



Green Office Program Overview

Northwestern is committed to being a leader in sustainability, and faculty and staff have essential roles to play in reaching the University's sustainability goals. The Green Office Program engages faculty and staff in adopting environmental best practices in the workplace. The program offers guidance on conserving energy and water, reducing waste, and increasing awareness of all facets of sustainability. The process empowers all of our faculty and staff to become green leaders.

The Benefits of Certification

The Green Office Program provides tools and support to help offices and departments conserve resources, reduce costs, and create a healthier, greener workplace. Participating offices and Green Office leaders receive University-wide recognition for their efforts and become part of a campus-wide community of sustainability leaders.

The Certification Process

sustainNU guides Green Office leaders as they work toward certification. Below are the steps in the process.

1. Contact sustainNU.

Contact sustainNU at sustainNU@northwestern.edu to learn more and start the process.

2. Hold an introductory meeting.

Meet with a sustainNU staff member to review the certification process.

3. Get approval.

Get approval from your office leadership to proceed with Green Office Certification.

4. Host a staff presentation.

Organize a Green Office presentation for your staff with sustainNU.

5. Form a Green Office team.

Organize a Green Office team to lead the certification process.

6. Complete and submit the Green Office Assessment.

Review your office's equipment and practices by completing the assessment.

7. Start greening your office.

Work with your green team to start implementing the steps in the Green Office Certification Guide.

8. Check in with sustainNU.

Update sustainNU on the status of your certification process, share a target completion date, and receive support during a mid-guide touch base.

9. Submit the Green Office Certification Guide.

Submit your completed guide to sustainNU for review and verification.

10. Receive certification.

sustainNU will present your Green Office Certification at a celebration event or meeting of your choice.

Get Started Today

Contact sustainNU@northwestern.edu



Green Office Program Requirements

Certification requirements

- Have an introductory meeting with sustainNU
- Receive office leadership approval for Green Office Program participation
- Achieve 75% staff participation in the Green Office presentation by sustainNU
- Have an active green team with more than 2 staff members
- Complete and submit the Green Office Assessment to sustainNU
- Have a mid-process check in with sustainNU while working through the Green Office Certification Guide
- Complete and implement at least 24 sustainability practices in the Green Office Certification Guide

Stay active and re-certify

- Maintain an active green team
- Continue the sustainability practices your office implemented through the program
- Maintain participation in Green Office Program efforts

Get Involved with sustainNU

- [Sign up for the sustainNU newsletter](#) for sustainability news, events, and opportunities
- Follow us @sustainNU on [Instagram](#)
- Network with other Green Office leaders at Green Office programs and events
- Participate in new sustainability office activities and opportunities
- Stay up-to-date with news and opportunities through the Green Office Program mailing list
- Use resources provided by sustainNU to promote your office's certification

Green Office Program Practices

To receive Green Office Certification, your office must implement at least 24 of these practices. Please use the Green Office Certification Guide to document your progress.

If you have any questions, contact sustainNU at sustainNU@northwestern.edu.

Communication and Engagement

1. We have an active Green Office Team.
2. We include Green Office information and updates in staff meetings and new employee orientation.
3. We place Green Office signage and reminders in key locations in our office.
4. We participate in sustainability events such as the Bike to Work Challenge and Earth Month events.

Energy and Water

Computers and Electronics

5. We use energy efficient settings for computers, printers, copiers and other devices.
6. We use smart power strips to power down devices that are not in use, reducing standby power usage.
7. We purchase computers and electronics that are ENERGY STAR® or EPEAT® certified.

Climate Control

8. We have eliminated space heaters and report temperature issues to Facilities.
9. We keep windows and doors closed when heating or air conditioning is running.

Lighting

10. We use task lighting with LED or CFL bulbs.
11. We take responsibility for turning off lights and place reminder stickers on switches where needed.

Kitchen Equipment

12. We use a central, energy efficient refrigerator rather than individual mini-fridges.
13. We use power strips or timers to turn off kitchen equipment.

Water Use

14. We use water efficiently and report leaks to Facilities

Waste and Recycling

Paper and Office Supplies

15. We save paper by distributing materials electronically, unsubscribing from unnecessary bulk mail subscriptions, and using double-sided printing.
16. We reuse scrap paper and office supplies.

Food and Drink

17. We provide reusable kitchenware in order to reduce the need for disposable items.
18. We do not provide bottled water and encourage the use of water coolers, pitchers, and reusable cups and bottles instead.

Recycling

19. We encourage recycling by ensuring proper placement and labeling of bins.
20. We recycle e-waste through sustainNU.

Purchasing

21. We purchase environmentally friendly products such as recycled content paper.
22. We minimize the purchase of disposable products such as pod-style coffee maker “K-cups,” paper cups and plates, and plastic utensils.
23. We purchase products with minimal packaging and buy in bulk when appropriate.
24. We explore options for reuse and check surplus resources before purchasing new products.

Meetings and Travel

25. We encourage the use of public transportation and distribute information about transit benefits.
26. We encourage walking and cycling, including participation in the Bike Commuter Challenge.
27. When hosting events we ask Northwestern Catering or other partners for sustainable options that minimize waste.

Social Sustainability

Office Culture

28. We bring natural elements into our workspace.
29. We encourage staff to take advantage of Health and Wellness programs offered through Human Resources.

Community

30. We encourage all office members to learn about the Indigenous People native to the land on which Northwestern sits.

Innovations and Extras

31. We do something innovative, implementing measures that go above and beyond the sustainability practices listed here.