

NIH SURPLUS CHEMICAL REDISTRIBUTION PROGRAM

The NIH Division of Environmental Protection (DEP) implemented two new innovative Recycling and Toxic Chemical Reduction Initiative Programs on the Bethesda main campus as part of its [Environmental Policy](#) and [Sustainability Goals](#). These new programs have a significant impact NIH-wide providing a cost savings to NIH researchers and hazardous waste minimization which benefits the environment. Consequently, the programs received the OD Honor Award in December 2013 for successful implementation. The two efficient recycling programs are:

- **The Surplus Chemical Redistribution Recycling Program and**
- **The Solvent (xylene, ethanol and formalin) Recycling Program**

THE SURPLUS CHEMICAL REDISTRIBUTION RECYCLING PROGRAM

The Surplus Chemical Redistribution Recycling Program was implemented in April 2013 at the NIH Hazardous Waste Facility using the [NIH Free Stuff program](#) for posting and sharing of unused chemicals collected as waste. This is a sustainable innovative program since NIH has 4000 research laboratories that generate large quantities of chemical wastes that are collected for disposal by the NIH Chemical Waste Services (CWS) contractor. The chemical wastes that are collected for disposal include discarded unused chemicals, referred to as surplus chemicals which are sorted and placed into a surplus chemical repository for redistribution upon online requests by intramural researchers.

All the collected sealed or unopened and unexpired chemicals are surplus items from NIH labs that are

- moving with limited storage space and
- discontinued research or process that no longer need them

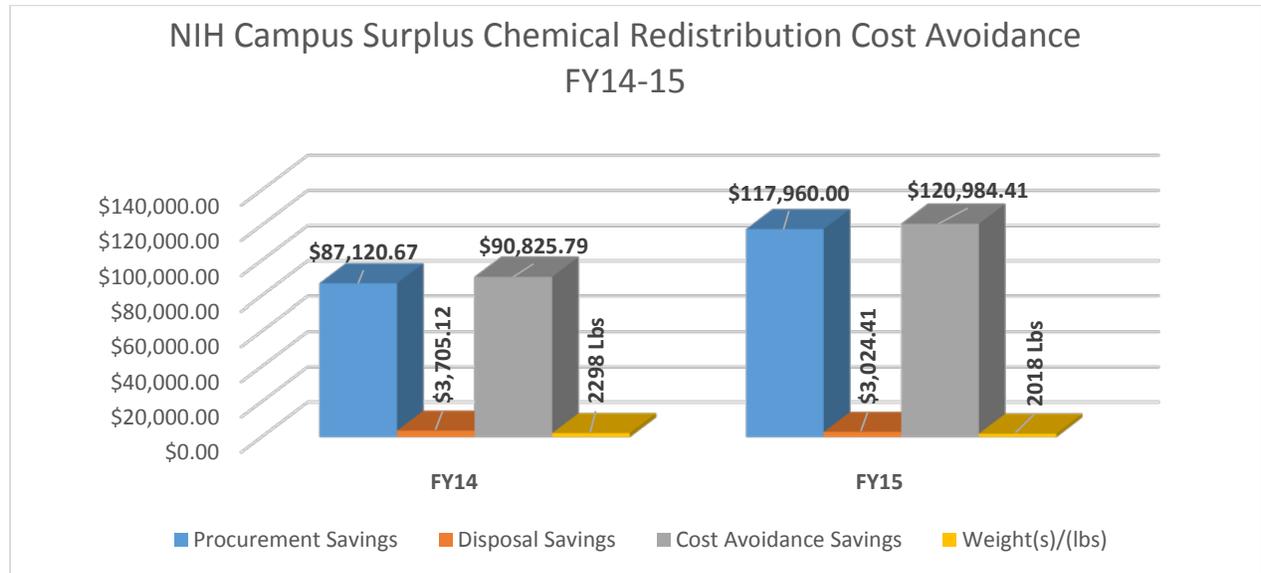
In the past DEP had little success implementing the sharing of unused chemicals during lab moves within institutes and buildings. The design of the NIH Free Stuff website by NIAID had solved this issue and provided DEP with stewardship and complete control of redistributing discarded unused chemicals. This is achieved by maintaining an online inventory of surplus usable chemicals that are stored at its Hazardous Waste Facility with immediate distribution to research labs for free. Consequently, a smart economic and environmental accomplishment that supplements budget cuts to NIH institutes and centers (IC) that utilize it. The program is a FREE service on a first come, first serve basis offered to all NIH intramural researchers through DEP's CWS Program. The program is being expanded to include NIH leased facilities in Maryland and had been in existence at the NCI Frederick facility since 2004.

The NIH Free Stuff website is easy to use by the NIH intramural research community to post, search and exchange free items in several categories like supplies, equipment and chemicals. An email correspondence is generated between NIH employees posting items and requesters to arrange for transfer of items. However, the chemicals and reagents category is under DEP's custody since it involves the transfer of chemicals from different buildings, but Bethesda campus researchers are encouraged to post and exchange chemicals within the same building. The program is part of DEP's Toxic Chemical Reduction Initiatives that aims to replace and minimize the use and disposal of toxic chemicals as wastes which is beneficial to NIH, the environment and DEP's budget. Participation in the program is simply a

mouse click on the [NIH Free Stuff](#) website to select and make a request for free chemicals and reagents that are delivered to your lab within one to two days free of charge.

Relocating labs that have surplus unopened and unexpired chemicals to donate to the program as well as chemical waste to get rid of should call CWS at 301-496-4710 or email DEPChemWaste@OD.NIH.GOV two months prior to move dates to arrange for pickups and redistribution. Please place a chemical waste tag on the surplus chemicals to specify that they are to be redistributed. Please do not request for chemicals you will not use in a reasonable time period (that is what initiated this program in the first place).

The Surplus Chemical Redistribution Recycling Program is a “dream come true” recycling achievement for DEP and the NIH community. The program generates a substantial monthly procurement savings for the NIH based on diversion of discarded chemicals that are used in research, as shown below.



Surplus Chemicals Shelf



First surplus chemicals delivery (4/11/13)