



# Save Money by Buying Green Resource Guide

The environmental and health benefits of “green” products are well known. What is less evident – but equally important – is that many environmentally preferable products (EPPs) save money, either right off the bat or over time. That’s because some EPPs reduce electricity or water bills, last longer, or have lower maintenance or disposal costs. This Resource Guide recommends green purchasing strategies that may save your organization money while protecting human health and the environment.

This resource was developed by the Responsible Purchasing Network (RPN), in collaboration with the Massachusetts Operational Services Division and with funding from the National Association of State Procurement Officials (NASPO).

To learn more about Massachusetts’ Environmentally Preferable Products Procurement Program, visit [mass.gov/epp](http://mass.gov/epp).



# Save Money by Buying Green

## Resources

[Choose to Reuse](#)

[Purchase Resource- and Energy-Efficient Products](#)

[Look for Long-Life Products](#)

[Try Concentrates](#)

[Factor in Maintenance Costs](#)

[Adopt Cost-Saving Strategies](#)

[Resources at Your Fingertips](#)

## Choose to Reuse

### Consider Surplus Items Before Buying New

An easy way to save money is to obtain surplus property, which is available free of charge (or at a lower cost) through Massachusetts' Surplus Property Program. Surplus items commonly available to State agencies, municipalities, and non-profit organizations in Massachusetts include furniture, electronics, appliances, office supplies, and laboratory equipment. To find available items, visit the Surplus Property Program on [mass.gov](https://www.mass.gov).

### Look for Remanufactured Toner and Ink Cartridges

Remanufacturing is the rebuilding of a product to the specifications of the original manufactured product using a combination of reused, repaired, and new parts. A remanufactured toner cartridge typically costs 20-40% less per page than an equivalent toner cartridge made by the original equipment manufacturer (OEM).

Remanufactured toner and ink cartridges are offered from multiple vendors on Massachusetts' Statewide Contract for Multi-Function Devices and Related Software, Services, and Cloud Solutions ([ITE001](#)).



**DID YOU  
KNOW?**

*In FY2023, purchases of remanufactured toner cartridges from Massachusetts' Statewide Contracts saved buyers more than \$150,671.*

### Replace Single-Use Batteries with Rechargeables



Rechargeable batteries have dramatically improved in performance over the past decade — some last longer than single-use batteries. Today, they can reliably power flashlights, head lamps, computer mice, paper towel dispensers, and many other types of equipment. Each rechargeable battery can replace 500-2,000 single-use alkaline batteries, saving hundreds of dollars over their "lifetime."

Rechargeable batteries and chargers, as well as flashlights and other equipment with a built-in rechargeable battery, may be found on several Massachusetts' Statewide Contracts, including Facility Maintenance, Repair, and Services ([FAC119](#), [FAC123](#), [FAC124](#)) green cleaning supplies ([FAC118](#)), and office supplies ([OFF53](#)).

**Other Reusable Products that May Save Your Organization Money** include washable dishware and cutlery on [GRO40](#): Foodservice Supplies and Equipment; microfiber cleaning cloths (rather than disposable wipes) on [FAC118](#): Environmentally Preferable Cleaning Supplies and other facility maintenance contracts ([FAC119](#), [FAC123](#), [FAC124](#)); and refillable pens and tape on [OFF53](#): Office Supplies.

## Purchase Resource- and Energy-Efficient Products

Some environmentally preferable products have a higher initial price tag, but quickly pay for themselves because they consume less electricity, fuel, water, paper, or other materials when compared to conventional products. Below are several examples.

### Avoid Bottled Water

Consider installing a filtered water dispensing system that may be connected to your building's water supply system, which can replace expensive bottled water with tap water. Water bottle refill stations are offered on several of Massachusetts' Statewide Contracts for Facilities Maintenance, Repair, and Services ([FAC119](#), [FAC124](#), [FAC123](#)). In addition, reverse osmosis and plumbed water dispensers may be found on the [GRO39](#) Drinking Water-General and Emergency Services Statewide Contract.



## Purchase Resource- and Energy-Efficient Products

### Choose Energy-Efficient Products

Many energy-efficient products reduce electricity consumption so much that they pay for themselves in 1-2 years – and then continue saving users money for years to come. The easiest way to find energy-efficient products is to look for the ENERGY STAR label. The US Environmental Protection Agency’s [ENERGY STAR Program](#) lists certified products in 10 categories: appliances; building products; food service equipment; servers and other data center equipment; electronics; heating and cooling equipment; lighting; office equipment; water heaters; and others (including electric vehicle charging equipment, water coolers, vending machines, and more).



ENERGY STAR-certified products are offered on several Massachusetts Statewide Contracts for Facilities Maintenance, Repair, and Services ([FAC119](#), [FAC123](#), [FAC124](#)). In addition, ENERGY STAR-certified foodservice equipment is available on [GRO40](#): Foodservice Supplies and Equipment.

**Find More Energy-Efficient Products**, from building materials to solar panels, on OSD’s fact sheet: [Save Energy Using Statewide Contracts](#).

### IT Equipment on the Electronic Products Environmental Assessment Tool (EPEAT) Registry and TCO Certified List

[EPEAT-registered](#) and [TCO-certified](#) electronics have multiple sustainability benefits, such as relatively low energy consumption, fewer hazardous materials, low toxic emissions, and manufacturer-developed product recycling programs. Massachusetts’ Statewide contracts for Information Technology – Hardware ([ITC73](#), [ITC83](#), [ITE001](#)) specify EPEAT-registered or TCO-certified computers, monitors, copiers, and more.



ENERGY STAR has a Most Efficient certification for products that are the Best in Class! To find these innovative products, which include computer monitors, air conditioners, refrigerators, and more, go to [energystar.gov/products/most\\_efficient](#).

The purchase of EPEAT-registered electronics from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts’ Statewide Contracts resulted in reduced electricity costs of more than \$3,061,658 annually – and is expected to save over \$5.53 million over the life of those products! Learn more about this EPP success story in the [2023 Annual Report](#) for the Massachusetts’ Environmentally Preferable Procurement (EPP) Program.



### Imaging Equipment that Reduces Paper Use

Multi-function devices (MFDs), which can copy, print, scan, and fax, as well as copiers and printers that easily make double-sided images, save users money by significantly reducing paper consumption.

Massachusetts offers MFDs on its contracts for Information Technology – Hardware ([ITC73](#)), Multi-Function Devices ([ITE001](#)), and IT Asset Leasing ([ITC83](#)).

## Purchase Resource- and Energy-Efficient Products

### LED Lamps and Fixtures

Replacing incandescent, halogen, fluorescent, and high-intensity discharge (HID) lighting equipment with light-emitting diodes (LEDs) significantly reduces electricity consumption as well as replacement, maintenance, and disposal costs. LEDs also may cost-effectively replace fluorescent lamps because they use about half as much electricity, last 2-3 times longer, and are free of toxic mercury (See [related report](#) by the Clean Lighting Coalition).

LED lamps, luminaires, and retrofit kits are offered on several Massachusetts’ Statewide Contracts for Facilities Maintenance, Repair, and Services ([FAC119](#), [FAC123](#), [FAC124](#)).



MERCURY FREE

State agencies and other users of Massachusetts’ Statewide Contracts saved nearly \$125,000 in energy and labor costs by purchasing LED lighting equipment in [FY2023](#). Because LEDs last 8-10 years, these purchases are projected to save nearly \$1.5 million over their expected life spans.

### Water-Efficient Plumbing and Irrigation Products



US EPA’s [WaterSense Program](#) has certified hundreds of water-efficient products, including toilets, faucets, showerheads, and irrigation equipment. According to the US EPA, “By replacing old, inefficient flushometer-valve toilets with WaterSense-labeled models, a 10-story office building with 1,000 occupants could save nearly 1.2 million gallons of water and nearly \$10,000 per year.”

WaterSense-certified plumbing and irrigation products are offered on several Massachusetts Statewide Contracts for Facilities Maintenance, Repair, and Services ([FAC119](#), [FAC120](#), [FAC123](#), [FAC124](#)).

## Look for Long-Life Products

Products with relative long lives save purchasers money because they don’t need to be replaced as often. High-yield toner and ink cartridges are good examples. While there is no standardized labeling of high-yield cartridges, look for products with HY, UHY, LL, X, or XL in their description or ordering code. They often contain over twice as much ink or toner as an equivalent standard-yield cartridge but cost only a fraction more.



High-yield cartridges may be found on [ITE001](#): Multi-Function Devices, Supplies, and Services.

## Try Concentrates

Concentrated green cleaners may seem more expensive than cleaners in spray bottles or aerosol cans, but they are much less expensive when compared on a per-use basis. Buying concentrates also lowers packaging and transportation costs. Not all concentrates are equal – some are much more concentrated than others. When calculating costs, compare the recommended dilution ratios in the manufacturer’s instructions. Look for low-toxicity cleaners certified by Green Seal, Safer Choice, or UL ECOLOGO and that work with automatic dilution equipment, which prevents overuse.

Concentrated green cleaners are offered by several vendors on Massachusetts’ [FAC118](#) Statewide Contract for Environmentally Preferable Cleaning Products, Programs, Equipment and Supplies.



## Factor in Maintenance Costs

Maintenance costs – especially labor – often are overlooked or undervalued. A good example of an environmentally preferable product (EPP) with a lower maintenance cost is PVC-free resilient flooring (e.g., linoleum), which avoids lifetime use of floor polish and strippers commonly needed for vinyl flooring.

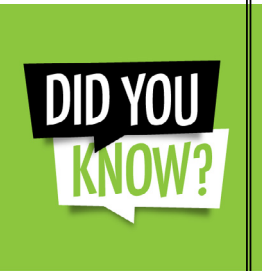
### Replace Fossil Fuel-Powered Equipment with Electric

Other EPPs with significantly lower maintenance costs include **solar-powered generators** and **electric landscaping equipment** which do not need to be refueled or flushed out like diesel- or propane-powered equipment.

**Electric Vehicles (EVs) have low operation and maintenance costs** largely because they do not need gasoline or require oil changes. According to the US Department of Energy, “Alternative fuel and fuel-efficient advanced vehicles, including hybrid electric vehicles and plug-in electric vehicles, may reduce a fleet’s fuel use, making them economical options for many fleets. Cost savings from vehicle maintenance, operation, and fuel use often offset higher purchase prices.”

Find maintenance cost savings opportunities on Massachusetts’ statewide vehicle commodity and rental contracts ([VEH110](#): Light- and Medium-Duty Vehicles; [VEH102](#): Advanced Vehicle Technology Equipment, Supplies and Services; [VEH112](#) Vehicle Rentals).

Estimate electric vehicle [cost savings](#) using this calculator.



*In FY2020, the [MA Department of Energy Resources](#) (DOER) estimated \$103,300 in annual fuel savings and \$827,000 in lifetime fuel savings resulting from state agency purchases of 97 vehicles that were more efficient than those they replaced. Also, MA Airports are expected to save approximately \$8,000 over five years and nearly \$15,000 over 10 years due to transitioning three pieces of landscaping equipment to battery-electric.*

**Use native plants and create pollinator habitats** for your landscaping and save on both maintenance costs as well as energy and water costs, while protecting biodiversity. Converting lawns to pollinator-friendly habitats saves money by lowering labor costs and reduces greenhouse gas emissions. Native plants have evolved in local weather and environmental conditions and don’t need extra fertilizer, pesticides, and water to thrive.

Native and pollinator-friendly plants are available on Massachusetts’ Statewide Contract for landscaping products ([FAC120](#)). Refer to DOER’s Leading By Example program’s [pollinator habitat calculator](#).



**Follow Integrated Pest Management (IPM) principles** for pest control to increase cost efficiencies. According to the US EPA, “As a first line of pest control, IPM programs work to ... prevent pests from becoming a threat,” adding that IPM “can be very effective and cost-efficient and present little or no risk to people or the environment.”

Massachusetts has a Statewide Contract for IPM Services ([FAC117](#)).

## Adopt Cost-Saving Strategies

**Look for grants and rebates** from federal and state agencies, as well as utilities providers to offset high upfront costs of energy-efficient products and solar-powered equipment (e.g., photovoltaics and generators). State grants are listed on [COMMBUYS](#).



**Use Massachusetts Statewide Contracts** to find environmentally preferable products and services (EPPs) available at discounted prices. Find a list of EPPs available on Massachusetts’ Statewide Contracts in the [Environmentally Preferable Products and Services Guide](#).

**Add sustainable products to your Core/Market Basket List** to encourage vendors to offer their highest discounts on those items – or develop an “all-green” contract to let vendors know you’re serious about buying EPPs. Award contracts to vendors offering the best pricing on green products.

**Purchase cooperatively:** Team up with other states or “piggyback” on their contracts to save time and secure higher discounts from vendors, but make sure the contract offers a wide array of green products with deep discounts. Cooperative contracts are available through [NASPO ValuePoint](#) and other cooperative purchasing organizations.

**Avoid overnight shipping** and ask vendors for discounts for reducing the frequency of deliveries.



## Resources at Your Fingertips

- ✓ [Statewide Contract User Guides](#)
- ✓ [Environmentally Preferable Products \(EPP\) Procurement Program](#)
- ✓ [EPP Procurement Program Reports](#)
- ✓ [Environmentally Preferable Products and Services Guide](#)
- ✓ [Save Energy Using Statewide Contracts](#)
- ✓ [Available Grants and Rebates](#)
- ✓ [Julia Wolfe](#), Director of Environmental Purchasing
- ✓ OSD Help Desk, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday
  - » 888-MA-State (627-8283)
  - » [OSDHelpDesk@mass.gov](mailto:OSDHelpDesk@mass.gov)



## About OSD

The mission of the Operational Services Division (OSD) is to create and promote dynamic programs and services that anticipate and fulfill our customers' needs. Our operational and oversight activities facilitate and guide the evaluation, acquisition, management, and disposition of goods and services. We strive to deliver a personalized customer experience by creating a climate of communication and cooperation and leveraging innovative business techniques.

[Sign up for OSD communications!](#)