



Running USA – Procurement Policy

I. Context and Understandings

As a member-based organization, Running USA recognizes that every purchase decision we make comes with the opportunity to be good stewards of the planet and to positively or negatively impact many people. Our organization is committed to being intentional about natural resource conservation, environmental stewardship, and social justice— including human and worker’s rights, and to setting a positive example for our members and broader network.

Running USA understands that the industrial system upon which the modern capital and materials markets grew is inherently degenerative, underpinned by a supply chain that harvests natural resources, puts them to use, then discards them as waste. Additionally, this linear take-make-waste system is largely fueled by nonrenewable fossil fuels, causing climate destabilization via the greenhouse effect and subsequent global warming.

Running USA sees that these processes run counter to those of the natural living world, which thrives by endlessly re-cycling the molecular building blocks of life such as carbon, oxygen, water, nitrogen, and phosphorus¹.

II. Aligning Action to Understandings

Making purchasing decisions based on their social, ecological, and economic merits impacts many aspects of our organization, perhaps most notably in the context of the annual industry gathering where we convene several hundred endurance and running industry professionals representing hundreds of companies that produce and serve the endurance sports event sector. Our example there is the most visible representation of our values and understandings as an organization.

We have identified four key areas in which we have the most influence over the outcomes and impacts of our decisions planning and delivering our event(s): (1) Venue Selection (2) Diversity & Inclusion (3) Hospitality & Catering (4) Materials & Waste.

Some of the considerations we therefore commit to make include:

¹ Raworth, K. (2017): Doughnut Economics: Seven Ways to Think Like a 21st-Century Economist. Vermont, USA: Chelsea Green Publishing. 320 p. ISBN-13: 978-1603586740

Venue Selection

- Selecting sites and venues with excellent accessibility and accommodations for the full range of bodily mobility types
- Selecting venues that, in addition to meeting our basic requirements for space, accessibility, and hospitality, enact sustainability-engendering procedures of their own

Diversity & Inclusion

- Identifying barriers to participation in our events, be they economic, socio-cultural, or technological and working to reduce or eliminate those barriers to create and host genuinely inclusive events
- Make purchases from women and/or minority-owned owned businesses and ensure that traditionally under-represented groups such as women and minority-owned owned businesses attend our events

Hospitality & Catering

- Selecting food service providers that maximize the use of organic foods, recognizing that this is the single most efficient way to ensure that food has been produced using biological, and mechanical practices that support the cycling of natural resources and conserve biodiversity².
- Communicating to hospitality providers our preference for menu items produced according to criteria designed to minimize ecological and climatic harm, including: organically grown, locally grown (100 miles or less from consumption location), sourced from farms that are certified biodynamic, Fair Trade Certified, non GMO Certified, direct-from-family farm(s), regionally in-season ingredients, sustainably sourced seafood, dairy products from cage-free and pastured animals, plant-forward menus, and offering vegetarian and vegan options.
- Require that hospitality providers contractually employ food waste and packaging waste reduction tactics in hospitality areas, meal service, and any concessions outlets

Materials & Waste

- Planning for low levels of waste production and a high rate of waste diversion by identifying items expected to become waste and identifying potential alternatives to the landfill such as reuse, recycling, donation, or re-purposing.
- Striving to minimize the distribution of physical non-consumable goods. When we do offer them, we will identify gifts, awards, and other physical hand-outs that are durable, useful, and designed for reuse and/or waste prevention
- Striving to identify, discuss, and purchase from suppliers and vendors that have earned sustainability credentials for their businesses and properties
- Seek to minimize the use of printing, but utilize 80% or more post-consumer recycled paper for our office/headquarters and event operations printing needs, and recommend that staff working remotely do the same

² Agricultural Marketing Service. 2011. *What is Organic?* [online] Available at: <<https://www.ams.usda.gov/publications/content/what-organic>> [Accessed 10 December 2021]

III. Tactics & Measuring Performance:

Historically, our procedures for internally tracking social and environmental criteria were informal. Now, we seek to measure our performance against our stated intentions (section II). Additionally, for the first time in 2021, we seek to achieve third-party verified certification from the Council for Responsible Sport, confirming our adherence to the *Responsible Sport Standards* of good practice within the events sector.

Therefore, this policy hereby establishes the expectation that all staff and/or contractors with purchasing power are compelled to report the social and/or environmental criteria that was factored into the decision-making for purchases in the [name of system (or office/person) for invoice-processing and accounts payable]. Our accounts office is hereby charged with keeping all such notes and/or evidence organized and available for analysis upon request.

The tactics we will use to accomplish the fulfillment of our intentions include (both generally and by category):

General (applies to all four categories below)

- Cost flexibility — cost flexibility is a mechanism that allows the consideration of factors of environmental and social impact values that have historically been overlooked or 'externalized' (not included in the cost of the product or service) in favor of lowest-cost only goods and services. Equipping our people with the power to make decisions that align with our stated social and environmental values means we must go beyond bottom-dollar only considerations and into deeper inquiry of utility and value.

This policy grants permission and encourages the consideration of social and environmental elements for key material purchases over priority for lowest-cost on a case-by-case basis excepting purchases of less than \$500, for which up to 20% flexibility is granted without supervisor permission needed if the purchaser can explicitly state the social or environmental value that was met by the choice of the more expensive option.

- In early considerations of a purchase, staff will be expected and trained to:
 - request and investigate information about what sustainability actions and options are being taken or are available for a given product or service.
 - Investigate and identify women and minority-owned businesses that provide the sought good or service, so that they may be considered

Venue Selection

- Staff will draft and include questions with venue managers before a decision is made about:
 - the accessibility and availability of accommodations for the full range of bodily mobility types
 - requesting information about any/all sustainability-engendering procedures utilized by the venue (e.g. water conservation, biodiversity, food waste prevention, recycling and composting, etc.)

- Wherever the information-gathering staff is not the individual making the final venue decision, that person will include the notes from these inquiries in any presentations comparing options before a decision is made

Diversity & Inclusion

- Leadership and staff will share any feedback or information in which a barrier to participation was identified or brought to their attention with the full leadership group in order to generate ideas for reducing or eliminating those barriers.
- Utilize our member-network to communicate about and collectively fundraise, then earmark funds raised for the sponsorship of the costs of attendance for no less than one women and/or minority-owned business that would otherwise not afford to attend our industry gathering event.
- After the conference when all accounts have been settled, staff will calculate the total USD spent by Running USA with Minority and/or women owned businesses, both as a standalone amount and as a percentage of the total event spending.

Hospitality & Catering

- Staff will request a report (see appendix A: Request Template for Additional Information to a Food Service Provider) or notation on invoices reporting the specific use and extent of use of foods and ingredients used in meal service that met any of the following preferred criteria:
 - certified organic
 - locally grown (100 miles or less from consumption location)
 - sourced from farms that are certified biodynamic
 - Fair Trade Certified
 - non-GMO Certified
 - direct-from-family farm(s)
 - regionally in-season ingredients
 - sustainably sourced seafood
 - dairy products from cage-free and pastured animals
 - plant-forward menus
 - vegetarian and vegan options
 - whether and which food and packaging waste reduction tactics were employed

Materials & Waste

- With any purchase, staff will identify whether that purchase will generate materials that may end up as waste (no further use to Running USA or its guests), and will identify potential alternatives, either to the item itself, or for the diversion of that material from a landfill such as reuse, recycling, donation or re-purposing.
- Staff are expected to limit and minimize the distribution of physical non-consumable goods and to relay this intention to conference and event partners. When we do offer them, we will note in after-action reporting whether gifts, awards, and other physical hand-outs were durable, useful, or designed for reuse

- In after action reporting, marketing and copywriting staff are expected to report which vendors/suppliers have earned sustainability credentials for their businesses and properties to highlight their works and indicate alignment by Running USA to those programs.

We at Running USA will henceforth employ these tactics, while striving to continuously learn about the impacts of our decisions on people and the planet.

This policy is immediately effective as of [date signed] by the signed confirmation herein by:

[leadership name/title/signature/date]

Appendix A: Request Template for Additional Information to a Food Service Provider

Greetings [Name of Supplier/Contractor/Contact],

We're happy to have contracted your services, skills, and expertise to deliver a top-quality experience for our guests [*optionally include event name and date*]. As an organization committed to being intentional about environmental stewardship and social justice, we are also committed to measuring our performance against these intentions.

For this, we require your help!

Please provide information—either with a written report, or notation on invoices—regarding the specific use (instances) and the extent of use (quantity) of foods and ingredients used in meal service for our account that met any of the following preferred criteria:

- certified organic
- locally grown (harvested 100 miles or less from consumption location)
- sourced from farms that are certified biodynamic
- Fair Trade Certified
- Non-GMO Certified
- direct-from-family farm(s)
- regionally in-season ingredients
- sustainably sourced seafood (e.g. Marine Stewardship Council certified)
- dairy products from cage-free and pastured animals
- plant-forward menus
- vegetarian and vegan options
- whether and which both food and packaging waste reduction tactics were employed

The more detail you can provide, the better. Please fulfill this request as soon as possible and no later than [date].

Thank you for your help and service!

[sign off]