

fostering a culture of sustainability  
through leadership, commitments,  
engagement, and traditions



# **GREEN WORKPLACE CERTIFICATION**

ILLINOIS STATE UNIVERSITY



# Table of Contents

|                                         |           |
|-----------------------------------------|-----------|
| <b>Sustainability at Illinois State</b> | <b>2</b>  |
| <b>Purpose and Overview</b>             | <b>3</b>  |
| <b>Process</b>                          | <b>4</b>  |
| <b>Green Workplace Categories</b>       | <b>5</b>  |
| Required                                | 6         |
| Recycling and Waste Management          | 7         |
| Energy and Water Conservation           | 9         |
| Purchasing                              | 10        |
| Transportation                          | 12        |
| Redbird and Community Engagement        | 13        |
| <b>Reminders and Resources</b>          | <b>15</b> |

# SUSTAINABILITY AT ILLINOIS STATE

Sustainability is a practice in which we consider the implications of our individual and collective actions; the interconnectivity among people and ecosystems coexisting within communities and across the globe; and a vision for an equitable and thriving planet for generations to come.

At Illinois State, putting sustainability into practice means:

- fostering a culture of sustainability through leadership, commitments, engagement, and traditions
- finding solutions through diverse, interdisciplinary collaboration, teaching, research, and innovation
- integrating accessible environmental stewardship into campus operations



View the Illinois State University Sustainability Strategic Plan on our [website](#).

## VISION STATEMENT

Advance, educate, and integrate a culture of sustainability that demonstrates our commitment to environmental stewardship and exemplifies our Redbird values.



# PURPOSE AND OVERVIEW

The Green Workplace Certification at Illinois State University provides an opportunity for offices to learn about sustainable workplace and lifestyle practices. The Green Workplace Certification process asks offices to self-assess their practices to learn where they are already acting sustainably and where there is room for growth. Participation in the program is meant to inspire campus offices to play a role in forming an environmentally conscious campus and a Redbird community that upholds the University's sustainability ideals.

The Green Workplace Certification is comprised of 50 "green" tasks within six categories: Required, Recycling & Waste Management, Energy & Water Conservation, Purchasing, Transportation, and Redbird & Community Engagement. A total of at least 30 tasks must be completed to achieve the certification. All task items in the Required category must be completed and at least



one task for each of the other five categories must be achieved to receive certification. An artifact, such as a photo or document, is required for most tasks.

Workplaces compile artifacts into a report to demonstrate achievement of their chosen tasks. More details on the steps of the process and each category and their tasks can be found on the subsequent pages of this guide.

# PROCESS

A workplace green leader is identified to lead the Green Workplace certification process. This person will be the primary point of contact between the Office of Sustainability and the workplace seeking certification. If the workplace has many members, consider putting together a green team.



The workplace members complete an initial review of the Green Workplace Certification checklist to determine areas that are already completed and areas of potential growth.



The workplace representative compiles feedback from members and completes the intent to apply form.



Office of Sustainability staff reviews the form and schedules a meeting with the workplace representative and other relevant members to tour the workplace and provide additional information about the reporting process.



The workplace representative works with members to compile necessary artifacts for relevant tasks and facilitate the creation of the final report. Once completed, the green workplace liaison will submit the Green Workplace report to the Office of Sustainability.



Once submitted, the Office of Sustainability will review the report and assess whether the certification criterion have been met.



The workplace representative will be notified within one week as to the status of their certification. If certification criteria are not met, Office of Sustainability staff will work with the workplace representative to make the necessary changes to achieve the certification.

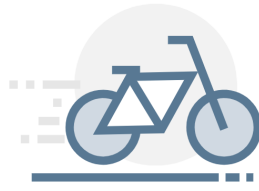


# GREEN WORKPLACE CATEGORIES



## Required

All four required tasks are foundational to maintaining a sustainable workplace and must be completed to be certified. Items involve creating space within the workplace to maintain sustainability efforts.



## Transportation

A green workplace will emphasize more sustainable transportation for its members. The items in this category encourage alternative transportation options and work to educate the workplace about the importance of alternative transportation.



## Recycling & Waste Management

Items in this category emphasize the ways workplaces encourage members to interact with waste including what they bring in and how it is disposed. Traditional waste management has been to reduce, reuse, and recycle. Reducing waste produced is the most important way to manage waste. Other ways to divert waste is recycling and composting. Teaching and encouraging these practices is included in this category.



## Redbird & Community Engagement

Sustainability is often thought about as it relates to the environment or “saving the planet;” however, sustainability also incorporates health and well-being of people and communities residing on the planet. Items in this category emphasize ways a workplace considers the person or social dimension of sustainability and takes care of its members as well as campus and community engagement.



## Energy & Water Conservation

While members may not be able to control all the energy and water used in their workplace, there are several small things that they can do to conserve energy and water. The items within the category include suggestions for workplace standards in common areas and individual workspaces to encourage energy and water conservation.



## Purchasing

The products we purchase have an environmental and social footprint, so it is important to purchase responsibly. These items emphasize purchasing environmentally safe, recycled, and ethically and sustainably sourced products. When buying, consider if products are reusable, reused, recycled, rechargeable, durable, or energy efficient.



# REQUIRED

## R.1 Designate a green workplace leader

Depending on the number of office members, this may need to be a green team. This person/team will coordinate the office's application and be the primary point of contact between the Office of Sustainability and the applicant office. organization is addressing.

## R.2 Add “eco-updates” to office meeting agendas

Incorporate time into office meetings to discuss sustainability goals, progress, and obstacles. Even if this isn't a large amount of time at each meeting, it can keep people in an environmentally friendly mindset.

## R.3 Implement green orientation for new hires

Provide all new hires with a "green" orientation of the office's and University's sustainable practices and goals. Consider using the office's Green Workplace report as the template for this orientation!

## R.4 Pair a recycle bin next to each trash bin

Place a recycling bin next to every trash bin in common areas and make recycling bins available at office events, meetings, and next to copy machines or printers. Ensure office members are made aware of what items are recyclable through appropriate signage on/near recycle bins.





# RECYCLING AND WASTE MANAGEMENT

**W.1**

## **Provide a compost bin for food waste, compostables**

Composting prevents leftover food, food scraps, napkins, paper towels, coffee grounds, and compostable tableware from going to a landfill and producing methane (a greenhouse gas more powerful than carbon dioxide). Include signage next to the bin to educate staff on what can be composted.



**W.2**

## **Create a routine/plan for emptying compost**

It is important to include as many members as possible in workplace composting. Develop and implement a routine/plan for members to check and empty the compost bin. Create a calendar to rotate responsibility for emptying the bin. Post the calendar near the compost bin or even add it to Outlook calendars.

**W.3**

## **Recycle electronic waste**

Post and refer to the University Recycling guides to recycle all electronic waste including batteries, chargers, CDs, adapters, electrical cords, toner cartridges, monitors, and cell phones. If you have any questions, email [Recycling@IllinoisState.Edu](mailto:Recycling@IllinoisState.Edu) or call 309-438-SAVE (7283).

**W.4**

## **Shift to be more paper-free**

Ensure at least 50 percent of meetings, events, and conferences are paper-free and materials are distributed electronically.

**W.5**

## **Print and copy double-sided by default**

Set double-sided printing as the default on all office computers and place a visual prompt on the copy machine/printer to remind office members to also copy double sided. Set narrow margins on documents to reduce paper use when possible. Consult your office's IT department for help or search for online tutorials for the manufacturer of the office copy machine/printer.

**W.6**

## **Institute scratch paper pile**

Keep a stack of previously used paper near printers/copy machines to be used for scratch paper and notepads or load it into a bypass tray for printing internal or draft documents.

**W.7**

## **Create an office supply reuse area**

Designate an area in the office for sharing of office supplies that can be reused (file folders, binders, pens, paper clips, etc.). Members can leave the supplies they don't need any more and pick up anything they may be missing. Include the following signage in your "reuse" area.



## W.8 Trust the tap! Use filtered or tap water

Do not provide bottled water to members or guests and instead encourage use of water bottle refilling stations and water pitchers with reusable bottles or compostable or reusable cups. Plastic water bottles a massive amount of energy and resources to produce. Only a fraction of plastic water bottles get recycled and many end up in our oceans and landfills.

If you need to provide bottled water, purchase bottled water in an aluminum can or bottle. Aluminum is infinitely recyclable whereas plastic is not. ISU branded aluminum water bottles can be purchased from the [Office of Sustainability](#) or through other businesses like [Open Water](#).



Illinois State University is a **Foam Free Campus**. There are a variety of harmful chemicals used in Styrofoam production and it cannot be recycled. The University does **not** support its use on campus.

## W.9 Provide and encourage use of reusable containers

Instead of providing single-use products (such as plastic utensils, disposable plates and cups, and Styrofoam\* products) that cannot be recycled, have an office supply of reusable plates, cups, utensils, and coffee mugs, or encourage staff to bring their own from home (if you don't have a sink in your office). If you need to provide single-use products, make sure they are [BPI-certified compostable](#) and compost them in the office compost bin.

## W.10 Eliminate/Reduce desk-side trash bins



Switch to using desk-side recycling with a centralized waste location in common areas or a smaller desk-side trash bin that attaches to a recycle bin.

## W.11 Unsubscribe from unwanted mail

Designate a person to develop a process and oversee unsubscribing staff from any unwanted promotional mail or magazines.

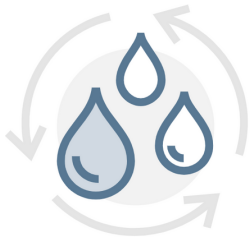
If you would like to opt out of receiving University publications, learn how by visiting the [Resources page](#).

## W.12 Shift to multi-serve supplies, beverages, and condiments

Provide multi-serving containers for beverages at events and in office (e.g. gallon jugs instead of bottled water). Use multi-serving portions for shared coffee, sugar, salt, pepper, and other condiments instead of individual packets. Make sure to specify these requirements in your catering requests.



Post this compost sign by the compost bin in your office to remind staff what is compostable



# ENERGY AND WATER CONSERVATION

## E.1 If you find an issue, report it!

Report all leaking faucets, continually flushing toilets, or temperature issues to Facilities Services' Maintenance division by submitting a work request online via the [iServiceDesk](#) or calling (309) 438-5656 after hours or for emergencies. Do not assume somebody else has already submitted a request.

## E.2 Set computers and monitors to energy-saving modes

Set all office computers/laptops to sleep mode after 10 minutes of being idle. Instructions on how to adjust the timing of sleep mode on computers can be found [here](#). You can also lower the brightness and/or change all computer monitors to energy-saving modes. Look up the instruction manual for your computer monitors and/or contact IT services for assistance.

## E.3 Eliminate unnecessary personal electronics

Avoid having personal refrigerators, heaters, and printers at individual workspaces. Encourage office members to bring a sweater in place of a personal space heater and to use centralized printers and refrigerators. If the office is experiencing temperature issues, submit a service request via the [iServiceDesk](#).

## E.4 Distribute energy-saving reminders before breaks

Email an energy-saving reminder checklist to members before University closures and other breaks. A sample energy-saving checklist can be found [here](#).

## E.5 Turn off the lights

Turn off lights every time you leave the room, especially at the end of the day. Place [reminders](#) on switches in the workplace or use occupancy sensors. Set a time and/or assign a specific person to turn off lights in hallways at the end of the day.



Include these [redbird green reminders](#) in the workplace

## E.6 Power down at the end of each workday

Use a power strip at each workstation to quickly power down electronics (including computer monitors) at the end of the day and unplug electronics at desks that are not in use. Plugged-in electronics can siphon off electricity even when not in use. Unplugging and powering down prevents wasting this electricity. Post [signs](#) near each computer workstation as a reminder to turn off and unplug before leaving.

## E.7 Utilize natural lighting and task lights

Using lights for individual work areas instead of overhead lights can minimize energy use associated with ceiling lights while providing sufficient lighting. Make sure any lamps are using LED light bulbs!



# PURCHASING

P.1

## Purchase green cleaning products

When purchasing cleaning products for the workplace, source items that are environmentally friendly. Visit the EPA's website to search for [Safer Choice-Certified Products](#).



P.2

## Make an office product eco-swap

Choose an office product that is regularly purchased (e.g., writing utensils, coffee pods, Styrofoam products) and commit to buying the most ecologically friendly form. Explore the [Sustainable Purchasing Guide](#) for ideas.

Replacing coffee pods with compostable or reusable pods is a particularly good swap to make because plastic pods claim to be recyclable but cannot be recycled in single-stream recycling and end up in landfills.

P.3

## Purchase recycled paper

Purchase recycled paper with at least 30 percent of the paper bought being 100 percent recycled. [Here](#) is a list of paper options to consider.

P.4

## Check before purchasing supplies and equipment

Avoid buying new office materials on a weekly basis and only purchase new items when running low. Check Illinois State's [surplus warehouse](#) before purchasing new equipment.

P.5

## Purchase products with low VOCs

Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs) can negatively affect indoor air quality. Some common sources of VOCs include permanent markers, correction fluids, aerosol sprays, air fresheners, adhesives, paint, and cleaning products including dish soaps. Visit the EPA's website to search for [Safer Choice-Certified Products](#).

P.6

## Use rechargeable batteries

Aim to use rechargeable batteries instead of disposable batteries at least 50 percent of the time. Make sure to recycle any used batteries. Check the [Campus Green Map](#) to locate where you can drop off batteries for recycling.

P.7

## Purchase fair trade certified coffees and teas

Purchase only fair trade certified coffee or tea for everyday use in the office or commit to offering only fair trade certified coffee or tea at meetings or events.



By only offering and consuming fair trade certified coffees and teas, your workplace helps ensure these products were grown in a sustainable way and the farmers growing them were paid equitable wages. Your workplace will help the University achieve [Fair Trade University](#) status.

P.8

## Commit to sustainable, responsibly sourced “swag”

Only purchase giveaways or swag that are made of recycled or sustainable material, produced in a fair trade factory, and/or are a reusable item that replaces a disposable one like a travel coffee cup, reusable bag, etc.

For ideas of environmentally-friendly products, visit the [Eco Promotional Products website](#). Other promotional vendors like [4imprint](#) also have products that are made from recycled materials or are more environmentally friendly.

Consider leaving off dates or years from any product or t-shirt to encourage its reuse.

# SUSTAINABLE PURCHASING CONSIDERATIONS

## Is the product...?



**durable**



**second hand**



**recycled**



**energy efficient**



**reusable**



**rechargeable**

P.9

## Purchase only Energy Star or EPEAT-certified electronics

If you need to purchase new electronics, make sure to check that they are Energy Star or EPEAT-certified. These certifications ensure products purchased for the office are energy efficient to save both money and the planet. Visit [Energy Star](#) or [EPEAT](#)'s websites for more information. Make sure to check ISU's Property Control [Surplus Warehouse](#) before purchasing new equipment!

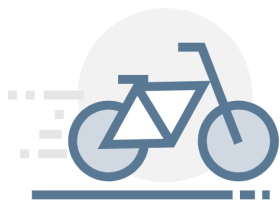


Look for these certification logos on products to ensure they were produced sustainably in terms of social and environmental impacts.



**SUSTAINABLE FORESTRY INITIATIVE**





# TRANSPORTATION

## T.1 Opt for teleconferencing when possible

Replacing business travel with video or teleconferences whenever possible can be more efficient for your business needs and be more environmentally friendly. [Zoom](#) and [Microsoft Teams](#) are options that are most often utilized at ISU.

## T.2 Select fuel-efficient vehicles for business travel

When reserving rental vehicles either through [Illinois State University Fleet](#) or other rental companies for business travel, request the most fuel-efficient options possible.

## T.3 Provide safe and secure bike storage

Ensure members have access to a safe and secure place to store bikes. This could be a bike rack, small bike room, or other area within or outside the workplace.

## T.4 Institute an office bike share program

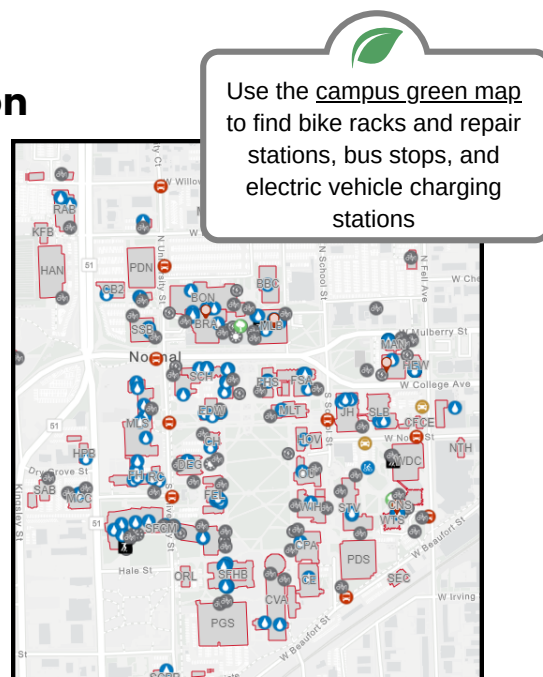
By instituting an office bike share program, the workplace will be able to provide members with an alternative means of travel to other on-campus offices besides walking or taking a vehicle.

## T.5 Encourage alternative transportation

Provide information on public transit, biking, ridesharing, and walking routes to commute to work. Consider instituting an “Alternative Commute Day” where all members use an alternative to single-occupant vehicles to get to work.

## T.6 Practice sustainable commuting

Ensure at least 20 percent of members walk, bike, carpool, take public transit to work, or telecommute from home at least one day per week on average.





# REDBIRD AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

## C.1 Educate workplace members on sustainable practices

Offer annual workshops on sustainable practices (in the workplace or more generally) and discuss how these practices may be implemented in the workplace. To further increase workplace sustainability, consider incorporating the promotion of sustainability practices into job descriptions.

## C.2 Incorporate biophilic design into workspaces

Biophilic design brings nature and natural elements into the workspace. Start small by adding in a plant or two. Plants can also help improve indoor air quality. Make sure to research what type of plant would work best in the office space. See this [indoor plant guide](#) for some ideas. Make sure to create a watering schedule to keep plants alive!

## C.3 Plan a zero-waste event

Consider turning a party, event, or meeting involving food a zero-waste event. Zero-waste focuses on waste prevention and ensures that 90 percent or more of the consumable products are reusable, recyclable, or compostable. The goal of zero-waste is to conserve resources and divert as much waste as possible from landfills.



## C.4 Provide vegetarian or vegan options when offering food

When having a party, event, or meeting involving food, make sure 50 percent of the options are vegetarian or vegan. Plant-based food options put significantly less strain on the environment and result in fewer greenhouse gas emissions.

## C.5 Use eco-friendly party decorations

Whether decorating for homecoming or someone's birthday, make sure decorations are eco-friendly. This could simply mean that the decorations are reusable. Consider making decorations from reused materials or finding decorations that can be recycled or reused again. Avoiding plastic confetti, streamers, glitter, and balloons is a great start!

## C.6 Center equity, diversity, and inclusion in the workplace

Sustainability is best defined as the intersection between equity, the environment, and the economy. Highlight the equity element of sustainability by emphasizing professional development, education, and practices that acknowledge and honor the land, environment, and people that contributed and continue to contribute to a sustainable future.

Incorporate and support environmental justice by including the environmental elements of sustainability into workplace equity discussions and training. Post the [land acknowledgement statement](#) within the workplace.

**C.7****Encourage health and wellness activities**

Provide active workspace tools (standing desks or active sitting balls) and alternative workspaces for members. Share information about the [University's wellness participation policy](#) and encourage members to be active.

**C.8****Hold an Office Clean Out Day**

Promote and increase awareness of office reusing and recycling by coordinating and holding an annual (or bi-annual) Office Clean Out Day. Materials office members no longer need can be reused by other members in place of purchasing new items. For supplies that cannot be reused, refer to the [office recycling guide](#) from ISU Recycling.

**C.9****Participate in community engagement opportunities**

Sustainability is often thought of as practices that can “save the planet,” but it also includes the health and well-being of communities. When focusing on making a workplace more sustainable, it is also important to consider the office’s relationship with its community. Support a local organization in the community or campus by volunteering together. Visit the [Center for Civic Engagement’s website](#) for an ongoing list of volunteer opportunities.

**C.10****Create a “green workplace” bulletin board**

Create a physical space where members can post environmental topics of concern or ideas. Having a physical space to share ideas can stimulate conversations and provide an interesting and educational backdrop for common or shared areas.

**C.11****Celebrate your commitment to a green workplace**

Pick any day on the calendar or align with any of the following [sustainability celebrations](#) to share educate others on the importance of sustainability while highlighting your workplace’s efforts. Post on social media, write an ISU News Article, or send an email to promote your efforts and celebrate.

Make sure to use the relevant hashtags on social media:

#SustainISU  
#BikeISU

#RedbirdsReuse  
#RedbirdsRecycle

**C.12****What other ways has the workplace been sustainable?**

This list is by no means exhaustive. Share other ways the workplace has been sustainable!

# RESOURCES AND SUPPORT

Consider this process a self-study, an opportunity to work collaboratively, and a way to intentionally incorporate sustainable practices into the workplace. The report you compile should be thought of as a useable showcase of the important work the workplace has done to expand the culture of sustainability at Illinois State University. With all that being said, it can seem like a daunting list of tasks. The Office of Sustainability has assembled a wide range of resources all available on their [website](#) to aid all campus workplaces in their sustainability efforts. Resources are described and linked below:

## **Sustainable Purchasing Guide**

Find recommended paper products, office supplies, energy-saving products, office kitchen supplies, and cleaning products that have a smaller footprint.

## **Indoor Plant Guide**

Find the right plants to improve indoor air quality and incorporate biophilic design into the workplace or home.

## **Zero Waste Workplace**

Learn how easy it is to incorporate zero waste practices in the workplace.

## **Energy Conservation**

Explore how to help your workplace be more energy efficient.

## **Redbird Green Reminders**

Download a variety of Redbird Green Reminders and additional signage that will help create a greener workplace.



## **Bike Education & Registration**

Learn about bike safety and how to keep bikes in working order for a healthy and environmentally friendly way to get around campus.

**For additional questions and support or for a thought partner, reach out to  
the Office of Sustainability:**

**Sustainability@IllinoisState.edu  
(309) 438-7357**