

# Green Purchasing News

Promoting the Sustainable Acquisition of Goods and Services at the Department of Veterans Affairs

A Message from the Office of Procurement Policy, Systems and Oversight  
Procurement Policy Service



April 22, 2019, marks the 49<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Earth Day. Since its founding in 1970, Earth Day has been a call for people to take stock of the environment and to act to ensure a safer, cleaner, and healthier planet for all.

Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) employees and facilities across the country recognize the value of a sustainable environment when it comes to serving our nation’s Veterans, and annually celebrate Earth Day in ways that demonstrate this important connection. This includes activities such as tree plantings, recycling events, green purchasing fairs and training sessions, energy conservation awareness booths, hazardous waste collection events, and visits to campus “healing gardens,” which engage Veterans and their families, VA employees, and the local community.

We invite you to join the more than [1 billion people in 192 countries](#) across the globe who now celebrate Earth Day, both on its official anniversary and year-round. Looking for ideas on how to participate? Check out the resources and tools available at the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s [Earth Day website](#). You can find local events and volunteer projects here, as well as learn how to make “*Earth Day – Every Day*.”

In this issue of *Green Purchasing News* (GPN) we announce two “moves”: First, GPN will be moving



## Green Purchasing News is Moving On!

After five years, *Green Purchasing News* (GPN) is moving on...from a quarterly to periodic publication, that is.

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to a periodic format (see article below). Second, the highly-anticipated Federal Environmental Symposium returns to the Natcher Conference Center at the National Institutes of Health, after being hosted at The George Washington University’s Marvin Center. The goal of the Symposium is to “encourage partnerships, sharing of information, and best practices amongst Federal facilities.” See [page 2](#) for registration and other details.

Also, on page 2, we are pleased to announce the availability of the new “[VA Market Guide for Acquisition Teams](#).” The Market Guide features a section dedicated to sustainable acquisition resources, which helps VA acquisition teams to “*think green*” at the start of the acquisition planning process.

As we reaffirm our commitment to minimizing the impact of purchasing on human health and the natural environment, we thank you for helping to make every day Earth Day in benefit of the Veterans we serve! 🌱

GPN was launched in 2014 in conjunction with Earth Day to “raise awareness across the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) of the need to Buy Green – a sustainable practice that contributes to the well-being of Veterans, their families, our employees, and other stakeholders.”



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs  
Office of Procurement Policy, Systems and Oversight  
Procurement Policy and Warrant Management Service



Over the years, GPN has featured a “Green Q&A” column, articles by leading Federal sustainability experts, best practices, new green purchasing requirements, reporting reminders, and other items of interest to the VA Acquisition Community and others involved, directly or indirectly, in the VA procurement process. Our favorite piece of news to report has been on the many honors bestowed on VA employees and facilities for outstanding achievements in improving the Department’s environmental footprint.

GPN will now be distributed when and as needed to provide pertinent information and updates. Feedback, suggestions for articles, and green purchasing success stories and best practices may still be submitted via email to [VA.Procurement.Policy@va.gov](mailto:VA.Procurement.Policy@va.gov). The current and archived issues of GPN will continue to be available on the [Communications page](#) at the Office of Acquisition and Logistics’ Green Purchasing Program website. 🌱

## 2019 Federal Environmental Symposium



The Federal Environmental Symposium, a forum for all Federal sustainability practitioners, policy makers, and their business partners, returns to the campus of the National Institutes of Health (NIH) (pictured above) in Bethesda, Maryland, this year.

The Symposium will be hosted by the Department of Health and Human Services and held at NIH’s Natcher Conference Center, October 30-31, 2019. This 2-day event will be a gathering of Federal agencies and their partnering organizations to provide existing and relevant environmental information and policy perspectives.

This year’s theme – Federal Facilities Leading Environmental Change – focuses on the sharing of best practices, success stories, partnerships, and challenges and achievements of the Federal sustainability practitioner community. Speakers from Federal, state, and local regulatory agencies, academia and private organizations representing a Federal agency, are invited to present at the event. The call for presentation abstracts is open and can be accessed by visiting the [FedCenter](#) website.

All potential speakers are encouraged to submit their abstracts by May 3, 2019. Regular updates regarding the Symposium also will be posted to the [FedCenter](#) website. Registration to attend and to exhibit is scheduled to open July 8, 2019. 🌱

## Did You Know? VA Market Guide Features Sustainability Acquisition Resources

In 2018, the Office of Acquisition and Logistics, Procurement Policy and Management Service (PPS), issued the first *VA Market Research Guide for Acquisition Teams* (Guide).

Updated in March 2019, the Guide provides acquisition teams and program/project offices with guidance, templates, and other tools to identify and capture key information and data on emerging trends and changes in the marketplace. In-depth market research enables the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to benefit from the commercial marketplace’s capabilities, technologies, and competitive forces in meeting Veterans’ needs.

Recognizing that a healthy environment is a key to Veterans’, employees’, and other VA stakeholders’ health and well-being, the PPS Team, in collaboration with the VAAR/VAAM Integrated Project Team, ensured the Guide included a comprehensive section on researching sustainable (green) products and services. This section includes links to [VA green purchasing program information](#), the General Services Administration’s [Green Procurement Compilation](#); the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s (EPA’s) [Sustainable Marketplace: Greener Products and Services](#); EPA’s [Energy Star](#) and [WaterSense](#) programs; the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s [BioPreferred Program](#); and the [Whole Building Design Guide](#) for Sustainable Buildings and Campuses.

“Start Early,” one of the Guide’s six market research principles, reflects the Federal Acquisition Regulation Part 7 requirement that acquisition planning include consideration of environmental and energy objectives and compliance with green purchasing provisions. Directing planners to “think green from the start of an acquisition” establishes the foundation for green purchasing success in VA and in the Federal community. For your copy of the *VA Market Research Guide for Acquisition Teams*, see Acquisition Policy Flash! 18-13 at PPS’s [Procurement Policy website](#). 🌱

