



Green Business Certification Program

Introduction

Engaging the business sector is an important element of any successful community sustainability plan. According to the Regional Greenhouse Gas Inventory (2008), commercial and industrial energy use constitutes 39% of the greenhouse gas emissions in Tucson, compared to 24% contributed by residential users. In addition, commercial and industrial water use accounts for 35% of the water distributed in Tucson. In order to realize meaningful reductions of greenhouse gas emissions and resource consumption, the business community must be an active participant in taking positive steps to operate more sustainably.

Goals

The goals of the Green Business Certification Program are to:

- Establish a credible benchmark for sustainable business practices.
- Provide technical support to businesses to evaluate their current resource consumption and operational practices.
- Promote the implementation of strategies for energy and water conservation, waste reduction, and pollution prevention, reducing greenhouse gas emissions from business operations.
- Connect businesses to financial resources for efficiency upgrades.
- Recognize businesses for their leadership in sustainable practices.

Program Outline

Step 1: Application and Verification of Eligibility

The Green Business Certification Program is a voluntary program providing businesses in Tucson technical expertise for reducing resource consumption and acknowledging these efforts. Businesses interested in participating will need to submit an application to verify that they meet the minimum requirements for participation:

- Business must be located within City of Tucson limits
- May be some industry limitations

Step 2: Initial Meeting with Program Staff

Once an application is submitted, staff will meet with the business representative(s) to discuss the requirements of the program and distribute program materials, including evaluation forms and action checklist.

Step 3: Collect Baseline Data

An evaluation form must be completed for each of the four program areas (some businesses may be exempt from the Pollution Prevention component). Staff is available to assist with the evaluations upon request.

Once evaluations are submitted, staff will meet with the business representative(s) to review the data and discuss strategies for achieving reductions in resource consumption.

Step 4: Take Action

Businesses must complete and submit the action checklist, and implement the strategies selected. Staff will connect businesses with existing financial assistance programs.

Step 5: Verification and Certification

Program staff will verify that the required actions have been fulfilled and Certification will be awarded.

Step 6: Annual Reporting

An annual report must be submitted one year after certification is awarded. The purpose of the report is to verify the strategies implemented and measure decreases in resource consumption. After two years, businesses must re-apply to ensure they are still taking steps to operate sustainably.

Recognizing Businesses

In addition to technical expertise and assistance with baseline data collection, recognition as a sustainability leader in the community is an important incentive for business participation. Businesses will be recognized as a Certified Green Business in a number of ways:

- Window decal identifying business as a Certified Green Business
- Business listing on Program website directory
- For locally-owned businesses, identification as a Certified Green Business on Local First Arizona's Tucson business directory
- Annual awards luncheon (contingent on funding)
- Annual newspaper advertisement (contingent on funding)

Contact

For more information about the Green Business Certification Program, please contact Nicole Urban-Lopez, nicole.urban-lopez@tucsonaz.gov or 520-837-6934.