

# **Sustainability Tracking, Assessment & Rating System (STARS) – Purchasing Call Notes**

March 25, 2008

*Please note: The Guide to STARS Pilot Phase One contains an error in the numbering of credits in the Purchasing category. Correct credit numbers are included below.*

## **Feedback about the Purchasing category**

Participants suggested adding credits for the following:

- Purchasing from historically underutilized businesses, minority-owned businesses, and women-owned businesses.
- Purchasing other local products (currently only a food credit in the Dining Services category and the furniture purchasing credit recognize purchasing local products).
- Purchasing green office supplies, such as refillable printer cartridges, folders, work books, and things made of recycled plastic or metal.
- Purchasing practices that reduce packaging and/or the number of deliveries coming to campus.

AASHE is open to suggestions for what form these potential credits could take. Please send suggestions to [stars@ashe.org](mailto:stars@ashe.org).

A caller suggested looking at Washington Environmental Council's Healthy Schools Healthy Kids program for innovative activities to foster environmentally preferable purchasing.

## **OP Credit 19: ENERGY STAR Purchasing**

A caller said that many orders are placed with credit cards and the purchasing office doesn't receive details about what people are ordering. Currently, the credit only applies to things that the institution has a central mechanism for tracking.

Another participant said her school was obtaining the information about purchasing records through the vendors with whom the institution has contracts.

## **OP Credit 20: EPEAT Purchasing**

Several callers weren't familiar with EPEAT. A participant said that some vendors haven't heard of the system yet either. AASHE responded that EPEAT is a new system with growing recognition and popularity. The University of California system has adopted a policy to give preference to EPEAT products. Please feel free to suggest additional standards for electronics ([stars@ashe.org](mailto:stars@ashe.org)).

## **OP Credit 21: Purchasing Green Cleaning Products**

AASHE is open to considering additional third-party certifications or standards for cleaning products to be included in this credit. A caller mentioned that some Green Seal standards haven't been updated in several years, and recommended looking at Cradle-to-Cradle certification.

A participant said that it would be helpful to formalize the process by which other products or certifications will be added to the list of acceptable products to earn this credit. AASHE is planning to work on developing that system this summer. The current, tentative vision for this process is to have a team that is focused on each category update standards, provide credit interpretations, and allocate/determine innovation credits.

Several callers expressed interest in introducing some hierarchy into the credit to recognize first steps in green cleaning programs. A caller suggested separating the different types of cleaners into different credits or different points within this credit.

A participant said that green cleaning includes more than just the products that are used. In fact, sometimes what makes a product environmentally preferable is how it is used. While this credit focuses on purchasing certain products, there is a separate credit in the Buildings category that addresses best practices for green cleaning.

A caller said that occasionally departments will buy a residential product. If the institution doesn't have a mechanism for tracking such purchases, they wouldn't be covered by the current version of the credit.

### **OP Credit 22: Environmentally Preferable Paper Purchasing**

The current version of the credit covers both copy/office paper and bathroom tissue. A caller suggested separating them into two separate credits or keeping a single credit and awarding one point for copy/office paper and another point for bathroom tissue.

A caller asked about certifications alternate to FSC, specifically PEFC and SFI. AASHE chose not to include SFI for this credit because it seems to be viewed by many in the environmental community as less environmentally preferable than FSC. LEED also doesn't recognize SFI. During the pilot period, AASHE is interested to hear if anyone is using any of the alternative certifications for paper, so please report if you're doing so.

The current version of the credit recognizes schools that have a policy to purchase or are purchasing environmentally preferable paper. For the pilot period, having a policy is sufficient to earn this credit. For future versions of the credit, AASHE will consider revising it so that it is actual purchasing behavior and not policies that count.

### **OP Credit 23: Environmentally Preferable Furniture Purchasing**

This credit is copied almost verbatim from LEED for Existing Buildings guidelines in order to maintain consistency between the rating systems.

A caller asked about furniture that has been reused for a long time or previously owned furniture. There is a Tier Two credit in the Materials and Recycling section that gets at office supply reuse programs. Several callers expressed interest in including reused furniture in this category, or creating a separate credit for reusing materials in the Purchasing category.

### **OP Credit 24: Vendor Code of Conduct**

A caller asked if any schools have acted to enforce the code of conduct. The University of Michigan applied its Vendor Code of Conduct to boycott Coca-Cola due to concerns about Coke's water use in India and alleged anti-union activities in Colombia. A participant noted that this could be a credit that schools aspire to earn – it's more advanced and not many schools are doing it yet.

Another caller said that adhering to environmental and other standards is part of the institution's RFP process, which is stipulated by state code. When a large food retailer wouldn't sign the school's standards, the retailer wasn't allowed to set up an outlet on campus. AASHE would like to hear about alternate mechanisms that help ensure vendors adhere to standards. Please report such mechanisms when you submit information for this credit.