

Introduction

Hello and welcome again to the Certified Green Office Program at the University of Illinois! The CGOP is a program of the [Institute for Sustainability, Energy, and Environment](#), the UI's center for sustainability-focused research and campus sustainability improvement. Whether you have participated in our program before or if this is your first time enrolled, we are very excited to be working with you to increase the sustainability of offices around our campus.

This newsletter will review the four Required Actions necessary for all levels of certification in the program, which must be implemented to the extent that they are applicable. As a reminder, completion of five Elective Actions beyond these initial actions will earn you Bronze level certification, completion of ten will earn Silver level certification, and fifteen Elective Actions will earn Gold level certification. Each forthcoming newsletter will review 1-2 Elective Actions.

The four Required Actions are:

1. Use a minimum of 30% recycled paper.
2. Turn off lights, monitors, and other unused devices at night and over weekends.
3. Offer at least vegetarian (or better yet, vegan!) food options at every event your department hosts.
4. Make sure your office has access to recycling bins (both paper and bottles/cans, if applicable) and that they are labeled.

Instructions

Required Action #1: Purchase a minimum of 30% recycled paper.

An average U.S. office worker will use about 10,000 sheets of paper a year, which is about 1.2 trees. Multiply these numbers by the workers in your office to estimate the impact of your paper usage! However, using printer paper with at least a portion of recycled content reduces this impact. Purchasing this through [iStores](#) is cheaper than buying virgin paper. Talk to whoever is in charge of purchasing in your office to make this change -- they should have access to iStores.

1. Go to the iStore portal on the F&S website: <https://my.fs.illinois.edu/fsportal/>
2. Click the COPY PAPER AND SUPPLIES link in the top right sidebar.
3. Click on the case of 30% recycled content paper to order a full case or the ream to order just one ream.
4. Add the product to cart, and checkout.

Required Action #2: Turn off lights, monitors, and other unused devices at night and over weekends.

Turning off office electronics should be a no-brainer -- saving electricity will not only help the environment, but cut down on the cost of power bills as well. To take computers as an example, [it is estimated](#) that a computer that is always on and running on 130 watts will cost about \$130 dollars a year in electricity, at a price of 11 cents per kWh. By turning off office computers at the end of the day, the power bill could decrease anywhere from \$20-\$200 per device, and reduce the energy used by each by up to 75%.

- If your office has manual light switches, get people to pay attention to them. Download our “Not in use, turn off the juice” signage [here](#), or make/download your own. See the “CGOP Required Actions” document for inspiration.
- Designate a daily volunteer to make sure lights and monitors are turned off at the end of the day. We have a [template](#) to help coordinate this if it would be useful.
- Some offices may have light sensors, but all computers, power strips, and anything else that is plugged in and not powered off will still consume energy when not in use.
- Use power strips and then put them on desks where they are visible.

Required Action #3: Offer at least one vegetarian and/or vegan option at every event your office hosts.

Though it hasn't always been widely known, many are becoming increasingly aware of the fact that animal agriculture is one of the greatest drivers of global warming. This is largely because of the [tremendous amounts of energy](#) required to grow the crops fed to animals, though many other factors such as processing/distribution emissions and methane emitted by cows play a role as well. As such, becoming vegetarian (or even better yet, a vegan) has been [consistently listed](#) as one of the best ways to reduce one's personal carbon footprint. However, any amount of meat reduction in your diet makes a difference (especially reducing beef and other red meats, which require the most energy input). This is why we ask all Green Offices to make sure there are meat-free meal options at events.

- You can do this through [University Catering](#) or a local restaurant. (The Red Herring Vegetarian Restaurant on campus caters!)
- Pasta, pizza, and empanadas are relatively cheap options and very easy to make vegetarian.

- Have a meatless salad option. When you order, make sure the salad you selected has no chicken, ham, or any other meat. (Or if it does, ask for the meat to be excluded).
- Many soups are also vegetarian-friendly. If given the option to pick one soup, make it vegetarian, and if given the option to pick two, make at least one vegetarian. Be sure to inquire if soups that sound vegetarian actually use a meat-based broth or stock before ordering.
- Similarly, make sure side dishes that sound vegetarian actually are. (For instance, if you see “mashed potatoes” make sure there are no bacon bits).
- Veggie, cheese, bread platters and baskets are good vegetarian sides and snacks, rather than having a meat platter.
- When given the option to choose two entrees, make sure one is vegetarian.

See below for more information on vegetarian options at University Catering:

- Many of Catering’s meal options come with salad. Salad selections include Caesar, Mixed Greens, Cole Slaw, Pasta Salad, and Potato Salad. While none of these salads contain meat, please recall that some Caesar dressings include anchovies.
- Catering’s meat-free soup options include Broccoli & White Cheddar, Roasted Tomato with Basil, and Vegetable Minestrone.
- If you want to order the Sandwich Buffet (with choice of side salad) from Catering, the vegetarian sandwiches include the Veggie Dagwood and Vegan Wrap. These sandwiches are also options when ordering Classic Box Lunches, as well as an Entrée Salad.
- University Catering’s vegetarian standard buffet options include Stuffed Shells Florentine, Spinach and Ricotta Lasagna, Penne Pasta with Roasted Tomatoes, Basil & Garlic Bread Crumbs.
- Vegetarian friendly theme buffets include the Tuscan Mangia (pasta), Bharata (various Indian dishes), Midwest Barbecue (Black Bean Burger & Three-Cheese Penne).
- Gourmet buffet options include Pasta Puttanesca and Wild Mushroom Lasagna with Fontina.
- Vegetarian table served meals at Catering include Roasted Vegetable Ravioli, Roasted Vegetable Towers, Eggplant Involtni, and Pappardelle Pasta Primavera.

Required Action #4: Make sure you have access to recycling bins (both paper and bottles/cans) and make sure that they are labeled.

Most of us are probably well aware of the benefits of recycling: reduced raw material extraction, reduced energy consumption, less land and marine litter, and lower landfill usage, just to name a few. Recycling is one of the easiest and most basic actions we can take to be good stewards of the environment. However, be sure to note that University Recycling cannot recycle all the materials that a standard community recycling program does! (Though not required for CGOP certification, we encourage you to consider taking any waste materials that University Recycling does not accept home to recycle).

- Some people don't know what can be recycled on campus. Signage on the bins can help this problem, so we recommend downloading the [university signs](#).
- If you don't have recycling bins or need new ones, you may be eligible for free ones from Facilities & Services. You can reach them to request bins at 217-444-7183 or recycling@illinois.edu. More information on Waste Management & Recycling at UIUC [can be found here](#).