

NIH Staff Support of the Surplus Chemical Redistribution and Solvent Recovery Programs

The NIH community has provided strong support for the NIH Surplus Chemical Redistribution and NIH Solvent Recovery programs since their inception in 2013 and 2014, respectively. As customer-driven programs, their success stems from the strong relationships forged between researchers and the program staff. To date, all 27 ICs have utilized the NIH Surplus Chemical Redistribution program and 16 ICs have participated in the NIH Solvent Recovery program.

We are always interested in adding participants to these programs and we believe one of the best methods for encouraging participation is by sharing the experiences of those that have used the programs. To this end, we have included below the personal experiences of a few of the long-term program participants. We hope their words of support will encourage you to participate in these programs.

Here's what they had to say:

NIH Surplus Chemical Redistribution Program:

Mariena Mattson, NIDA

"The Drug Design and Synthesis Section/NIDA is a medical chemistry group working on drugs acting on central and peripheral opioid receptors as well as other drugs of abuse. Our group routinely receives specialty and solvent chemicals from the [NIH] Surplus [Chemical Redistribution] Program. Acetone, acetonitrile, chloroform, and ethanol are regularly available in some amount from surplus. Since the inception of the program, I would estimate that we have saved thousands of dollars using surplus chemicals that would otherwise have been discarded. Recently, [we received] 96 – 500mL bottles of ethyl acetate being discarded from the Gaithersburg Distribution Center. This is a great program that is important to our lab, our budget and the environment and is one of the many reasons that makes NIH a special place."

Malliga Iyer, NIAAA

"As part of my efforts to establish a chemistry lab and lead the Medicinal Chemistry Core at NIAAA, I have been utilizing the resources provided by the NIH [Surplus] Chemical Redistribution Program. I have requested numerous chemicals and solvents, which have helped us save money and time on ordering some of these chemicals from outside vendors. [The program staff] have been very prompt in responding to my requests. The [NIH] Surplus Chemical Redistribution Program is a valuable resource and I look forward to using it in the coming years. Thank you for all the help you provide to NIH researchers."

To facilitate participation, a monthly spreadsheet is provided to the NIH staff through the [Greenserve Listserv](#), which provides information on the available chemicals and reagents and their available quantity.

The [NIH Free Stuff](#) website hosts the NIH Surplus Chemical Redistribution program. Staff from the NIH can use this website to post and receive office and lab supplies as well. For more information on NIH Free Stuff, please read "[Post or Find Equipment, Supplies at NIH Free Stuff](#)" from the NIH Record.

NIH Solvent Recovery Program:

Jorge Chavez, ORS/DVR

"The [NIH Solvent Recovery] Program has been used in the pathology section of DVR for several years. The [recovered] formalin quality has been acceptable by pathologists and histologists. The [staff] have been reliable in [our] delivery of recycled formalin in a timely manner. A couple of years ago, the [staff] had some quality issues for purification, but they were able to make the appropriate correction and modification of their procedures for the purification of formalin. [Since this change], our lab has not had any purification issues with [recovered] formalin."

Annie Merriweather, ORS/DVR and Chris King, ORS/DVR

"We have been very pleased with the quality of service we have received from the [NIH] Solvent Recovery Program. The customer service has always been prompt and responsive. Their quality control has been very effective [and] they catch any errors we have made during waste collection so as to not return contaminated recycled solvents to us. They even came in personally to help us diagnose issues with our equipment that were causing contamination. The program has saved [our labs] around \$20,000 a year on solvents and recycled 1,500 pounds of waste."

Zu Xi Yu, NHLBI

"The Pathology Core of the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute is a histology laboratory. We have one paraffin tissue processor and two auto-histology stainers with coverslippers. These instruments use lots of solvents, such as gradient alcohols, xylene and formalin. We have been using the NIH Solvent Recovery Program since 2015. During past years, we found that the recovered solvents are very good quality, which we can use in the processor and stainer without any problems. In addition, we [also] use [recovered solvents] for manual routines or special histology staining procedures. [This program has] not only saved money by recycling reagents, but [has] also [been] very [convenient] for our lab for reducing orders through NBS in the [beginning and] end of the fiscal year. The staff from this program are very kind people and like to help us [with] troubleshooting on reagent contamination problems. We would like very much to continue participating in this program."

We greatly appreciate the ongoing support from the NIH community for these programs! Please contact [Crispin Hernandez](#) if you are interested in participating in the NIH Surplus Chemical Redistribution or NIH Solvent Recovery program.