

Other Considerations for Socially Responsible and Sustainable

Before making a new purchase, consider the following:

Is this item already at the college?

[Central Distribution Services](#) (CDS) serves as a hub for retaining still usable goods and disposing of unneeded, but sellable surplus property. They receive a wide variety of surplus items during office cleanouts and remodels, which can be reused by the college or, when no longer useful, sold, recycled, or otherwise disposed of. They have a range of items which including chairs, filing cabinets and office supplies. Email stores@pcc.edu to put in a request for a needed item.

Am I the right person/department to be making this purchase?

Several of PCC's employees make frequent, high volume purchases on behalf of the college and are experts in buying certain types of products such as computers, furniture and vehicles. They consider the total cost of ownership and are frequently able to get discounts using bulk buying power or through the use of large contracts.

What are the total costs of ownership?

PCC is committed to being a good steward of public funds and that includes considering total cost of ownership. The total cost of ownership means evaluating goods and services on how much they will cost to operate, maintain and dispose of with considerations for the environmental and social costs in addition to the purchase price. The total cost of ownership should include the initial purchase price and all other costs, including installation, freight, taxes and fees where applicable, operating and energy costs, maintenance cost, warranty cost, collection and end-of-life disposal or recycling costs. These costs are often not considered when purchasing an item, but still paid by the college until after disposal.

The college is taking into account criteria that reflect qualitative, technical and sustainable aspects of the purchase as well as price when reaching an award decision. In addition to the total cost of ownership, PCC aims to make purchases that align with college values.

What will happen to this product at the end of its life cycle?

Products vary vastly as to their ability to be recycled. The more easily a product can be broken down into its component parts, the more likely it is that at least some of it will be accepted by the recycling system. But not all materials have a high resale or reuse value. Metals tend to have the highest resale and reuse value, followed by glass and wood. Plastics have the least, as they can only be reformed into weaker plastics. Many of the landfills the college sends its waste to have some form of methane recovery and/or electrical generation. However, there is no guarantee that the landfills maintain these practices for all waste sent there. Items in landfills decay very slowly as they are often without the ingredients that would let them decompose: air and sunlight.

For Assistance...

The PCC Sustainability Department will help you evaluate the sustainability options for your purchases and can work with both you and our Purchasing Department to develop sustainability specifications for your contracts and requests for proposal.