

# NASHVILLE CIVIC DESIGN CENTER

## Green Office Initiative Template

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Thank you for using the Nashville Civic Design Center's green office initiative template. This document can be the first step towards establishing an office environmental policy. The template includes six categories of sustainability: transportation, energy and water use, paper consumption, janitorial supplies, waste and recycling, and business associates. Within each section, there are blank fields where you can enter the correct information for your office. Once these blanks are filled, you and your colleagues can set sustainability goals in each category.

Minimizing the ecological footprint at work is an ongoing process. Your office can be a positive example to employees, who will likely spread the same habits to the home, and even to other businesses.

### TRANSPORTATION:

This section should evaluate the transportation involved in office activities, from employees' commutes to work, to out-of-town trips, to meetings with clients, to deliveries. Employees should consider the following questions:

#### How do we get to work?

Driving alone: \_\_\_\_\_%

Carpooling with housemate/colleague: \_\_\_\_\_%

Public Transportation: \_\_\_\_\_%

Biking/Walking: \_\_\_\_\_%

#### How far do we drive?

<3 miles: \_\_\_\_\_%

3-6 miles: \_\_\_\_\_%


7-10 miles: \_\_\_\_\_%


Over 10 miles: \_\_\_\_\_%

The office average or cumulative CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, in pounds, can be determined with the following calculation,:

Number of miles driven divided by fuel efficiency (miles per gallon)= \_\_\_\_\_ (gallons used)  
times the emissions factor 19.6 (or 22.4 for diesel vehicles)= \_\_\_\_\_ pounds of CO<sub>2</sub>.

(An Inconvenient Truth, <http://www.climatecrisis.net/takeaction/carboncalculator/howitwascalculated.html>)

 When we go to work-related functions, do we carpool or use public transportation when possible?

 What incentives can the office offer to encourage the use of public transportation, biking, or walking to work?

Are we located along a bus line?

Can we offer bus passes?

Do we have bicycle parking or showering facilities for bikers?

What goals can we set in each of these areas to minimize our impact? What is each employee willing to do to lessen his or her own impact, and what office incentives would employees like to see to make it easier to do more?


### **ENERGY AND WATER USE:**


Office buildings account for the largest portion of energy use among commercial buildings. The largest uses of energy in an office are lighting (29%), space heating (25%), equipment (16%), cooling (9%), and water heating (9%), (*Energy Information Administration, eia.doe.gov*). In many cases, looking at the electric and water bills can be an important way to know where to cut back on consumption. Decreasing energy and water consumption is also a sure way to save your office money.

Visit the webpage of your energy provider to determine the sources of the energy purchased by your office. Does your energy provider offer a green energy offset option?

*Nashville: Of the energy the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) produces, 60% is generated by coal-burning plants (other fossil fuels generate another 4%), 29% is generated by nuclear plants, and 6% is hydroelectric. Less than one percent is currently produced by green power. TVA does offer green power offset purchase with the Green Power Switch option.*

### **LIGHTING:**


 Can electric lighting be substituted with more natural or reflected light? If so, decide which windows will provide the light, and whether to invest in mirrors or reflective metal on the walls or ceilings. If some blinds are designated to be kept open at all times, delegate someone to make sure they stay that way.

 Is it possible to use dimmers, or turn some lights off altogether? If so, make sure everyone knows which lights are not being used, particularly if the same people tend to turn the lights on each morning.


### **HEATING/COOLING:**

 How hard is our temperature control working? Can we turn it warmer in the summer and cooler in the winter?

#### EQUIPMENT:

 How efficient is our office equipment? Do we turn monitors “off” or on “standby” when not in use? If not, how can we be reminded to shut down computers at night?

#### WATER:

 How efficient are our water fixtures? Do our sinks have faucet aerators w/ <2.75 gpm (gallons per minute)?

Do we have a water cooler or purifier, to use as an alternative for bottled water?

#### PAPER CONSUMPTION:

It can be both an economical and environmentally conscious decision to reduce paper consumption. If your office rents copy machines, you may end up paying overage costs when you make over a certain amount of copies per month. It is possible to save in overage costs, in addition to paper and ink costs if your office enacts a policy to reduce the number of copies it makes. Employees should print and copy documents only when a physical format is necessary. At some stages of revision and design, an on-screen version is sufficient.


Current copying costs:

Current paper: \_\_\_\_\_; \_\_\_\_\_ price per 10 reams, divided by 5000 sheets =  
\_\_\_\_\_ price per sheet, times \_\_\_\_\_ copies made per month =  
\_\_\_\_\_ paper costs per month

Current ink: \_\_\_\_\_; \_\_\_\_\_ price per set of cartridges, divided by  
\_\_\_\_\_ months between cartridge replacement =  
\_\_\_\_\_ ink costs per month

Monthly copying costs: \_\_\_\_\_ paper costs per month + \_\_\_\_\_ ink costs per month +  
\_\_\_\_\_ overage costs per month (if applicable) =  
\_\_\_\_\_ monthly copying costs

#### COPY PAPER:

 Do we print double-sided whenever possible? Can we designate certain documents or a specific printer/copier to print on reused paper?

The recycled content of the paper can also be increased.

Current paper: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ % recycled; \_\_\_\_\_ % post-consumer recycled  
\_\_\_\_\_ price per 10 reams

Alternatives:

- Office Depot--35% recycled--10 reams (38.99)
- Office Depot--100% recycled--10 reams (53.49)
- Aspen 100--100% post-consumer recycled--10 reams (47.56) (Sam's)

In addition to copy paper, kitchen and event supplies also contribute to paper use. Small changes can be made by buying products with less packaging, and kitchen supplies that are non-disposable, made from recycled content, or land-fill friendly.

#### PAPER KITCHEN SUPPLIES:

Can we avoid buying individually-packaged servings of food and beverage products?

Can we switch to cloth towels in the kitchen?

Are current disposable paper items recycled, unbleached, or compostable?

Current paper towels: \_\_\_\_\_; Unbleached? Y N

\_\_\_\_\_ % recycled; \_\_\_\_\_ % post-consumer recycled

\_\_\_\_\_ price

Alternative:

- Marcal--100% recycled--12 rolls (13.88) (Costco prices)

Current disposable cups: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ % recycled; Compostable? Y N

\_\_\_\_\_ count divided by \_\_\_\_\_ price = \_\_\_\_\_ unit cost

Alternative:

- Compostable, corn-based, 16 oz, 1000 ct. (128.05--.128/cup) (Costco)

Current disposable napkins: \_\_\_\_\_; Compostable? Y N

\_\_\_\_\_ % recycled; \_\_\_\_\_ % post-consumer recycled

\_\_\_\_\_ count divided by \_\_\_\_\_ price = \_\_\_\_\_ unit cost

Alternative:

- Marcal luncheon napkins, 100% recycled, 2400 ct. (29.98--.012/pc) (Costco)

## JANITORIAL SUPPLIES:

Are our cleaning supplies biodegradable?

Are our trash bags recycled/biodegradable?

Current: \_\_\_\_\_; Compostable? Y N

\_\_\_\_\_ % recycled; \_\_\_\_\_ % post-consumer recycled

\_\_\_\_\_ count divided by \_\_\_\_\_ price = \_\_\_\_\_ unit cost

Alternatives:

- Webster Earthsense--60% recycled, 10% post-consumer--90 ct. (9.99--.111/bag) (Office Depot)
- Webster Reclaim--75% recycled, 10% post-consumer--150 ct. (17.59--.117/bag) (Office Depot)

## WASTE/RECYCLING:

After decreasing the waste your office generates by consuming less paper and heavily-packaged products, a recycling system will further reduce your office's ecological footprint. Recycling bins should be just as, if not more, accessible than trash cans. Analyze the placement and size of trash cans and recycling bins according to what and how much is disposed of in the different spaces of your office. Decide how many bins are needed in each size. Alert your colleagues to the new plan and educate them on exactly what can be thrown in each receptacle.

Depending on the amount of recycling your office produces, and whether the city provides curbside pickup, you may need to designate someone to collect the recyclable materials and bring them to a recycling drop-off center, or hire a recycling pickup agency.



Rubbermaid "Slim Jim" blue 23 gal. (44.99) (Office Depot), (37.42) (Costco)

Suggestion for Meeting Space: 2 Rubbermaid Containers that allow for the separation of plastic, metal (most commonly used in meetings).



Two-compartment, stainless steel, 30 gal. (69.99) (Bed, Bath & Beyond)

Nashville: A map of recycling drop-off centers is provided on the Nashville.gov webpage: [http://www.nashville.gov/recycle/Centers/drop\\_off.htm](http://www.nashville.gov/recycle/Centers/drop_off.htm). Recycling pick-up is provided by several private companies which can be found online or in the phonebook.

### **BUSINESS ASSOCIATES:**

An important aspect of a Green office is the example it provides to other businesses and patrons. Extending an image of sustainability can encourage others in your community to do the same. Brainstorm with your colleagues about ways to promote this message. Consider:

- Buying locally. This can also be a money-saver and build friendly relations with other local businesses.
- Providing recycling bins and recycled products in prominent spaces where clients will see them.
- Encouraging the use of earth-friendly practices when visitors come to your office premises.
- Posting a bus map in the entryway, meeting spaces or website, or electronically distributing it to guests who will be visiting the office.

### **SOME TIPS FOR AN EFFECTIVE GREEN OFFICE INITIATIVE:**

Make your green office initiative as effective as possible by getting everyone involved. Once you have an idea of where you need to improve, let all of your colleagues know about your goal to go Green.

- Instead of sending a memo for each person to read individually, hold a meeting where everyone can discuss how to improve and ways to make the changes easier. If it is a group effort, accountability to each other will facilitate accountability to the cause.
- Keep the initiative current. In many cases, several one-time improvements can be made in the beginning just by unplugging unused equipment and switching to different products. Once this is done, continued improvement depends on continued habits.

■ If possible, give your colleagues updates on the office's progress. This will encourage good habits and remind everyone that the initiative is still relevant.

■ Finally, hold periodic meetings to set higher sustainability goals. Creating a Green office is an ongoing process.