

Healthy Purchasing Initiative Frequently Asked Questions

Q: How does the Healthy Purchasing Initiative work?

A: Through the procurement and contracting processes, the City will include a chemical disclosure form that vendors and manufacturers will need to complete as part of the contract requirements.

Q: What is the goal of the Initiative?

A: The ultimate goal is to show the market that consumers want to know about product content and to call on the market to create healthier alternatives. In the nearer term, this information will help inform future purchasing decisions and bolster the City's sustainability initiatives.

Q: How did this idea originate?

A: The Oregon Environmental Council and SERA Architects, a Portland-based firm specializing in sustainable design, approached the City and County about a frustration from builders who wanted to use sustainable products but who didn't have a means to ask vendors about their product content. OEC and SERA shared examples of work being done nationally to start asking vendors these questions, and a proposed comparable process for municipal government resulted in the Healthy Purchasing Initiative.

Q: How are Multnomah County and the City collaborating?

A: The two jurisdictions will share knowledge and develop best practices around incorporating the Health Product Declaration into procurement and contracting processes, and will also develop a joint knowledge library of products containing chemicals of concern.

Q: What are the proposed City pilot projects?

A: The Healthy Purchasing Initiative will pilot two projects, both from the Bureau of Environmental Services, which is responsible for stormwater management, wastewater treatment, and watershed health: the first seeks disclosure of sewer pipe material and the second, of building materials.

Q: Where else is this being done?

A: The Healthy Building Network, a coalition that advocates for environmental health and justice in buildings, developed the Health Product Declaration form, a reporting tool which the City will use.