

The background of the top half of the page is a photograph of numerous purple flowers, likely asters, with yellow centers. A single bee is visible on one of the flowers in the center. The image is slightly faded to allow the text to be legible.

State of Minnesota Enterprise Sustainable Procurement Action Plan

2026 - 2031

Legislative charge

Executive Order (EO) 19-27 directs the development of enterprise-level plans in each focus area (procurement, fleet, solid waste, energy, greenhouse gas emissions, and water) to recommend steps to achieve the sustainability goals. EO 19-27 directs the Sustainability Steering Team, chaired by the Lieutenant Governor with eight agency commissioners as members, to approve the plans. MINN. STAT. § 16B.372 directs cabinet-level agencies to participate in the sustainability effort by developing a sustainability plan and by making measurable progress toward improving associated sustainability outcomes.

Authors

Stuart Arkley
Alison Cameron
Marcus Grubbs
Luke Jannett
Janis Keesling
Caroline McFadden

Contributors/acknowledgements

Parker Angelos
Enterprise Solid Waste and Procurement Workgroup
Enterprise Sustainability Coordinator Roundtable

Office of Enterprise Sustainability | Department of Administration

50 Sherburne Avenue | Saint Paul, MN 55155

Sustainability.mn.gov | mnsustainability@state.mn.us

Contents

Executive Summary	1
Background	2
Roles	3
Admin and SPP Actions.....	4
Agency Actions.....	5
Implementation.....	8
Data.....	8
Accomplishments and Opportunities	9
Accomplishments.....	9
Opportunities	9
Resources for Implementation	10
Authorities	11
Definitions	12

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The *2026-2031 Sustainable Procurement Action Plan* establishes an aggressive yet achievable guide for the State Enterprise (the Enterprise) to meet sustainability goals.

Sustainable procurement is different than purchasing. Purchasing is the act of buying goods or services, like simply using a credit card at the store. Sustainable procurement, however, is a holistic view that looks at the entire lifecycle of the product, from impacts related to sourcing materials or manufacturing to the final end-of-life disposal or ability to reuse it.

Sustainable procurement embodies the three pillars of sustainability: environment, economy, and society. Looking at the entire lifecycle of a product, from needs planning to disposal, supports marketplaces that make the state more resilient from environmental or economic disruptions, minimizes negative impacts, and prioritizes responsible sourcing practices. The State of Minnesota can leverage its \$3 billion dollar purchasing power to drive the market for sustainable goods and, in doing so, state operations can:

- reduce resources needed to make goods,
- minimize waste,
- improve energy and operational efficiencies,
- lower greenhouse gas emissions from product manufacturing or transportation,
- promote Minnesota's local economy,
- increase user safety,
- support equity through certified small businesses,
- lower cost and promote transparent competition, and
- use methods backed by the highest ethical standards.

Everyone in the Enterprise has a role to play in procuring sustainable goods and services. Buyers, staff, and those who can influence agency-level policies all drive sustainable procurement. This plan provides actions all agencies can employ to increase sustainable procurement.



BACKGROUND

Executive Order (EO) 19-27 directs the Enterprise to achieve goals in six sustainability focus areas: fleet, greenhouse gas emissions, energy, water, solid waste, and procurement. Relevant to this plan, the sustainable procurement goal is that 50% of enterprise-wide contracts solicited every year include any of the following elements, if they're appropriate to the contact:

1. Energy efficient products and services, such as [ENERGY STAR®](#) certified and [Federal Energy Management Program](#) (FEMP)-designated products.
2. Water efficient products and services, including [WaterSense®](#) certified products and services.
3. [BioPreferred®](#) and biobased products designated by the United States (US) Department of Agriculture (USDA).
4. Environmentally preferable products or services recommended by US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) through the [environmentally preferable purchasing program](#).
5. Products that contain [Significant New Alternative Policy \(SNAP\)](#) chemicals or other alternatives to ozone-depleting substances and high global warming potential hydrofluorocarbons, where feasible.
6. Recycled content products designated by the EPA under the [Comprehensive Procurement Guidelines program](#).

In 2023, the Sustainability Steering Team updated the sustainable procurement goal. The former goal was that 25% of total spend on select, priority contracts are sustainable purchases by 2025. The Enterprise was consistently meeting this goal, and the 19 priority contracts became examples of sustainability language in contracts and formed the foundation for the process to include sustainability considerations into contracts, from working with buyers, acquisition management specialists, and vendors. The new goal builds on the success and progress of the former goal.

This *2026-2031 Sustainable Procurement Action Plan* describes:

- 1) actions that the Office of State Procurement (OSP), the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency's (MPCA) Sustainable Procurement Program (SPP), and Office of Enterprise Sustainability (OES) will take to assist agencies.
- 2) actions that staff, buyers, and agencies leadership should take to advance sustainability procurement within their agency.

The Enterprise Solid Waste and Procurement Workgroup, staff from OSP, the SPP, and Minnesota Information Technology (MNIT), were instrumental in developing this plan and will continue to tailor the agency actions to meet state agencies' needs, respond to evolving technology, and to adhere federal, state, and local mandates.

This plan is a companion to other enterprise action plans, creating a coordinated pathway to achieve the sustainability goals.

ROLES

Sustainable Procurement Program (SPP)

The SPP is a joint initiative of the OSP and MPCA. The SPP integrates environmental and social considerations into state procurement practices and contracts. By embedding sustainability criteria into contracts, the SPP advances statutory requirements and strengthens market demand for sustainable products and services.

Through this work, the SPP has succeeded in:

- establishing sustainable state contracts that expand access to products and services meeting environmental and social standards.
- providing statewide leadership and guidance by sharing best practices.
- building and fostering a community of government purchasers who integrate sustainability into procurement decisions.
- supporting equitable opportunities for targeted groups to compete in and meet sustainability requirements.

Equity in Procurement

The Enterprise has a goal that 12% percent of procurement dollars are spent with certified small businesses, which are targeted group, economically disadvantaged, and veteran owned.

Office of State Procurement (OSP)

OSP facilitates the strategic acquisition of goods and services for the State of Minnesota and other governmental entities. OSP leverages its economies of scale to achieve competitive pricing and favorable terms in state contracts. OSP utilizes state purchasing as a tool to advance social initiatives and impact the way companies conduct business for the benefit of the general public.

Office of Enterprise Sustainability (OES)

OES assists the Enterprise in achieving the sustainability goals by:

- providing data reporting tools and annually publishing agency and enterprise data, trends, and progress toward the sustainability goals.
- conducting enterprise-level planning and assisting with agency-level planning.
- implementing projects and providing technical assistance to agencies.
- championing sustainability by advocating for sustainability in funding discussions and sharing best practices.

Enterprise Agencies

EO 19-27 requires the Enterprise agencies to make progress toward the goals and participate in sustainability efforts by fulfilling the following responsibilities:

- designating a sustainability coordinator.
- participating in workgroups and sharing best practices,
- creating and implementing a biannual sustainability action plan.

- Every-other-year, all agencies in the Enterprise submit a sustainability action plan to the Office of Enterprise Sustainability (OES). In their plan, agencies will address the relevant agency actions detailed in this plan.
- Reporting energy, water, solid waste, and fleet data.

Staff and buyers should consider sustainability criteria early in the procurement process so they are reviewed and appropriately incorporated into the product evaluation, contracting, and purchasing process. Criteria vary from product to product, but factors to consider when evaluating for sustainability include:

- product or material composition (e.g., recycled content or free from toxic chemicals)
- refrigerants with low global warming potentials
- energy or water efficiency
- bulk delivery to reduce packaging and transportation emissions
- local production
- product's lifecycle carbon footprint
- reusable vs. single-use packaging (e.g., foam packing peanuts, plastic wrap)
- adherence to fair labor standards



ADMIN AND SPP ACTIONS

As part of this plan OSP, SPP, and OES will prioritize the following actions:

- **Provide training and resources to build a common understanding of sustainable procurement.**
 - The SPP and OES will develop and provide training and other educational materials so staff can identify sustainable sourcing options and confidently use state contracts that include sustainability criteria.
 - SPP and OES will create and disseminate standardized tools and templates (e.g., sustainable conference contract terms, procurement guidelines) to support agencies in meeting their sustainable procurement commitments.
- **Assess performance to provide accountability and continuous improvement opportunities.**
 - OES will publish annual data on sustainable procurement outcomes.

Enterprise Data

OES publishes sustainability data annually at sustainability.mn.gov.

- OES and the SPP will analyze data to identify trends, barriers, and opportunities for improvement.
- For pertinent contracts, the SPP and OSP will review vendor-supplied usage reports and share analysis with agencies as appropriate.
- **Recognize achievements through the annual sustainability awards.**
 - Annually, OES will solicit award nominations and facilitate the recommendation process through the Sustainability Steering Team.
 - OES will share accomplishments and effective strategies at meetings and other forums to promote replication and enterprise-wide learning.

AGENCY ACTIONS

All agencies

As part of this plan, all Enterprise agencies will prioritize the following actions.

- A. Adopt sustainable procurement guidelines.** Establish a sustainable procurement policy or set of guidelines that directs sustainable procurement across all departments and staff. The policy or guidelines must align with this plan and connect to the agency's mission, goals, and programs.
- B. Implement sustainability best practices for purchasing card (p-card) purchases.** Adopt best practices so p-card purchases support sustainable procurement objectives. Practices may include, but are not limited to:
 - Reviewing p-card reports to identify instances where state contracts could have been used.
 - Providing targeted education to p-card holders.
 - Requiring approval or justification for purchases of specified products not on state contracts.

Use the template provided by the SPP and OES. Note: P-cards use must follow *Purchasing Card Use Policy 1b*, which prohibits using p-cards to circumvent state contracts, purchasing laws, rules, policies, or procedures.

- C. Educate staff.** Provide staff, buyers, and leadership with the training and educational materials developed by the SPP, at a minimum. Agencies should consult the SPP for technical assistance, like guidance on sustainable purchasing decisions, and opportunities to increase sustainability.
- D. Reduce and reuse.** Before buying a new product, first determine whether existing inventory can meet the need or whether suitable used items are available. Agencies are encouraged to purchase through Surplus Services (e.g., tables, chairs, bookcases, monitors, office supplies), establish or expand office supply

Office Supply Management

The Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) installed resource hubs on each floor of their buildings that streamline office supply reuse. MDH also uses a centralized supply management process to prevent over ordering, reducing excess office supplies and lowering procurement costs.

reuse areas, and provide reusable products such as plates, bowls, mugs, cups, and flatware in kitchens and breakrooms.

- E. Use state contracts first.** Prioritize the use of standalone state contracts over punchout systems, market basket lists, or other sources, even when the contract is not designated as “must use”. Punchout systems and market basket lists may not always reflect the most sustainable, cost-effective, or preferred purchasing method.

Agency buyers should:

- check the OSP Contract Search Tool before ordering through a punchout catalog.
- inform business units of available standalone state contract options when requests originate outside procurement and encourage purchase through those contracts.
 - Document and justify any exemptions if business units or buyers choose to order through a punchout system, following agency procurement procedures.

The Power of State Contracts

Using state contracts leverages the State’s negotiated pricing and terms. It also makes purchasing sustainable products easy because as state contracts are resolicited, the product specifications are being vetted for sustainability elements and

If an agency demonstrates a business need to negotiate a separate or companion contract with a vendor, the agency will follow established procurement policies and will coordinate with OSP and the SPP as applicable to obtain permissions and to build in equivalent sustainability requirements wherever possible.

- F. Apply sustainability filters.** When using punch out systems or market basket lists, select sustainable products by using filters or sustainable identifiers.

- G. Support Minnesota’s small businesses.** Review the certified Targeted Group (TG), Economically Disadvantaged (ED) and Veteran-Owned (VO) Vendors directory early in the procurement process to strengthen economic opportunity. Guidance and more information are provided at

<https://mn.gov/admin/business/vendor-info/oep/sbcp/>. This requirement applies to both acquisitions and professional/technical (P/T) contracts.

Simplifying Contracting

Vendors certified in the TG/ED/VO program may be eligible for a direct contract up to \$100,000.

- H. Make conferences and events sustainable.** Incorporate the [Sustainable Conference Contract terms](#) into agency-specific solicitations for events and conferences. These terms establish specifications to reduce waste, increase diversion, and/or lower travel-related fossil fuel use. For other offsite meetings and agency events, agencies will apply their Sustainable Meeting Guidelines for consistent integration of sustainability practices.
- I. Audit targeted purchases for sustainability opportunities.** OSP will generate usage reports for select contracts, which the SPP will review to identify recent purchases that have sustainable alternatives (e.g., polystyrene, bottled water, single-use items). In coordination with agency staff, the SPP will:

- gather additional information as needed,
- conduct spend analyses to assess the feasibility of sustainable alternatives,
- identify barriers and opportunities for improvement, and
- develop and support the transition to sustainable alternatives where appropriate.

J. Print sensibly. Implement sustainable printing practices to minimize paper, ink, toner, energy use, and unnecessary equipment. Partner with MNIT to adopt to evaluate implement the following strategies:

- Replace personal or desktop printers with shared high-volume multifunction devices.
- Set default printer settings to black-and-white and double-sided.
- Enable secure print release (e.g., badge swipe or login) to reduce unretrieved print jobs, support confidential printing, and cut the need for desktop printers.
- Set printer settings so the printer goes into sleep mode or stand-by when not in use for 10 minutes.

Printing Practices

At the MPCA, print requests over 100 pages are routed to the sustainability coordinator for review, allowing the sustainability coordinator to work with the requestor to offer options to reduce or avoid the print job. Since implementation, nearly all requests have been able to be avoided entirely, saving thousands of dollars in costs!

K. Reduce shipping waste. Request that suppliers reduce unnecessary packaging materials (e.g., bubble wrap, polystyrene, and excess cardboard) and implement practices that reduce waste and emissions. Preferred practices include:

- bulk packing items to limit individual wrapping.
- consolidating shipments to reduce packaging and transportation emissions.
- using reusable or returnable packaging systems and reusable packaging materials.

Shrinking Wrap Waste

*MNIT encourages vendors to ship items in bulk, in reusable or multi-pack containers, and use straps for pallets instead of shrink wrap. This is avoiding a minimum of **72 pounds** of shrink wrap every year.*

Agencies that lease space

As part of this plan, all enterprise agencies that lease space will prioritize the following action.

L. Incorporate sustainability criteria into lease agreements. Work with Admin's Real Estate and Construction Services' leasing staff to incorporate both the standard and negotiable [sustainable lease/green lease requirements](#) into all new leases and renewals. Examples include waste collection stations with signage, organics recycling where available, submetering for electricity and water in shared buildings, low flow fixtures, WaterSense® irrigation audits, water bottle filling stations, and sustainable cleaning and janitorial paper requirements.

- Develop and maintain a lease expiration schedule, documenting lease end dates, sustainable lease provisions currently in place, and recommended modifications or additions to be incorporated during renegotiations.
- Before the lease expires, review space occupancy and utilization to identify opportunities for consolidation.

Incorporating sustainability criteria into lease agreements directly supports enterprise energy, water, and waste reduction goals, while advancing cost savings, operational efficiency, and alignment with statewide climate and sustainability priorities.

IMPLEMENTATION

Many of the actions in this plan build upon commitments included in prior enterprise action plans and in some cases, are already in practice. Agencies can implement actions ahead of the timelines in the implementation schedule; however, all actions must be implemented by the end of the designated calendar year. Implementation is designed to be a continuous, iterative process. As new data and information become available, agencies should adjust their implementation approach to strengthen outcomes and maintain alignment with enterprise sustainability goals.

Table 1 - Agency Action Recommended Implementation Schedule

Action	Current	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030
Adopt sustainable procurement guidelines						
Implement best practices for p-cards						
Educate staff and buyers						
Reduce and reuse						
Use state contracts first						
Apply sustainability filters						
Support Minnesota's small businesses						
Make agency conferences sustainable						
Audit targeted purchases						
Print sensibly						
Reduce shipping waste						
Incorporate sustainability into leases						

 = Calendar year action should be implemented

DATA

Tracking and reporting contract reviews ensures transparency and demonstrates measurable progress toward enterprise sustainability goals.

In 2024, the SPP reviewed 359 contracts. Of these, the six sustainability elements identified in the enterprise goal were relevant to 32 contracts. Within that group, the SPP flagged 12 contracts as applicable, meaning they were, new or reissued contracts rather than extensions.

For all 12 applicable contracts, the SPP successfully incorporated sustainability language into the final product specifications for 9 contracts. Examples of sustainability elements include specifying safer refrigerants, requiring credible, third-party certifications, and mandating minimum levels of recycled content in products.

For the most up-to-date results and performance data, refer to sustainability.mn.gov.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Accomplishments

Success stories related to agency actions are highlighted throughout this plan, with additional case studies available at sustainability.mn.gov. These examples demonstrate how sustainable procurement practices are delivering measurable environmental, social, and economic benefits across state government.

Opportunities

Establishing Meaningful Metrics

Because sustainable procurement impacts vary widely by product type, a single cross-cutting metric cannot fully capture progress. For example, a low flow faucet aerator reduces water use and is incredibly cost effective, whereas computer procurement focuses on energy efficiency and responsible materials sourcing.

The SPP is evaluating product and industry-specific metrics to complement enterprise goal tracking. Potential metrics include virgin material avoided by using recycled content paper and greenhouse gas emission reductions achieved through Electronic Product Environmental Assessment Tool (EPEAT)-certified electronics.

Obtaining Meaningful data

For many contracts, usage reports submitted by vendors are the only way to track purchases of sustainable products. However, contract language requires usage reports for a limited number of contracts, and the data received is often difficult to analyze. Off-contract purchases, like those made with p-cards, are even harder to capture at the product level and may bypass processes that designed to ensure buyers see or select sustainable options. To address this, the SPP is reviewing all state contracts to identify contracts for usage reports, clarifying the data to be requested, and strengthening reporting standards.

Identifying sustainable options

The state's procurement software does not currently indicate whether sustainable alternatives are available, creating barriers for staff seeking to make more sustainable choices. The SPP is collaborating with vendors who manage State employee-specific purchasing portals to improve visibility, including the use of symbols or labels to denote sustainable options.

RESOURCES FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Accessing state contracts

For state staff, access state contracts at: <https://osp.admin.mn.gov/user/login>.

If it is your first time logging in, you'll need to create an account, which requires an access code. To get an access code, contact Sherry Brown at 651-201-2404 or send an email to sherry.brown@state.mn.us.

Paper recycling toolkit

Developed by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, the [Paper Recycling Toolkit](#) provides information to educate leadership and peers on the importance of buying recycled paper.

Sustainable procurement training series

Training modules that can be used to educate on the purpose and impact of sustainable procurement, [here](#).

Sustainable purchasing policy assistance

The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency's Sustainable Procurement Program offers a variety of technical assistance, including real-world examples of sustainable purchasing policies, here: <https://www.pca.state.mn.us/business-with-us/developing-a-sustainable-purchasing-policy>.

AUTHORITIES

Executive Order 19-27 Directing State Government to Conserve Energy and Water, and Reduce Waste to Save Money

Establishes the framework for the OES, including the Sustainability Steering Team and sustainability goals. It also directs cabinet agencies to be involved in making progress toward the sustainability goals.

Executive Order 19-28 Restoring Healthy, Diverse Pollinator Populations that Sustain and Enhance Minnesota's Environment, Economy, and Way of Life

To the extent available and verifiable, accommodating the purchasing of neonicotinoid-free plants and pesticides in state contracts.

MINN. STAT. § 16C.073

Establishes standards for purchasing paper and printing related services and items and allows agencies to purchase recycled content materials with the cost is within 10% of the nonrecycled materials.

MINN. STAT. § 16C.0725

Establishes priority for State Agencies to purchasing recycled and recyclable materials when the cost is within 10% of non-recycled alternatives. Procurement decisions should also emphasize waste reduction, product durability, reusability, and the inclusion of postconsumer materials.

MINN. STAT. § 116.92

Prohibits the sale of most products that contain mercury.

MINN. STAT. § 116.943

Also known as Amara's Law, prohibits the sale of products that include intentionally added perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) in many products.

Purchasing Card Use Policy 1b

Ensures appropriate use of purchasing cards by authorized state employees so that specific categories of merchants, goods, and services may be procured in an efficient and cost-effective manner and consistent with the statewide and agency use policy. The policy specifically states that the use of the purchasing card is an alternate means of payment and must not circumvent the use of state contracts, purchasing laws, rules, policies, or procedures.

Purchasing Policy 16

Instructions for procuring paper products and printing services in accordance with MINN. STAT. § 16C.073.

DEFINITIONS

Applicable Contract: Specific to enterprise (multi-agency) Acquisitions (Goods and General Services) and includes new and re-solicitations within a calendar year. It does not include grants, amendments, extensions, one-time agency-specific solicitations, professional services, or vertical or horizontal construction.

Authority for Local Purchase (ALP) Buyer: An individual that received a delegation of authority from the Commissioner of Administration who has the responsibility to ensure that State purchasing laws, rules, policies, and procedures are followed on all purchases that are not made with a purchasing card. A buyer is the agency's certified Authority for Local Purchase.

Enterprise: The 23 cabinet agencies, Direct Care and Treatment, and the Metropolitan Council.

Priority contracts: The 19 contracts that the former sustainable procurement goal applied to. These contracts were determined by amount spent on the contract and potential for impact and were:

Contract Category	Contract Release Number
Cleaning Products	C-252 and C-983
Carpet and Flooring	C-432
Office Furniture	F-379 and F-464
Ballasts and Lamps	B-308 and L-290
Computers and Imaging Equipment & Toner	C-1046, C-871, and C-1005
Office Paper & Janitorial Paper	O-86, P-942, and P-661
MINNCOR Industries Cleaners & Office Furniture	M-566
Wireless Hardware & Services	T-535
Network Equipment, Maintenance & Support	T-653
Painting	P-719
Audio-Visual	A-203
Systems Furniture	F-522

Sustainable contract: A contract that incorporates sustainability requirements to improve the environmental, social, and economic impacts associated with purchasing.

Sustainable procurement: A purchasing process that considers environmental, social, and economic factors.