Founded in 1968, Oregon Environmental Council (OEC) is a statewide nonprofit dedicated to advancing innovative, collaborative solutions to Oregon's environmental challenges for today and future generations.

Healthy Purchasing Coalition

Who

The Healthy Purchasing Initiative is built on the idea that a coalition of individuals and organizations, acting collaboratively and with a harmonized approach, can have a bigger impact than any one of us acting alone. Together we can create positive change.

What

Oregon Environmental Council (OEC), a nonprofit founded in 1968, and our partners are facilitating the Healthy Purchasing Initiative because we want to strengthen demand for innovative goods and services that are designed to be safer, less hazardous, and more sustainable for people and our ecosystems.

We want to protect the health of our employees and our communities.

Why

By forming a coalition to take action in a collaborative fashion, all members of the coalition will benefit directly. We commit to sharing our experiences and learning from each other.

A coalition makes it easier and more efficient for us to develop and use smart contract language, specifications, and best practices.

The benefits of this shared effort include saving staff time and money, getting better total value, and ultimately driving innovation that leads to more sustainable goods and services for our employees, clients, and communities.

Coalition Members



MULTNOMAH
COUNTY



How

Joining our coalition is free. Members of the Healthy Purchasing Coalition agree to adopt the following six-part framework:

1. Review organizational policies
2. Identify pilot projects, commodities, or contracts
3. Integrate healthy purchasing elements
4. Establish market feedback loops
5. Set goals and measure progress
6. Share with coalition members

Making more sustainable purchases easy: A shared framework for action

The coalition is designed to be an informal partnership between like-minded organizations that purchase goods and services. No financial commitments are required to join. Member organizations are free to leave the coalition at any time and at their own discretion. As part of our collaborative partnership, coalition members agree to pursue the the following framework for action.

1. Review organization policies

Determine whether existing policy will enable your organization to integrate chemical hazard disclosure, avoidance, and green chemistry innovation into your purchasing decisions.

Having an enabling policy provides a clear legal basis for integrating healthy purchasing options into your decision-making. If no enabling policy is currently in place, evaluate the feasibility of adopting an enabling policy.

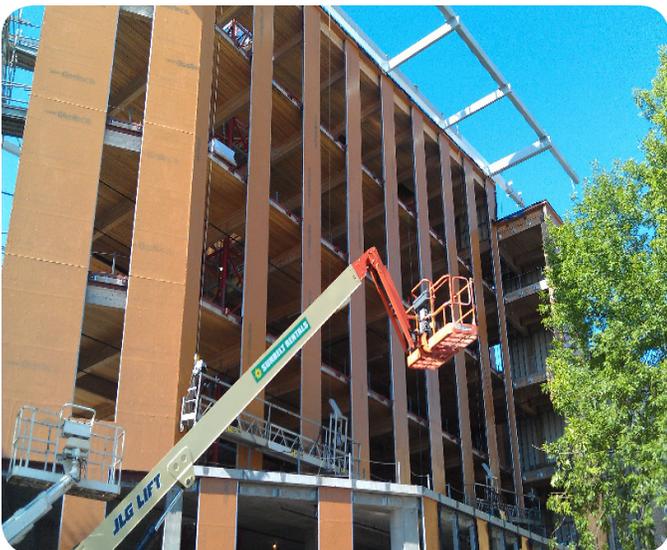
OEC and our partners are available to assist in policy development and adoption. If an enabling policy is already in place, you do not need to adopt a new one to join the initiative.

2. Identify pilot projects or contracts

Identify a few pilot purchases (goods or services) to test healthy purchasing in your organization.

For each organization this may be different, but interior building products (furniture, flooring, paints, etc.) and cleaning supplies both share some characteristics that make them possible priorities: likely presence of hazardous chemicals, high potential for exposure (workers, public, environment), and emerging industry innovation.

As part of this process, identify staff champions to lead the pilots.



Transparency is responsible and possible

One of the biggest barriers to choosing safer, less hazardous products is a lack of clear, transparent, and actionable information. We lack information about where chemical hazards are present in products, but we also lack that information in a format that allows for efficient decision making by purchasers.

When we have more transparency in the market place, information that is both accurate and usable, we can then select products that are safer and less hazardous.

Greater transparency will allow us to create change using the market and better protect workers, the public, and our environment while also rewarding innovation. We can use transparency to create clear standards for more sustainable products through a more comprehensive assessment of value.

3. Integrate healthy purchasing elements into contracts

Include the healthy purchasing elements of transparency, hazard avoidance, and safer alternatives, beyond what your organization may already be doing, in at least three pilot contracts or specifications over the next two years.

Examples of how transparency and hazard avoidance can be included in contracts and procurements include:

- Incorporating the use of Health Product Declarations (HPDs) into building materials selection or Architecture & Engineering contracts
- Avoiding products that contain restricted substances or chemicals of concern
- Specifying a relevant third-party certification that features hazard criteria
- Providing the opportunity for proposers to describe how green chemistry innovation is used for the good or service
- Requesting a Green Screen hazard score

4. Establish market feedback loops

Promote healthy purchasing elements in vendor outreach, market research, and in solicitations. Provide feedback to vendors that unsuccessfully address healthy purchasing in proposals during debrief or at other appropriate opportunities.

This will allow for informal information exchange that helps build awareness among vendors and manufacturers that transparency and safer alternatives to toxic chemicals is an emerging area of importance in purchasing.

Ultimately, this can help increase the likelihood that successful proposals include these elements and allow innovative vendors and manufacturers to distinguish themselves from their competition in new and important ways.

Real, shared progress and success on sustainability goals

We all recognize that what gets measured gets managed, and healthy purchasing is no exception.

5. Set goals and measure progress over time

This includes establishing a baseline using simple measures that could include:

- Counting the number of contracts in which healthy purchasing elements were included
- The number for different departments using healthy purchasing elements in contracts
- The amount spent on contracts where healthy purchasing elements were included, or
- Quantity of products purchased that contain no chemicals of high concern

Establishing a baseline and measuring progress over time will allow your organization to highlight its own innovation in sustainable purchasing in reports or presentations should you choose to do so.

6. Share with other coalition members

Sharing successes and lessons learned with coalition members will make implementing healthy purchasing more efficient for everyone, since we all have limited time, resources, and expertise. Also, we need coordination on our approach and priorities to ensure that we have the maximum impact in the market place.

As part of the initiative, member organizations commit to having at least one staff representative designated to participate in coalition communications.

We anticipate a quarterly conference call initially to ensure effective communication among coalition members, in addition to external communications between individual members regarding healthy purchasing efforts.



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