Green Purchasing Guide

Best Practices

- Opt for products that contain recycled content like paper with 100% recycled content or plastic products that have at least 30% post consumer content in them. This help shows that there is a market for recycling.

- Purchase reusables or refillables when avalible. Example: Purchasing pen refills.

- Try and avoid items made with plastic or polystyrene and instead use aluminum, glass, or silicone alternative.

- When purchasing electronics look for EPEAT Certifications to find the most sustainable option.

- Giving away swag items? Make sure they are something students will actually use and want! Think about purchasing something reusable so that students will use your branded item again and again.
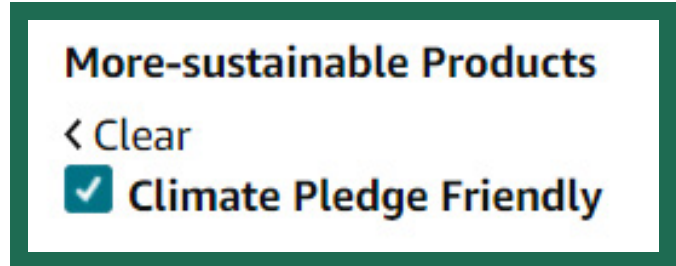
Sustainable Strategy

Try purchasing rechargeable batteries. Not only will you save money, but you're helping the environment!

Questions to Ask Before Purchasing

1. Can you share or borrow the product?
2. What will happen to the product after purchase? Is it single use that could be replaced with a reusable option?
3. Have you checked UAB Surplus for the item?

Online Purchases

- Avoid rush or overnight shipping. Choosing these options often have higher emissions than the standard shipping option.

- Right Size: Make sure to right size what you buy to prevent overordering and wasting of materials.

- Look for sustainable filters when shopping online. Example: Selecting Climate Pledge Friendly on Amazon Orders.

  More-sustainable Products
  ‹ Clear
  ✅ **Climate Pledge Friendly**

- Consolidate purchases to reduce packaging waste and minimize emissions from multiple deliveries.

- If you are purchasing snacks online, try and purchase locally instead. If local is not an option, look for USDA Organic snacks.

- Instead of purchasing bottled water, purchase aluminum can water with options available in sparkling and still water.

- Avoid single use decorations and make decorations out of items already available or look for reusable holiday decorations so that they can last for years to come.

- Choose candy packaged in cardboard like Dots or Nerds to avoid plastic packaging.

Food Orders

Before Event

- Stay away from plastic and polystyrene: It is best to use a beverage dispenser or aluminum cans.
- Use reusable plates and utensils. Don't have any? Email solarhouse@uab.edu to borrow our 50-person plate and utensil kits. We will even wash them!
- When ordering, ask for limited packaging as possible. Ask to not have napkins or plastic utensils included if you already have some in supply.
- Order vegetarian meals when avalible. If not possible, try to avoid red meat.
- Limit food waste by asking for RSVPs or by having a food recovery plan in place. Visit FeedBHAM if you are hosting a large event with guaranteed leftover food.

During Event

- Make sure to notify attendees what can and cannot be recycled while also pointing out the recycling and trash bins.
- Brag on yourself: Inform your guests that they are participating in a "green" event, and even point out the "green" features! This will encourage them to host a green event and be aware of ways to reduce their impact in everyday life.

Post Event

- Sharing is Caring: If there's leftover food, offer to let people take it home. Ask the caterer to provide recyclable to-go containers and encourage people to use their own containers.
- Leftovers? If you have enough events with food and often produce leftovers, consider doing a food rescue with FeedBHAM.
- Recycle! UAB recycles clean paper/cardboard, clean aluminum cans, and clean #1 and #2 plastic bottles. UAB Recycling has a wealth of information about what is recycled on campus.

Certifications

Fair Trade Certified and Fairtrade International

Think about labor conditions and opt for Fair Trade Certified or Fair Trade International products. These certifications ensure that those producing the product have safe working conditions and fair compensation.

Green Seal

Green Seal sets health and sustainability standards for products. This certification allows for more informed purchasing decisions.

Energy Star

Look for Energy Star Certification on electronics to make well informed purchasing decisions. The Environmental Protection Agency administers Energy Star and gives unbiased information for consumers to purchase the most energy-efficient product.

EPEAT

Opt for environmentally friendly technology. EPEAT gives consumers more purchasing information in the IT sector about which items are more environmentally friendly.

FSC

Look for paper products that are produced with post-consumer recycled content or from responsibly managed forests.