

Help end tax-payer subsidies of sweatshops! Make your community sweatfree.

State and local government procurement can create a hundred billion dollar market for sweatfree products and services which would transform industries where sweatshops are pervasive. Take action in your community to help this vision come true. Organize for a sweatfree ordinance in your city, or a law in your state, that ensures your tax dollars do not subsidize sweatshop abuses. Join the growing sweatfree movement!

What's in a Sweatfree Purchasing Policy?

Protection of basic worker rights

Contractors sign a sweatfree code of conduct that binds them and subcontractors.

The code of conduct includes:

- Compliance with local labor laws
- Safe and healthy working conditions
- Non-poverty wage
- Overtime optional and compensated
- Non-discrimination, no harassment or abuse
- Ban on child labor
- Freedom of association and right to collective bargaining

How do we know if these rights are respected?

A sweatfree policy requires suppliers to disclose the names and locations of their factories, and information about wages and working conditions. Factory disclosure is essential for verification of working conditions.

The policy should also include a sweatfree procurement advisory group with representatives from worker rights organizations in your community. This could be your chance to be involved in reviewing reports about working conditions from suppliers, workers, and third-parties. In the event of a worker rights complaint, the purchasing institution must require the supplier to investigate and, if necessary, take corrective action. This could involve rehiring fired workers, paying workers overtime and severance pay, union recognition – all actions that make a big difference in workers' lives.

Independent third-party investigation of sweatshop conditions is a crucial complement to self-disclosure by companies. Get your city, state, or school district to become part of a governmental consortium to allow for cost-sharing of independent monitoring and joint purchasing from sweatfree factories. A consortium can significantly increase market demand for fair labor conditions, while reducing the cost of monitoring and investigation.

Additional Objectives of a Sweatfree Procurement Policy

You can influence the working conditions in farms and fields by including preferences for agricultural products that are certified fair trade and organic.

You can also positively influence working conditions and economic development in your own community by including a preference for products that are made locally.

Who benefits?

- Workers, both domestic and international, who toil long hours for poverty wages in unsafe and oppressive conditions, with no job security.
- Women and children who make up the majority of sweatshop workers and are the most severely oppressed.
- Businesses that respect worker rights.
- Local workers, businesses, and communities who benefit from a more just and secure global economy.

Both San Francisco and Los Angeles have allocated \$100,000 in their 2006 budget to provide funding for an additional city staff person and enforcement by a non-profit, independent monitoring agency. Los Angeles is starting a pilot project with the Worker Rights Consortium.

Get Involved!

Organize for a sweatfree policy in your community. Get your city or state to become a founding member of the new city and state sweatfree procurement consortium.

If you are campaigning or planning to start a campaign, please be in touch with SweatFree Communities or Global Exchange. We can offer organizing assistance. We want to hear your questions, challenges, and successes. And of course, we want to hear about your victories! For a list of public institutions with sweatfree policies, see www.sweatfree.org