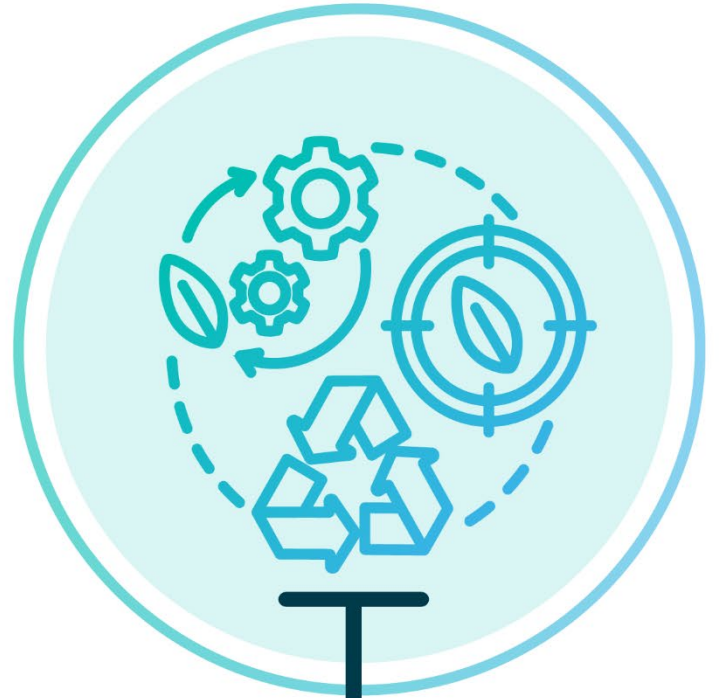




Washington State
DEPARTMENT OF
ENTERPRISE SERVICES



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ANNUAL REPORT

Greening Washington: Environmentally Preferred Purchasing



State
Efficiency &
Environmental
Performance
www.commerce.wa.gov





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SEEP EPP Workgroup

DES | Commerce | Ecology | Liquor & Cannabis Board | Labor & Industries | Transportation
Social & Health Services | Corrections | Fish and Wildlife | Veterans Affairs



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Reducing toxics and plastics in Washington state

The State Efficiency and Environmental Performance (SEEP) [Environmentally Preferred Purchasing \(EPP\) Workgroup's](#) initiatives help state agencies and other public organizations adopt green purchasing habits to safeguard the well-being of Washington employees, citizens and environment. Green goods and services help the state conserve energy or water, prevent climate change, are made with recycled content, and protect human health and the environment by preventing toxic chemical use, emissions, and waste.

[Executive Order 20-01](#) calls for reductions in greenhouse gases, toxics, and solid waste or plastics. DES and the SEEP EPP Workgroup developed the Washington EPP program in response to the EO. The SEEP EPP workgroup is a collaborative effort among 13 state agencies, led by DES as the Chair, and Commerce as the SEEP coordinator. The team took a systematic, enterprise-wide approach to create clear guidance and tools to increase awareness of/compliance with EPP laws and policies, along with shifting agency buying habits.

Together, we are decreasing the use of toxics and plastics through education and tools to help agencies make more informed purchasing and contracting decisions.

The **SEEP EPP program** includes:

- ✓ The new [Green Purchasing Guide](#) to give state agencies clear and user-friendly instructions for reducing toxics and plastics in their purchasing processes.
- ✓ A new [green purchasing webpage](#) to find all necessary green info in one place.
- ✓ [Green purchasing training](#) for state procurement professionals.

Introduction

State government spends more than \$2 billion each year on goods and services, ranging from paper and pencils to computers, fuel and food. To meet green purchasing goals, DES and the SEEP EPP program provide the tools and guidance to state purchasing and contracting professionals to help them choose products that have fewer chemicals, toxics, and plastics, and that produce less solid waste. We collect, analyze and report green spend data to identify where our state is doing well buying green and where we can do better.

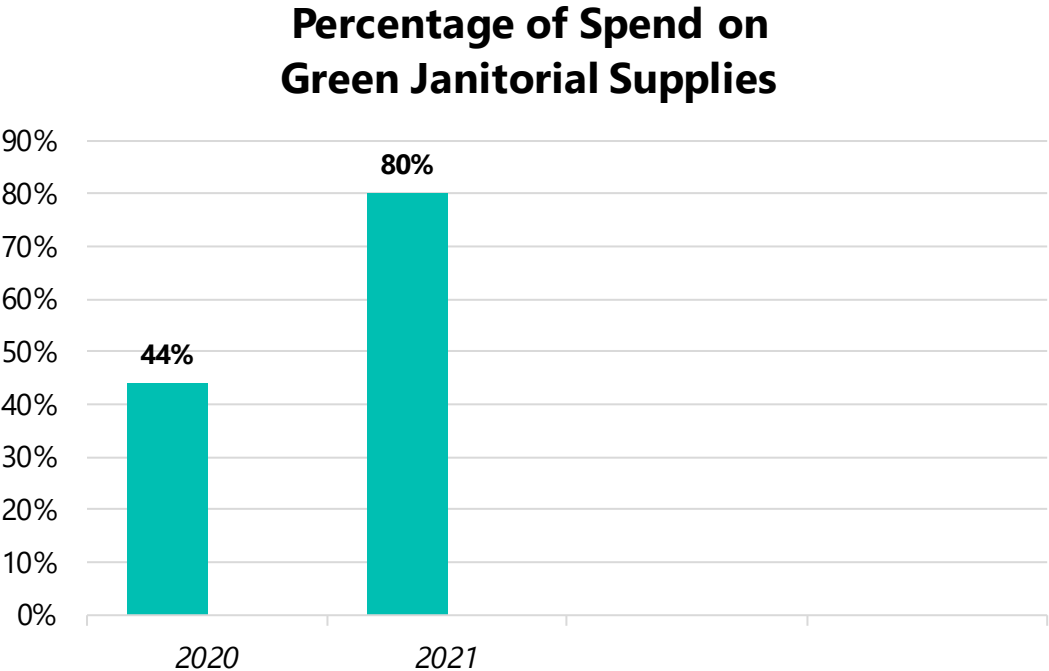
The inaugural [Greening WA annual report](#) captured first-year (2020) spend data to establish a baseline for purchasing habits. This second annual report provides a look at how green spending in Washington state in 2021 compared to the previous year, showing positive changes happening.

Results

The new Washington EPP program, including the new Green Purchasing Guide, has led to a notable reduction in toxic products the state purchased in two categories: **janitorial supplies** and **computers**.

Janitorial supplies

The most definitive increase in green purchases is in janitorial supplies, as cleaning products often contain toxic chemicals. Purchases of green janitorial products nearly doubled from 2020 to 2021.

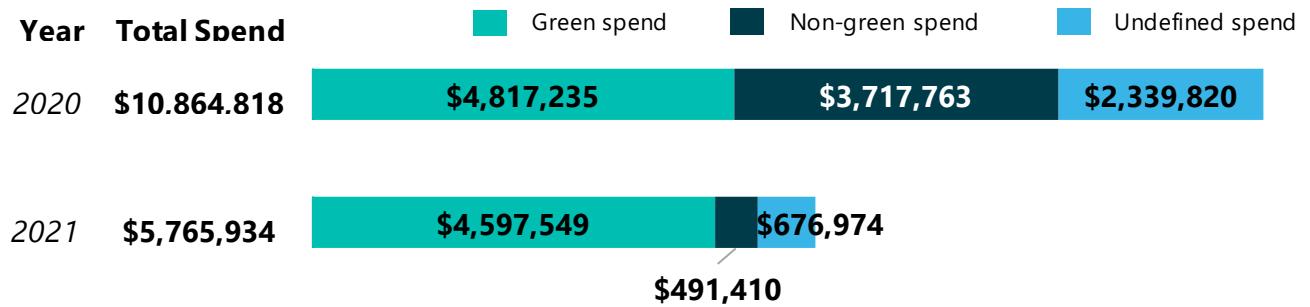


Starting in 2020, cleaning standards became more rigorous due to COVID-19. DES, ECY and the SEEP EPP Workgroup deployed a green cleaning campaign with guidance, tools and training.

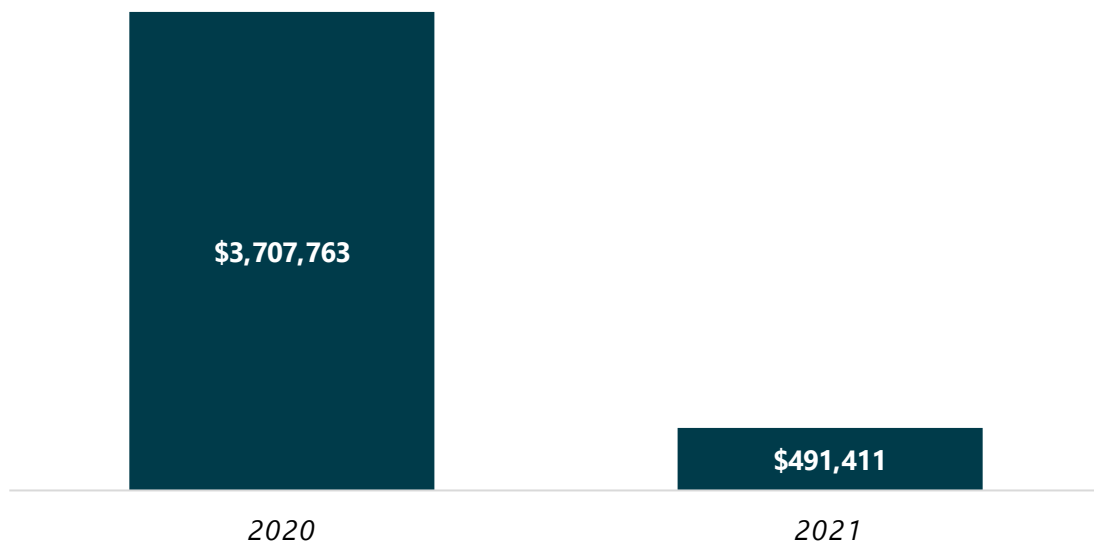
After that effort:

- Non-green purchases **dropped from \$3.7 million** in 2020 **to \$491,000** in 2021.
- The undefined category, or products that haven't yet been evaluated, **dropped from \$2.3 million** in 2020 **to \$677,000** in 2021.
- Because of a shift to telework, the total spend on janitorial supplies dropped by nearly half **from \$10.8 million** in 2020 **to \$5.7 million** in 2021.

WA Janitorial Supplies Spend Comparison 2020 – 2021 (pre/post EPP implementation)



Non-Green Janitorial Spend



Making an impact: How DES helped childcare centers keep toxic chemicals away from young children

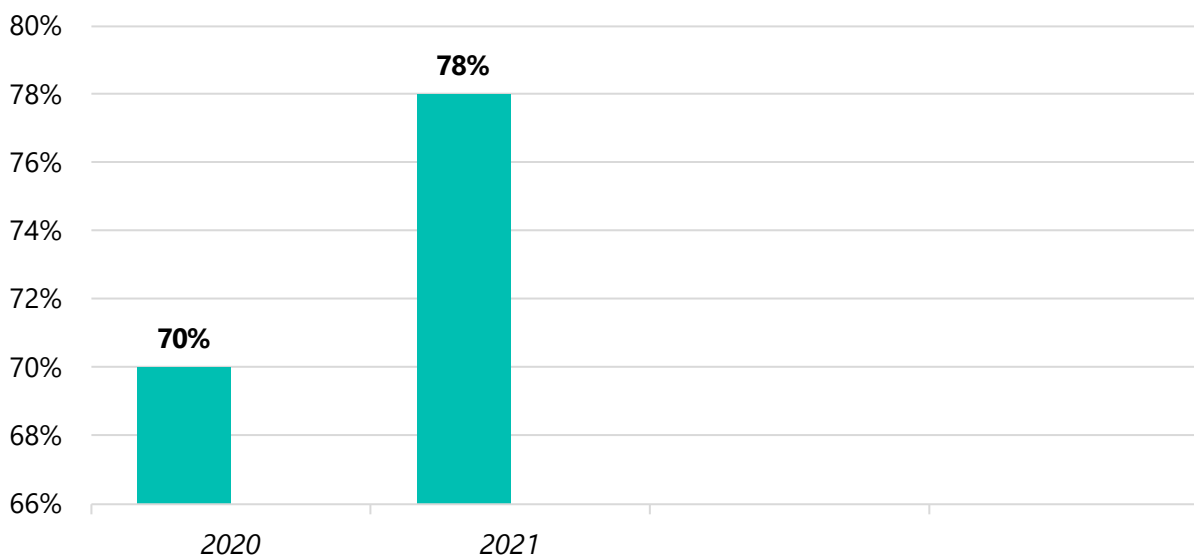
In 2021, following a year of strict COVID-19 safety protocols, people began to pay closer attention to the ingredients in their cleaning and janitorial supplies. DES collaborated with its green consultant, Responsible Purchasing Network (RPN), and the Department of Ecology and the University of Washington to create educational materials for agencies about green janitorial and cleaning products to maintain COVID safety measures minus harmful chemicals.

During this time, a customer at the Washington State Department of Health shared that childcare centers were struggling to figure out how to keep babies and young children safe from COVID without using bleach. They needed reputable information and didn't know where to turn. After learning this, DES, ECY and RPN created guidance for childcare centers to help them identify green alternatives to bleach for use around children. DES then went a step further; since childcare centers cannot purchase from DES-managed statewide contracts, they put the childcare centers directly in contact with vendors to get the supplies they needed. In the end, DES helped solve childcare centers' problem by recommending safer alternatives and connecting them with vendors from whom they could purchase the green supplies.

Computers

Washington state agencies spent \$41 million on computers in 2020. Because this category impacts every state agency, DES saw a tremendous potential to shift spending to green alternatives.

Percentage of Spend on Green Computers and Equipment

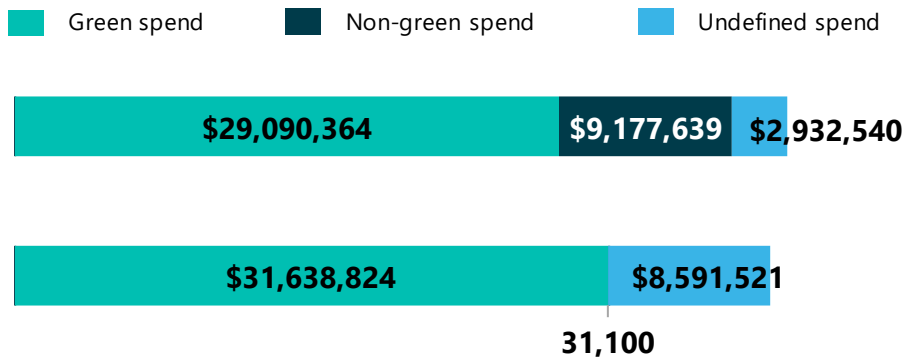


Before DES and SEEP launched EPP standards, Washington state government spent just over \$12 million on non-green and undefined computer purchases in 2020. The undefined category includes new technology that has not yet been evaluated for green standards.

After EPP implementation, computer purchasers for Washington state made a conscious shift away from non-green products. Non-green purchases **dropped from \$9.1 million in 2020 to \$31,100 in 2021**. Green computer purchases increased by \$2.5 million in 2021*.

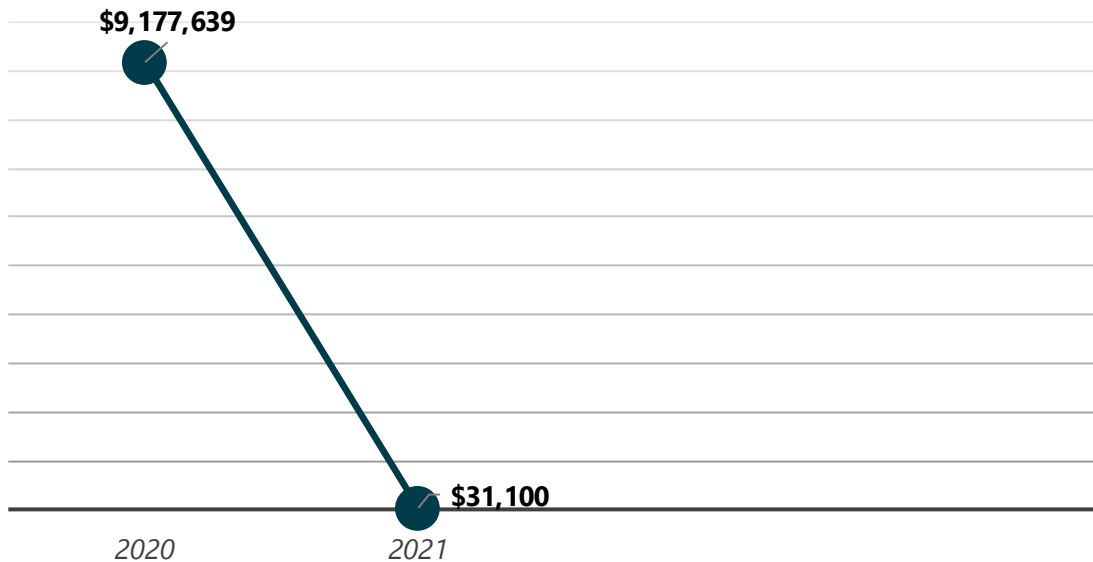
**Note – number of computer suppliers and the specific companies reporting varied between the 2 years, so not a apples-to-apples comparison; however green purchasing trends reflected are still showing positive.*

WA Computer Spend Comparison 2020 – 2021 (pre/post EPP implementation)



This indicates that when purchasers were given information about green purchases, they opted to buy more green products (as well as emerging technology, represented in the undefined category).

Non-Green Computer Spend



**Note – number of computer suppliers and the specific companies reporting varied between the 2 years, so not a apples-to-apples comparison; however green purchasing trends reflected are still showing positive.*

Next steps: Working with suppliers to go greener

DES and the SEEP EPP Workgroup are encouraged to see purchasers make a clear shift away from non-green products when given the guidance to make an informed decision. DES is working with suppliers to create clear labels to identify green options for new products. The goal is that green computer purchases will increase as labeling improves.

Success stories

Partner agencies shared their green purchasing success stories for other agencies to follow.

Washington State Liquor and Cannabis Board (LCB)

LCB established purchasing standards for 115 items including office supplies, janitorial supplies, and IT hardware. The agency reviews the standards quarterly to find the most effective and compliant items for purchase. Currently the agency standards meet 70% of green purchasing requirements.

LCB conducts regular purchasing reviews that focus on green purchasing and general procurement policy compliance. Results are shared across the agency highlighting where they are doing well buying green, and where they can improve. It is intended to spread awareness and steps employees can take to buy safer products. LCB has two internal webpages that focus on purchasing compliance and SEEP product categories that detail what to avoid and acceptable alternatives.

LCB is also tracking purchasing and contracts training compliance to ensure users have the most up-to-date information. LCB target is to have 100% of users trained within 90 purchasing days of delegation approval.

Washington State Department of Transportation

Single-use plastics policy

WSDOT's Purchasing and Materials Management Office (PMMO) Team is finalizing a new agency policy to address reducing single use plastics in the workplace. SEEP Executive Order 20-01 directs agencies to reduce toxins and solid wastes (plastics) from our state, which we can do by reducing the use and/or purchase of single use plastics. This policy will encourage using and purchasing only biodegradable or reusable food/beverage service products for agency sponsored events, and hopefully help promote awareness of the WA State Green Purchasing Guide amongst procurement professionals. The draft policy has been reviewed by stakeholders and a Q&A document to address questions/comments received from those reviews have been created. There are a few more steps to complete before it becomes an active policy, but progress is being made.

EPEAT Ecolabels & computer equipment purchases

WSDOT has IT hardware standards for computer equipment, most of which is procured through our statewide contracted vendor Dell. Almost everything Dell sells qualifies under EPEAT (Electronic Product Environmental Assessment Tool) guidelines for sustainable electronics is a leading global ecolabel in the technology sector. Items on the EPEAT registry have undergone a comprehensive review and grading process to receive either a bronze, silver, or gold level EPEAT rating. Grading criteria address environmental and social impacts across the entire product lifecycle of the product, from extraction of resources and manufacturing, through to assembly, use and end of life. Most models we can (and do) purchase through DELL are in the "Gold" Tier.

HP ink & toner recycling program

The toner recycling program with HP Business Rewards enables our agency to recycle ink and toner cartridges to earn points, and from eligible contract purchases made with Office Depot. These points can be redeemed to obtain new multi-function printers (at no cost) which has an average savings of \$650-700 per printer. It's free to participate in the program and HP ships materials to properly recycle so it doesn't end up in landfills. This program has environmental impacts, providing an eco-friendly and efficient way to recycle ink and toner, plus costs savings on new hardware.

Quarterly business reviews

PMMO coordinates quarterly meetings with essential vendors of statewide contracts focused on green spend. WSDOT quarterly green spend data is reviewed with vendors like Waxie and Office Depot by region or commodities, including green spend trends and green product alternatives.

Department of Social and Health Services

DSHS has informed purchasing staff of the DES policies related to environmentally preferred purchasing and the new Washington State Green Purchasing Guide for state agencies. DSHS conducts quarterly meetings with Administration and Division Purchasing Coordinators to share and disseminate procurement related topics to include Environmentally Preferred Purchasing efforts. DSHS also generates internal listservs to disseminate green purchasing information to its purchasers across the state. We engage vendors available on DES statewide contracts to help determine our agency's green purchasing spend to develop strategies to increase our efforts to other available green products on Statewide contracts.

DSHS has received two Leadership in Greener Purchasing Awards for "State Government Sector in Greener Purchasing" from Office Depot/Office Max. They reviewed 1,000 largest customers and evaluated spend patterns based on high green spend with them compared to others in our industry.

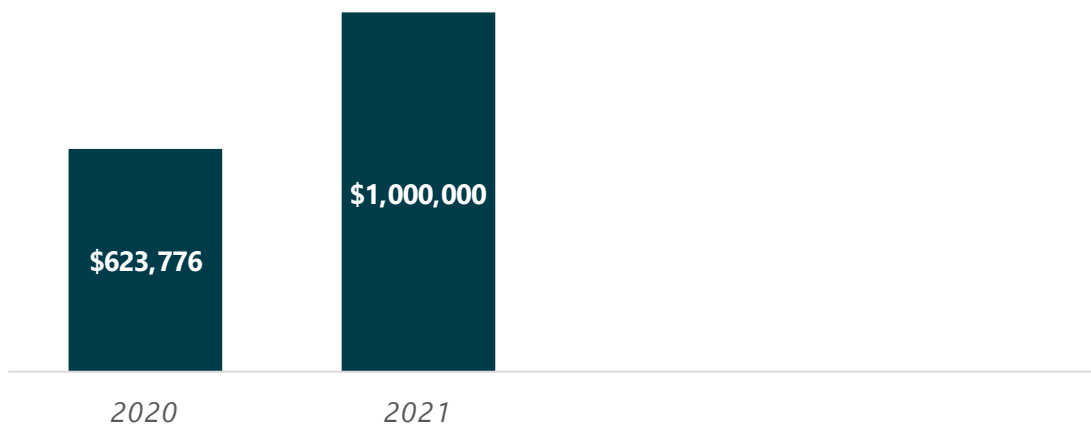
What's happening in 2023

Focus on office supplies

Our next focus for EPP: Making it easier for purchasers to identify and buy green office supplies.

As more employees work from home, green spend data shows state agencies purchased **much more non-green office supplies** in 2021 than they did in 2020. The highest volume of non-green spend appears in some of the most commonly purchased categories: **paper, toner and writing supplies.**

Amount Spend on Non-green Office Supplies



To assist, the SEEP EPP Workgroup is developing a **green office supplies awareness campaign.**

In addition, DES is working with statewide contract supplier Office Depot to enhance its website so purchasers can easily and quickly find green office supplies in these categories and all office supplies.

Green Purchasing Guide going interactive

Will include new on-demand “how to use” training

We are developing a more interactive online version of the Green Purchasing Guide, along with new on-demand training that will take procurement, contracting and purchasing staff, leaders, and executives step-by-step through the tools based on their roles.

Direct buys going green

We are working to gather, learn and share information as we increase our knowledge about direct buys. Agencies look for green purchasing guidance when buying everyday items, such as:

- Wireless keyboards and rechargeable batteries
 - Benefits vs cost; energy consumption; applying critical thinking
 - Cost effectiveness; impacts on agencies and the environment
- Understanding green certifications and labels - Navigating the ever-changing landscape
 - Why do experts approve certain ones, deny others and why?
 - For each purchase ask: Is the product certified? If not, what do you do?
- Learning how to help apply the Green Purchasing Guide to routine purchases
- Greenwashing: Claims that something is green when it may not be. How can you discern if products are actually green or not?

Identifying more green purchasing specifications

We worked with the RPN to develop 14 additional green purchasing specifications to add to the existing [EPP specifications](#) for agencies to use when going out to bid or buying green products. They include products like paint, office furniture, linen and laundry services, and others.

Closing

With shifts in where and how we work, this has been a unique period of change. We have come together As a community to learn and improve green purchasing, procurement and contracting practices to reduce toxics, plastics, and solid waste across our state.

Together we are successfully moving the dial, accomplishing significant goals to improve EPP. However, we have more to do as we continue our growth. We will continue to connect, discover, test, and spread awareness, tools and guidance on this key priority.

We look forward to continuing to collaborate and communicate to help agencies do the right thing in their daily work, for our state and its citizens.

