



EVERY UTRGV OFFICE CAN BE A SUSTAINABLE OFFICE.

Every department and office at UTRGV is either directly working towards a [U.N. Sustainable Development goal](#), or indirectly contributing to students' success by putting goals like Responsible Consumption and Strong Institutions into practice. Help UTRGV uphold its [commitment](#) to [sustainability](#)!

I CAN HELP IN THREE STEPS:

1. Complete the assessment below and submit my results to the Office for Sustainability.

2. Incorporate these habits at work and encourage my co-workers to do the same. *It takes time to build a habit.*

3. Become a Sustainable Development Leader! *Work closely with OFS towards a completely sustainable office!*

I UNDERSTAND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT.



The United Nations' 17 Sustainable Goals (SG17) guide nations and their citizens towards a more sustainable future. With these goals, I have a frame of reference from which to assess our sustainable development.

- I have identified how my workplace contributes to a more sustainable world. I know that sustainable development is written into [UTRGV's Mission](#) in the [Strategic Plan](#), and is also a [UT System policy](#), and I align my behavior towards these institutional goals.
- I include information and updates about sustainability in staff meetings and new employee orientation.
- I place sustainability-related signage and reminders in key locations in My office.

I PRACTICE AND DEMONSTRATE SUSTAINABLE HABITS AT WORK.



Living sustainably means maintaining balanced mental and physical health while working and playing throughout life. Engaging in healthy habits can make work more enjoyable as well as safe and efficient!

- I participate in [sustainability events](#) such as Arbor Day, Earth Fest; cultural celebrations hosted by UTRGV; and health initiatives like the Health Fair and UTRGV Living Well Program.
- I stay active and hydrated. A sedentary lifestyle is an office worker's biggest health risk. Every hour or so, I encourage my co-workers to stretch or walk for five minutes, and take a water break.
- I pack a lunch in a reusable container. Eating out every day is expensive, often unhealthy, and leaves a larger carbon footprint than cooking at home.
- I encourage walking and cycling to work, as well as the use of public transportation. I carpool to meetings off-campus.
- When hosting events, My office or department asks [Sodexo](#), UTRGV's Dining Services provider, for sustainable options such as healthy meals (reduced sugar, salt, etc.) and reusable dinnerware to reduce waste.

I DO MY PART TO HELP UTRGV SAVE ENERGY AND WATER.



All individuals can make small changes to help our communities. Sustainable utility use habits can help redirect my department's budget into things that are more important in the long run. I do my part to help UTRGV meet its system-wide reduction goals!

- I have changed the settings on my computers and printers to print double-sided and to enter energy-saving modes. I reduce my margins to print more material per page.
- My office opens window blinds to allow natural lighting. In addition to providing more light, natural daylight has been shown to reduce stress and promote human health and potential.
- My task lighting (desk lamps, etc.) uses LED bulbs.
- My office uses smart power strips to power down small electronics that are not being used to reduce standby power usage. Consider that microwaves and coffee pots are only used a few times a day.
- I turn off lights when not in use and have placed reminder stickers or signs by light switches.
- I share a central, energy-efficient refrigerator rather than individual mini-fridges. I have a policy for cleaning and maintaining a safe fridge environment. I regularly take home my reusable containers.
- I have eliminated space heaters, and report temperature issues to facilities management.
- I report leaks and dripping faucets to facilities management.

I REDUCE, REUSE, AND RECYCLE TO CUT DOWN ON WASTE.



"Out of sight" does not mean "out of mind" when you're living and working sustainably. The whole life-cycle of materials must be considered. I look for ways to cut down on waste.

- I share digital versions of documents and meeting agendas instead of printing them for the group, and reduce printing whenever possible. I include a "only print if necessary" message in my email footers.
- I have a designated area for sharing office supplies. I reuse the blank sides of scrap paper as notepads.
- My office uses reusable kitchen products (ceramic or glass cups/plates and metal utensils) instead of purchasing disposable products (Single-serve pod products, plastic cutlery, paper and Styrofoam plates or cups, etc). My office uses a water cooler or water fountain to fill reusable cups instead of purchasing plastic water bottles.
- I explore options for reuse of office items, furniture or electronics. All computers replaced by new ones are collected by UTRGV's [surplus department](#) to be used elsewhere. I contact [UTRGV's IT department](#) to securely erase data from hard drives and other storage media first.
- I recycle and encourage recycling by ensuring proper placement and labeling of bins. I recycle used toner and ink cartridges safely by submitting a pickup request to waste@utrgv.edu.

MY OFFICE MAKES SUSTAINABLE OFFICE SUPPLY PURCHASES.



I use my department's purchasing power to make a statement! By shopping from companies that make a commitment to sustainability, I support their goals and encourage other suppliers to demonstrate environmental stewardship.

- I purchase and use printer paper that is Forest Stewardship Council (FSC)-Certified, 100% Recycled Post-Consumer Paper, or made of an alternative to trees such as cotton, banana, tobacco, citrus, coffee bean, hemp, flax, bamboo, bagasse, and recycled fabrics. (Look for the "Green" or "Recycled" icon when looking for products on iShop.) ♻️
- I look for surplus resources before purchasing new office furniture and electronics. If buying new, I purchase ENERGY STAR or EPEAT certified electronics and ethically sourced furniture.
- I purchase items whose chain of production involves processes that are not harmful to people, animals, or the environment. I purchase from companies with a stated goal of reducing their negative environmental and social impacts as much as possible.
- If I must use disposable products, I look for sustainable alternatives like wood or bamboo utensils or biodegradable/compostable tableware.
- I purchase in bulk to reduce wasteful packaging and prefer packaging that is recycled/recyclable.
- I consolidate orders and eliminate purchase orders below \$100. Consolidating orders reduces packaging and reduces the emissions and energy associated with transporting my purchases to campus.
- My office purchases products with reduced toxic or hazardous chemicals, including cleaning supplies.