

Purchasing Policy and Procedures
Rev. Anthony David

Policy

Our policy at UUCA is to ensure that, through our purchases, we (1) secure the best quality items for a reasonable cost in a reasonable timeframe; (2) make environmental considerations an integral part of purchasing decisions; (3) avoid conflicts of interest that would undermine the congregation's trust in its staff and leaders; and (4) guarantee that the goods and services we purchase are consistent with our Unitarian Universalist ethical and spiritual values.

Procedures

I. To secure the best quality items for a reasonable cost, we make no purchases

- of over \$500 without having analyzed comparative prices and quality;
- of over \$1000 without a stringent method of assuring the balance of long-term quality and cost. This method includes (a) seeking out alternative bids, (b) utilizing relevant expertise in the congregation as a source of advice and counsel, and (c) seeking out counsel from other religious institutions using the item/service we are considering.

II. Since "best quality items" implies "environmentally friendly," we will follow the following procedures:

- General
 - Increase the use of recycled products, supporting recycling markets;
 - Strengthen our commitment to reduce, reuse and recycle, and so reduce our contribution to landfills;
 - When possible, source purchases locally.
- Building
 - Choose Energy Star equipment and appliances when replacements are needed;
 - Use rechargeable batteries and/or recycle batteries;
- Cleaning and Maintenance
 - Look for Certified Green Seal products or those recommended by the U.S. EPA, testing their appropriateness and effectiveness (See <http://www.greenseal.org/findaproduct/cleaners.cfm>,
 - <http://epa.gov/dfc/pubs/projects/%20doemulR/%NODOEPer.hrm#xlwN>)
 - When cleaning or disinfecting products containing toxic substances must be used, use the minimum effective amount and dispose of containers and remainders properly;
 - Purchase janitorial paper products that are recycled and contain a high Post-consumer Waste (PCW) content;
 - Purchase trash bags made from recycled plastic content.
- Office

- Buy paper with recycled content, processed chlorine free
 - Choose energy efficient office machines. EPEAT, <http://www.epeat.net/>, is a tool to help purchasers evaluate, compare and select desktop computers, notebooks and monitors based on their environmental attributes.
 - Use 100% recycled paper with a high Post-consumer Waste (PCW) content; and
 - Choose refillable, recycled toner cartridges.
 - Choose nontoxic water-based highlighters and markers.
- Kitchen and Food Service
 - Reduce the use of packaging that must be land-filled by buying in bulk, avoiding individual packets such as sugar and creamer, and storing food in reusable containers;
 - Avoid Styrofoam products, and ask outside groups that use our building to avoid using Styrofoam; purchase plant-based biodegradable plastic utensils when plastic must be purchased.
 - Increase the recycled content of paper products;
 - Purchase Fair-Trade coffee, and encourage the purchase of locally-sourced healthier food (organic, preservative/chemical free);
 - Reduce the use of paper napkins, table cloths and decorations and, when paper is used, choosing paper goods made with recycled content. Make reusable service items and decorations the primary choice.

III. To avoid conflicts of interest, our general practice is to look to businesses that are not associated with UUCA congregants and staff. In cases we're convinced that the best item for cost comes from a business that IS related to a UUCA congregant or staff person, we undertake due diligence in backing up our conviction so that, if our action is questioned, we are able to defend the integrity of our decision. This due diligence includes: (a) seeking out alternative bids, (b) utilizing relevant expertise in the congregation as a source of advice and counsel, and (c) seeking out counsel from other religious institutions using the item/service we are considering. Finally, in cases where we do business with a UUCA congregant or staff person, we diligently adhere to the principle of impartiality and expect of it the same things that we would of any other business. If its products or services end up being inferior, we will not hesitate in turning to another business.

IV. To guarantee that the goods and services we purchase are consistent with our Unitarian Universalist ethical and spiritual values, we

- familiarize ourselves with the mission and general reputation of the business we work with (by reviewing its website and other informational materials, utilizing relevant expertise in the congregation, or seeking out counsel from other religious organizations)
- consult resources like the Responsible Shopper website <http://www.greenamerica.org/programs/responsibleshopper/> to determine whether the business in question is socially conscious (e.g., environmentally-friendly, labor-friendly, gay/lesbian oriented, and so on)