

Green Business Resources

< *City of Austin - Office of Sustainability* >

Green Business is good business, especially in Austin. By taking action to go green, your business can save money, protect the local environment, and get recognized for all that you do! Find out more about Austin Green Business Leaders at www.austintexas.gov/greenbiz



Communication & Outreach

Use regular communications with employees, as well as your customer or client network, to share information about initiatives and the changes you are making to become more sustainable and environmentally responsible.



Resource Management

Recycling saves landfill space and disposal costs, reduces energy and water consumption, reduces greenhouse gas emissions, extends virgin material resources, contributes to carbon sequestration, and boosts employment and the economy.



Water

Saving water saves wastewater, energy, and money. Show that your business is committed to going green and reducing water use.



Energy

Know where you stand. By observing your energy use and establishing a baseline, you'll have a reference point of how much energy you use. This will help you determine how much energy you can save and provide a means for tracking your progress.



Healthy Work Environment

Studies have shown that workplace wellness programs can improve workplace productivity, reduce healthcare related costs, reduce worker absenteeism, and bring employees improvements in physical activity and healthy lifestyles.



Transportation

Transportation is the life-blood of any economy. And yet, our fast-growing urban centers are faced with increasingly clogged arteries. Encouraging employees to take alternative transportation eases congestion in Austin and reduces emissions from car tailpipes.



Community Stewardship

Being a good corporate citizen builds employee loyalty and satisfaction, enriches the community, and feels good. Think of ways to build camaraderie among staff through a day of community service or volunteer activity.





Communication & Outreach

Strategies	Resources	ABGL Scorecard
Create a written policy recognizing sustainability as a core value in your company culture and business identity.	Environmental Policy Examples (Pollution Prevention Pays)	C1
Create a “Green Team” to lead environmental initiatives and build staff support for green practices.	Bring Your Green to Work with ENERGY STAR® Team Up to Save Energy (EPA) Green Teams—Engaging Employees in Sustainability (GreenBiz.com) Greening Business: Highlights the benefits of undertaking sustainable practices	C2
Host a speaker from Austin Energy, Austin Resource Recovery, Austin Water, Watershed Protection, Capital Metro, or another environmental organization to educate staff on environmental initiatives.	Request a Speaker from Austin Energy's Power Saver™ program Request a Speaker from the Office of Sustainability Request a Speaker from the Water Conservation Speakers Bureau Request a Speaker from Austin Resource Recovery Request a Speaker from Watershed Protection	C3
Join Austin Green Business Leaders and get tools and resources that can help your company save money, expand market share, protect the environment, and support our local community.	Visit the Austin Green Business Leaders website.	C4
Celebrate Earth Day, “Green Week” or other green events to encourage employee participation in sustainability-related activities.	Green Living Tips Earth Fast Facts (PlanetPals) WasteWise Program: Success Stories EPA	C5
Educate employees about how they can take green actions at home.	Climate Change- Health & Environmental Effects (EPA) The Business Case for Environmental and Sustainability Employee Education (National Environmental Education Foundation) Going Green at Home	C6
Highlight your sustainability efforts on your website, in e-newsletters, or in other forms of communication to emphasize your green practices to customers and other stakeholders.	Marketing and Sustainability (Center for Sustainable Design)	C7
Calculate your business' carbon footprint and communicate the results with your team.	Business Carbon Calculator (Carbonfund) Business and Organization Carbon Calculator	C8





Resource Management

Strategies	Resources	ABGL Scorecard
<p>Conduct an onsite waste assessment with Austin Resource Recovery, with a private firm, or by following an EPA approach, and develop a plan to increase waste prevention, reuse, and recycling.</p>	<p>Austin Resource Recovery Business Outreach and Services EPA Waste Assessment Approaches Universal Recycling Ordinance</p>	<p>R1</p>
<p>Aim to divert at least 75% of your waste annually from the landfill by reducing, reusing and/or recycling and have documentation to support your achievements.</p>	<p>Onsite Waste Assessments</p>	<p>R2</p>
<p>Develop an environmentally preferable purchasing (EPP) policy to procure green products where feasible.</p>	<p>Environmentally Preferable Purchasing (EPA) [PDF] Green Product Checklist: What Makes a Product Green? (REGREEN) Green 101: Policies (Responsible Purchasing Network) Green Seal Sustainable Paper Product Standards</p>	<p>R3</p>
<p>Purchase at least 30% post-consumer recycled copier/printer paper and at least 100% post-consumer recycled paper products (e.g., paper towels, envelopes, notepads, boxes, etc.).</p>	<p>Comprehensive Procurement Guidelines for Paper and Paper Products (EPA) Green Seal Sustainable Paper Product Standards</p>	<p>R4</p>
<p>Track how much paper your business uses and implement strategies to achieve a paper reduction goal.</p>	<p>Common Wastes & Materials - Paper Recycling (EPA) Office Paper Reduction Quick Tips</p>	<p>R5</p>
<p>Purchase recycled-content supplies, refurbished equipment, rechargeable batteries, and/or remanufactured printer cartridges.</p>	<p>Comprehensive Procurement Guidelines for Nonpaper Office Products</p>	<p>R6</p>
<p>Use suppliers that take back packaging, electronics, pallets, carpet, or other products.</p>	<p>Checklist of Activities for Starting a Takeback Program (Pacific Northwest Pollution Prevention Resource Center) Product Stewardship Council Green Product Development - Take Back Programs (U.S. Small Business Association)</p>	<p>R7</p>





Resource Management

Strategies

Resources

ABGL
Scorecard

Reduce the number of catalogs, newspapers and unwanted mail sent to your business.

Junk Mail Reduction (Ohio EPA)
DMAchoice (Direct Marketing Association):
Control the number of commercial mailings and emails you receive
Stop Junk Mail for GOOD! (Eco-Cycle)
Catalog Choice

R8

Eliminate all single use disposable dishware (paper or plastic cups, plates, bowls, utensils, coffee stirrers, Styrofoam products, etc).

Municipal Solid Waste in the United States:2007 Facts and Figures (EPA)

R9

Discourage the purchase of single-use plastic water bottles and support alternatives.

Water Bottle Pollution Facts
9 Ways to Reduce Plastic Bottle Use

R10

Provide recycling for your employees for common household items, such as their cell phones, rechargeable batteries, electronics, and/or printer cartridges.

"What Do I Do With..." Austin Resource Recovery Guide
Business Outreach and Services
Call2Recycle: Free rechargeable battery and cell phone collection program
Plug-In to eCycling (EPA)
Responsible Appliance Disposal Program (EPA)
Austin Resource Recovery Electronic Recycling Program

R11

Provide compost bins and either conduct your own composting or contract with a third party composter.

Information on Composting
Organic Materials (EPA)
Urban Worm Girl: Educational resource on vermiculture

R12





Water

Strategies

Resources

ABGL
Scorecard

Conduct a water use audit by participating in the Austin Water 3C Business Challenge or in the Industrial, Commercial or Institutional (ICI) Audit Rebate Program.

3C Challenge
Water Conservation for Businesses
The First Step to Improving Building Water Efficiency (EPA)
Greening Advisor -- Water Audits (NRDC)

W1

Practice water-efficient irrigation with monthly walk throughs, maintenance, and seasonal scheduling changes.

Free Irrigation System Evaluations
Education/Information on Water-Efficiency (Innovative Water Solutions)
Grow Green Irrigation Fact Sheet

W2

Practice sustainable landscaping by planting 90% native and/or drought resistant plants like those found in the Grow Green Plant Guide.

Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center
Water-Efficient Landscaping:
Preventing Pollution & Using Resources Wisely (EPA)
Grow Green Plant Guide

W3

Utilize auxiliary water such as reclaimed water, rainwater harvesting, AC water recycling, cooling water blowdown, or graywater.

Rainwater Harvesting Rebate
Resources for Rainwater Harvesting (HarvestH2O.com)

W4

Complete and submit an Integrated Pest Management (IPM) plan.

Integrated Pest Management
Travis County Entomology program

W5

Avoid the practice of washing cars, equipment, and other items where the runoff water can flow straight into the storm drain.

Residential Car Washing (EPA)
Water Pollution Prevention and Protection
Austin Guide to Home Mechanics
Outside Storage Equipment and Vehicle Maintenance (Arlington Department of Environmental Services)

W6

Keep receiving/loading docks, dumpsters and parking areas free of litter, debris, oil, chemicals, and other contaminants and provide signage in key areas that describes proper practices to prevent pollutants from reaching storm drains.

Austin Clean Water Partners
Stormwater Outreach for Commercial Businesses (EPA)

W7





Water

Strategies

Resources

ABGL
Scorecard

Have someone from your business attend Grow Green Landscape Training.

Grow Green Resources

W8

Institute employee awareness; post signs in restrooms and kitchen areas to encourage water conservation.

Water Conservation Tips (National Geographic)
Water Saving Tips (Texas Water Development Board)

W9

Check to see if your toilets use 1.28 gallons or less per flush, your urinals use 0.5 gallons or less per flush and have faucet aerators with a target flow rate of 1.5 gallons per minute (kitchen), & 0.5 (bathroom).

WaterSense - Bathroom Sink Faucets & Accessories (EPA):
Information on water-efficient faucets and bathroom fixtures

W10

Create a policy to conduct regular leak checks on bathroom sinks and toilets and implement a process for their proper repair.

Leak Detection and Repair: A Best Practices Guide (EPA)

W11





Energy

Strategies

Resources

ABGL
Scorecard

<p>Track your energy use over the last 12 months using the EPA's ENERGY STAR® measurement and tracking tool, Portfolio Manager.</p>	<p>Portfolio Manager (EPA): Software that baselines your energy and water use Austin Energy's Speakers Bureau: Request a Speaker on Energy Conservation Load Profiler: Monitor your business' energy use daily, hourly, or every 15 min.</p>	<p>E1</p>
<p>Disclose your Portfolio Manager results to your tenants and /or property managers.</p>	<p>Energy Conservation Audit and Disclosure (ECAD) Multi-Family Properties: Rebates for apartment and condo building owners</p>	<p>E2</p>
<p>Keep your indoor air temperature between 66 and 70°F in winter, 74 and 78°F in summer, and use programmable thermostats to automatically regulate temperatures depending on occupancy.</p>	<p>Thermal Comfort for Office Work (Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety) Thermostats and Control Systems (DOE)</p>	<p>E3</p>
<p>Set your refrigerator temperatures between 35 and 38°F, freezer temperatures between 0 and 5°F, and hot water heater temperature to 120°F or less (or lowest temperature required by Health and Human Services).</p>	<p>Refrigerators: Best Practices (ENERGY STAR®) Lower Water Heating Temperature for Energy Savings (DOE)</p>	<p>E4</p>
<p>Replace the majority of indoor and outdoor incandescent light bulbs, T12 fluorescent, and magnetic ballasts with more energy efficient lighting.</p>	<p>Lighting: Information on lighting retrofits and rebates ENERGY STAR® Light Bulbs Commercial LED Lighting (ENERGY STAR®) Commercial Rebate - Summary of Technologies CFL Savings (ENERGY STAR®)</p>	<p>E5</p>
<p>Place reflective film or Solar Screens on windows to block out summer heat and keep heat in during winter.</p>	<p>Window Treatments and Rebates Tips: Windows (DOE) Mesh Window Screens (DOE)</p>	<p>E6</p>
<p>Use timed lighting or occupancy sensors in common areas or use daylight sensors to adjust artificial lighting levels automatically.</p>	<p>How to Select Lighting Controls for Offices and Public Buildings (DOE) Austin Energy Plug Load Occupancy Sensors</p>	<p>E7</p>



Energy

Strategies	Resources	ABGL Scorecard
Require the purchase of ENERGY STAR® qualified equipment and appliances.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commercial Rebate - Summary of Technologies Find ENERGY STAR® Products Foodservice Equipment Rebates Guest-Room Controllers - Rebate Purchasing & Procurement (ENERGY STAR®) Commercial Kitchen Equipment rebate Buyer's Guide to Purchasing ENERGY STAR® Labeled Office Equipment 	E8
Check to see if your Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning (HVAC) system meets Energy Efficiency Rating (EER) and Seasonal Energy Efficiency Ratio (SEER) minimum efficiency standards.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Selecting a New Water Heater (DOE) Commercial Heat Pump Water Heater Rebate Waterheat timer Solar Water Heater Rebate Program 	E9
Perform HVAC and refrigeration system maintenance according to manufacturer recommendations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Heat and Cool Efficiently - Maintenance Checklist (ENERGY STAR®) 	E10
Generate and use renewable energy on-site.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Solar Photovoltaics—Commercial and Multifamily Solar PV Rebates Renewable Energy (DOE) 	E11
Contribute to renewable energy generation through the GreenChoice® program or offset energy related emissions with carbon offsets.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> GreenChoice®: Support electric generation from wind and other clean, renewable sources 	E12



Healthy Work Environment

Strategies	Resources	ABGL Scorecard
Join the Mayor's Health & Fitness Council.	The Mayor's Health & Fitness Council (MHFC)	H1
Establish and enforce tobacco-free worksite policies, initiatives and programming that actively promote tobacco-free living.	Live Tobacco Free Austin Sample Tobacco Free policy Guide to a tobacco free business (CDC) Tobacco-use cessation policies Nicotine Anonymous	H2
Create a policy requiring the purchase of low- or no-VOC cleaners, polishes, sealants, adhesives, paints, carpeting, and finishes.	An Introduction to Indoor Air Quality (EPA and Safety)	H3
Provide education and/or resources to support employee health and wellness such as workshops, counseling or printed materials on good nutrition, physical fitness, stress management, etc.	American Heart Association Austin Mayor's Fitness Council 10 Steps to a Microbusiness Wellness Program (U.S. Small Business Association)	H4
Offer staff options or assistance to ensure proper ergonomics at employee workstations.	Workplace Safety and Health Topics: Ergonomics and Musculoskeletal Disorders (CDC) 10 Tips for Effective Ergonomics (Washington State Department of Labor & Industries)	H5
Implement programs or initiatives that promote and encourage healthy food choices, making it easier for employees to maintain healthy diets.	Improve Vending Machine Options (New York State Department of Health) Health-related programs for nutrition	H6
Implement programs or initiatives to promote and encourage physical activity.	Workplace Health - Implementation - Physical Activity (CDC)	H7



Healthy Work Environment

Strategies

Resources

ABGL
Scorecard

Purchase and display art created by local artists and/or showcase employee art.

Art In Public Places
Art Alliance Austin
Art Austin

H8

Provide Mother-Friendly Worksites to proactively support employees who choose to breastfeed their infants.

Mother Friendly Worksite Initiative
Texas Department of State Health Services
Mother Friendly Worksite Poster

H9





Transportation

Strategies	Resources	ABGL Scorecard
<p>Study how employees get to work by using a commuter survey and create a commuter plan.</p>	<p>Commuter Survey: An example of a commuter survey: (Commuter Connections) Commute Cost Calculator Movability Austin: Resource for businesses in Downtown Austin Commute Solutions: Resource for businesses outside of Downtown Austin</p>	<p>T1</p>
<p>Provide a public transit benefit program to encourage use of public transportation.</p>	<p>Try Transit! Request a Presentation or Tour!: Contact Capital Metro and sign up for educational presentations Capital Metro Employer Program</p>	<p>T2</p>
<p>Offer employee carpool program tools to help your staff find carpool partners.</p>	<p>Commute Solutions Capital Metro Ride Share Capital Metro Vanpool</p>	<p>T3</p>
<p>Compensate or provide other incentives to employees that avoid driving alone to work.</p>	<p>CapMetro Public Transportation (EPA)</p>	<p>T4</p>
<p>Provide secure, well lit, weather protected onsite bicycle parking for employees and guests.</p>	<p>Federal Highway Administration University Course on Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation: Lesson 17 -- Bicycle Parking and Storage City of Austin Bike Rack Program</p>	<p>T5</p>
<p>Provide Bike Sharing program memberships for your employees or create your own bike sharing program.</p>	<p>Yellow Bike Project: The Austin Yellow Bike Project (YBP) Austin B-Cycle</p>	<p>T6</p>
<p>Provide showers and lockers in your place of business or subsidize nearby gym memberships for bike commuters to have access to those amenities.</p>	<p>Bike to Work (EPA)</p>	<p>T7</p>



Transportation

Strategies	Resources	ABGL Scorecard
<p>Have a telecommuting or flextime policy for employees (unless you are a home-based business).</p>	<p>Telework Exchange: A public-private partnership focused on telecommuting information</p> <p>Sample Telework Program Policy:(Denver Regional Council of Governments)</p> <p>Green Office Guide: A Guide to Greening Your Bottom Line Through a Resource-Efficient Office Environment (City of Portland)</p> <p>Telecommuting: Saving Energy and Promoting Progress (Tennessee Advisory Committee on Intergovernmental Relations)</p>	<p>T8</p>
<p>Regularly use teleconferencing or webinars instead of traveling to meetings.</p>	<p>The Business Case for Videoconferencing (Wainhouse Research)</p>	<p>T9</p>
<p>Sign up for a Car Share program and provide membership updates to your employees.</p>	<p>Car Sharing (EPA)</p> <p>Car Sharing (Movability Austin)</p>	<p>T10</p>
<p>Provide an onsite electric vehicle charging station.</p>	<p>Plug In Partners</p>	<p>T11</p>





Community Stewardship

Strategies	Resources	ABGL Scorecard
<p>Use local foods or participate in a Community-Supported Agriculture (CSA) or other farm to work program.</p>	<p>Community Supported Agriculture (Local Harvest) information</p> <p>The Sustainable Food Center's (SFC's) Farmers' Market</p> <p>The Coalition of Austin Community Gardens</p>	<p>S1</p>
<p>Donate or share your business space (either permanently or on occasion) with local organizations that can use the space to host activities and events promoting green and sustainable community practices.</p>	<p>I Live Here, I Give Here: Offer your space to a nonprofit</p>	<p>S2</p>
<p>Donate materials such as furniture, electronics, or other supplies to local charities or non-profit organizations.</p>	<p>Donate to Animal Services</p> <p>Furniture Pick Up: Support our program to provide furniture and household goods to our No Longer Homeless Veterans here in the City of Austin</p> <p>Goodwill Computer Works: A computer recycling and refurbishing operation run by Goodwill Industries of Central Texas</p>	<p>S3</p>
<p>Encourage or incentive employee participation in local mentor or tutoring programs for youth.</p>	<p>Austin Public Library Youth Services</p>	<p>S4</p>
<p>Sponsor or participate in community volunteer events and encourage employees to engage in other community service and volunteerism.</p>	<p>Austin Public Library Volunteer Program</p> <p>Austin Park and Recreation Volunteers</p> <p>Austin Volunteermatch</p> <p>Hands on Central Texas</p> <p>Earthshare</p>	<p>S5</p>
<p>Refer another business to participate in the Austin Green Business Leaders program!</p>	<p>Email greenbusiness@austintexas.gov for more information</p>	<p>S6</p>
<p>Advocate for or sponsor any community causes.</p>	<p>Committee Encouraging Corporate Philanthropy</p> <p>[PDF] Business Involvement in the Community: Everyone Wins (National Civic League)</p>	<p>S7</p>