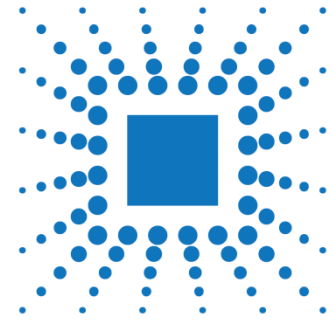


CASE STUDY

**Inspiring Champions throughout
an Organization: A Sustainable
Purchasing Training Video**

County of Alameda, CA

Submitted by: Karen Cook, Sustainability Project Manager



**SUSTAINABLE
PURCHASING
LEADERSHIP
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Abstract

No matter where a person sits within the organization, there are opportunities to make decisions on how to use resources to perform their job function. Alameda County has developed a short, animated training video, titled “*Climate Action Through Purchasing*,” targeted at introducing the basic concepts of sustainable purchasing to everyone from purchasing professionals, to managers and line staff. Viewers will learn why sustainable purchasing is important, and how businesses and institutions can use their purchasing power for good. It also includes publicly available resources for getting started with a program.

The video is specifically designed to help agencies and individuals outside of Alameda County build support and capacity for using purchasing as transformative lever to advance the organization’s sustainability and climate goals. We encourage you to share this video, and use it for your own purposes! If you’d like to go a step farther and modify the video under a Creative Commons license ([CC BY-NC 4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/)) to include resources particularly relevant to your audience, please reach out to Karen Cook, Sustainability Project Manager, at Karen.Cook@acgov.org.

Summary

Goals	Strategies	Results
Train purchasing staff and early career fellows serving in sustainability-focused internships	Produced short, introductory animated video	Video has been presented at various workshops and trainings, reaching 100+ people
Promote the importance of green purchasing on a public platform	Posted video publicly online; promoted to local partner agencies and national networks	Received almost 300 views in less than 2 months on YouTube
Encourage others to build on this work by modifying content to meet their unique needs	License under Creative Commons; Provide source materials and tips for editing	Provide materials to three organizations interested in expanding content or modifying to highlight local resources

Goals

Sustainable purchasing is a broad and complex topic that can be challenging to approach as an individual within an organization. In our work trying to advance sustainable purchasing within our own organization, and throughout our partner agencies in our region, we regularly hear people say, “It’s not my job,” or “I don’t have the authority.”

In developing this video, our goal is to provide individuals with a concept of how sustainable purchasing can touch every employee's workday, and expand their capacity to see themselves as an agent of change within their organization.

We also wanted to scale our efforts to increase the value of our work by allowing others to utilize it for their own training purposes, either as is, or by adapting it to meet their unique needs via a Creative Commons license. We have posted the video publicly, and announced its availability through multiple purchasing and sustainability focused networks to achieve this goal.

Strategies and Actions

Identifying the need

As part of our comprehensive sustainable purchasing strategy, Alameda County has long provided its employees information and training on sustainable purchasing. We have a Green Buying Guide on our internal organizational website that provides specifications for a number of commonly purchased products, and we've integrated a sustainable purchasing module into our Procurement 101 trainings provided to employees across County government who manage and make decisions on how to spend County funds. These resources have helped to grow our own internal program, but they can be difficult to translate into effective resources for others outside our organization that are interested in leveraging our work.

In summer of 2018, during a strategic planning exercise, we identified a training video as an effective way to continue to scale our efforts to build capacity of public agencies locally and nationally that are seeking to learn from our experience. Capacity building is a core component of our work that is supported through a partnership with *StopWaste*, a government agency whose mission is to reduce waste in Alameda County.

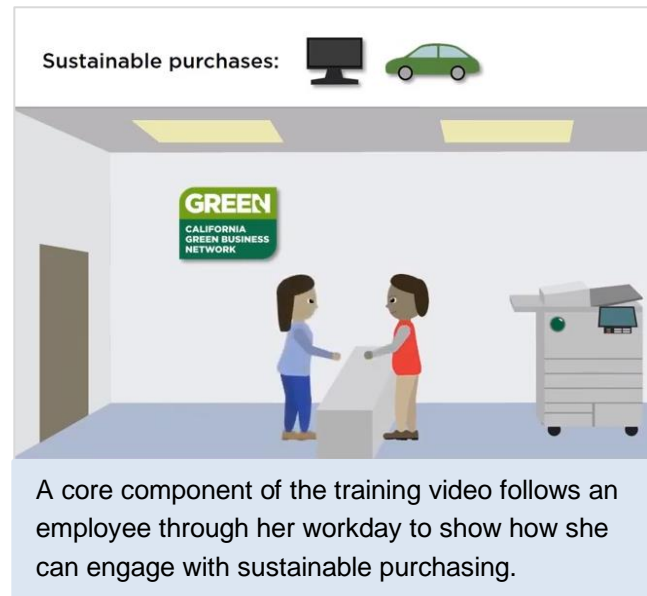
We also identified a video as a great way to engage the 100+ young professionals entering into the sustainability field every year through a *Climate Corps* fellowships, 10-month internship placements in sustainably minded public, private and non-profit institutions across California. We want to empower them to become agents of change in their organizations, both today and as they advance in their careers.



The project was approved internally within the General Services Agency, Sustainability Office, and assigned to a sustainability fellow who was serving in a 10-month position as a Green Purchasing Fellow through the *Climate Corps* program.

Developing the video

The fellow was provided wide latitude in developing the concept, presentation style and script for the video. Under the direction of Sustainability Office project managers, the fellow first created a core component of the video, an animated sequence that shows how sustainable purchasing can touch any employee's workday. From here, other components of the video were added, which together provide a compelling story for why sustainable purchasing matters, how organizations can leverage their purchasing power for good, and what resources are publicly available to get started. It was developed using only commonly available technology resources, such as Adobe Illustrator, Microsoft PowerPoint and the recording capabilities of the fellow's laptop computer. This first version of video, Version 1.0, was completed in June of 2019, at the very end of the fellow's term with the County.



It was quickly determined by Sustainability office staff that the video had great potential to be a valuable resource and training tool, both internally and for others outside of our organization. Early reviewers provided us valuable feedback that helped to identify areas for improvement, both in clarifying content and improving the production quality. It also confirmed our intuition that investing additional resources into the project would increase the likelihood the video could become a useful resource for others, creating an economy of scale for the investment.

The project was assigned to our next Green Purchasing fellow who came on board in September 2019. The fellow utilized video editing software, licensed by the County for less than \$100, to make minor modifications to the video and incorporated a new narration of the script. In addition to improving the audio quality, the new, faster-paced narration eliminated over two minutes of time from the final version of the video.

Scaling the effort through promotion

Once complete, we worked with our Information Technology Department to post the video publicly to the County's *Sustainability YouTube playlist*, and to our Sustainability Office website at www.acsustain.org.

To enable agencies to build on this work, we licensed the video using Creative Commons (*CC BY-NC 4.0*) that allows others to adapt the work for non-commercial purposes, as long as they provide attribution to Alameda County. We then promoted the availability of the video to a number of networks, expressly encouraging organizations to use it, share it, and reach out to us if they would like to adapt it to meet their own needs. As of early March, three different agencies from across the country (a city government, a State agency, and a university) have expressed interest in making modifications to build on the work and to feature their local resources!

Sharing Resources for Adapting the Video

Alameda County has compiled all the resources you need to modify and build on this work, including:

- Video file
- Narration script
- PowerPoint animation
- Video editing tips

Contact:
Karen.Cook@acsustain.org

Financial Information

The video was produced primarily with available staff time and tools at hand. The only additional expense was the video editing software, which cost less than \$100 for a lifetime license.

In all, the development of the video took a significant amount of project time for the two fellows who worked on it, approximately 150 hours to complete version 1.0 and 50 hours to complete version 2.0.

We have committed to making available all the necessary source files to any agency or organization who is interested in building on the work or adapting it to meet their local needs. We hope this will allow others to save considerable time and resources, and will allow for scaling of the project to have a greater impact.

Results

Within the first two months of being posted, the video has been viewed over 300 times. This is the result of wide spread promotion of the video as a resource through our networks, list serves and communities of practice where Alameda County is an active member. In response to this promotional activity, we have proactively received feedback from ten different organizations from across the nation who are excited to use the video as a training resource within their own organization.

As a result of our decision to license the video to allow for modification, three organizations from across the County have requested information on how they can adapt and build on the County's work to develop a video that meets their local training needs.

In addition, the video has been used locally at a training event hosted by Alameda County for 70+ climate corps fellows, young professionals serving 10-month fellowship in public, private and non-profit sector organizations interested in advancing climate protection. We hope by sharing this type of information earlier on in their careers, we can build a generation of local talent who sees purchasing as a lever for advancing sustainability and climate action goals.

Scaling Up Through Promotion

Alameda County promoted the video to multiple networks, including:

- SPLC Community
- EPPnet
- USDN (Urban Sustainability Directors Network)
- CAPPO (CA Association of Public Procurement Officers)

To post on your network, contact:
Karen.Cook@acsustain.org

Responses from the Community

Below are just a few of the appreciative responses we've received from public agencies nationally:

- *Awesome video guys...I really appreciate the succinctness and it being packed with easily implemented strategies. I'll share this with the sustainability committee as well because it hits on many of the topics we bring up in our procurement planning and policies.*
 - Procurement Manager of a local Public Water District
- *Thank you! This is great, I have been trying to work on a "green employee training manual" to let new people know how we operate.*
 - Environmental Services Staff at a local City in Alameda County
- *Congratulations on the video! Well done! I plan on sharing it with my colleagues in my city!*
 - Sustainable purchasing professional at an out-of-state City
- *I shared your video with my director and she was really impressed! She asked me to find out about putting together a similar message for [our State] to post on our sustainable purchasing website. Can you share with me how we could go about doing that?*
 - Contract Team Leader, State Purchasing Agency, East Coast

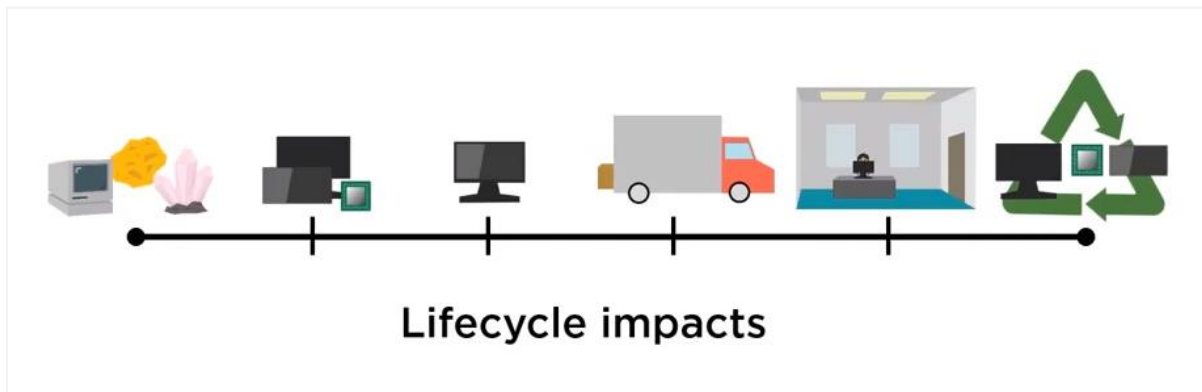
Benefits

The sustainable purchasing training video provides a fun, friendly and non-technical way to introduce the concepts of sustainable purchasing to a wide range of audiences. We believe the engaging, animated format makes it more likely for viewers to watch the entire video and imagine themselves as an agent of change within their organizations through their own purchasing power and influence. We hope that providing this resource into the public domain under a Creative Commons license will allow many other organizations to build on the work and expand the impact of the work to new and diverse audiences.



Lessons Learned

- Media or video experience is not a requirement to developing a fun and engaging video. Just a willingness to learn, be creative and try new things.
- If you'll be referencing outside resources, make sure to get approval and verify language used with the organization prior to final production.
- Don't start from scratch. We are happy to share all of our resources to help you get started!



The training video introduces viewers to seeing sustainability through a purchasing lens, and provides insight into addressing impacts throughout the full lifecycle of products and services.