

# Eco Friendly Purchasing



Everyone deserves the opportunity to live a healthy, full life — but not everyone in our country has an equal opportunity to achieve this. CityHealth, an initiative of the de Beaumont Foundation and Kaiser Permanente, promotes a package of tried and tested policies that ensure all people in our largest cities have access to healthy choices.

Together, with visionary city leaders, we can make sure that all people have access to a safe place to live, a healthy body and mind, and a thriving environment. Policy solutions like Eco-Friendly Purchasing can help make communities healthier and resolve critical health disparities — now and decades down the road.

Toxic chemicals that damage our health can be found in everything from cleaning products to carpets. City leaders can lead by example and lessen exposure for city workers, residents, and visitors by buying products free of toxic chemicals. When our leaders buy eco-friendly products for city buildings, they make it clear that the health of our communities and our environment is worth protecting.

## THE TOXIC CHEMICALS CHALLENGE

- Americans spend 90 percent of their time indoors, and common products such as furnishings, flooring, and cleaning products — products frequently purchased by cities — often contain chemicals that contribute to increased indoor air contamination and adverse health effects.
- Annual healthcare costs and lost earnings from low-level but daily exposure to chemicals found in common products exceed \$340 billion, or more than 2.3% of the U.S. GDP.
- People in low-income communities and communities of color experience higher levels of exposure to hazardous chemicals and conditions, exacerbating health disparities.

## A HEALTHY SOLUTION: ECO-FRIENDLY PURCHASING

- **Protects City Workers** — People who provide vital services to cities, such as cleaning, foodservice, maintenance, and waste management, are particularly at risk of developing asthma and other illnesses when using products containing toxic chemicals. This disproportionately affects communities of color, who make up the majority of cleaning workers in large cities.
- **Safe, Affordable Alternatives Exist** — There are affordable alternatives to toxic products — and cities save resources in preventable health care costs. Eco-friendly purchasing is the smart thing for cities to do.
- **Cities Can Lead the Way** — Cities spend billions of dollars annually purchasing goods and services. When cities choose to procure goods free of harmful chemicals and practices, municipalities can help decrease demand for the extraction, manufacturing, and disposal of toxic chemicals while improving the health of their workforce and communities.

# Going For Gold

CityHealth annually rates Eco-Friendly Purchasing policies in cities with criteria that set the “gold standard” in each policy area. These criteria were developed with input from national experts, are backed by evidence, and work to reduce or remove systemic barriers to health equity. Medals are awarded to cities that meet the elements necessary for the best quality policy (gold), a good quality policy (silver), and a passable quality policy (bronze). Cities with no policy, or that don’t meet the minimum threshold for a bronze medal, receive no medal.

## ECO-FRIENDLY PURCHASING MEDAL CRITERIA



	Bronze	Silver	Gold
1. The city has an eco-friendly purchasing policy that requires annual reporting.	✓	✓	✓
2. The city has an eco-friendly purchasing policy that meets independent standards for at least one of the following high-priority categories: furnishings, foodware, cleaning products.	✗	✓	✓
3. The city’s eco-friendly purchasing policy applies to all requests for proposals (RFPs) and contracts.	✗	✗	✓

## PRODUCT CATEGORIES

### FOODWARE (FSW) Must meet ALL of the following performance requirements:

1. Prohibit EPS foam (“Styrofoam”) and PFAS in FSW.
2. Prefer reusables.
3. Where reusables are not feasible, prioritize FSW that are recyclable or compostable in local facilities.
4. Use **Biodegradable Products Institute (BPI)** or **Compost Manufacturing Alliance (CMA)** Certifications to define compostable.
5. Require single-use accessories to be made available only upon request.

### CLEANERS & DISINFECTANTS Must meet ONE OR MORE of the following performance requirements:

Green Seal • EcoLogo • US Environmental Protection Agency’s Safer Choice

### FURNISHINGS Furniture, carpet, or flooring must meet ONE OR MORE of the following performance requirements:

Furniture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Business and Institutional Furniture Manufacturers (BIFMA)</b>,               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Criterion 7.4.4 (Targeted Chemical Elimination)</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Health Care Without Harm’s (HCWH) Healthier Hospitals Healthier Interiors</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>List of companies and products</b></li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>GreenScreen Certification for Furniture and Fabric</b></li> </ul>
Carpet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Health Care Without Harm’s (HCWH) Healthier Carpet</b> (at least HCWH’s Silver Level)</li> </ul>
Flooring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Health Care Without Harm’s (HCWH) Healthier Flooring</b> (at least HCWH’s Silver Level)</li> <li>• <b>SF Approved</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Only for hard-backed carpet tiles and adhesives)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

## SAN FRANCISCO LEADS IN ECO-FRIENDLY PURCHASING

San Francisco passed a landmark ordinance in 2005 to establish and implement purchasing requirements for targeted, high-impact product categories. San Francisco’s rigorous standards now cover nine comprehensive product categories to protect the health of its workers and residents. Adopted in 2018, San Francisco’s cutting-edge carpet requirement encompasses recyclability as well as material safety and transparency and has served as a model in shaping the broader movement toward safer carpet products.