



GREEN LIVING CERTIFICATION GUIDE

Overview

The individual decisions you make on a daily basis, even if seemingly small, play a critical role in the University's sustainability initiatives. Penn Sustainability seeks to recognize these choices through the Green Living Certification program—an environmental certification available for residents living on and off campus.

This document serves as a guide to the Green Living Certification. Read on to instructions for how to get certified, as well as tips for living sustainably at Penn.

Applying for Certification:

1. Fill out the Green Living Survey [here](#) in accordance with how many actions you qualify for – the questions in the survey are listed in the following sections
 - (1) Prerequisites
 - (2) Waste
 - (3) Energy and Water
 - (4) Transportation
 - (5) Purchasing
 - (6) Involvement at Penn
 - (7) Bonus Questions
2. Submit your completed form.
3. If certified - you will receive your Green Living Certification sticker in the mail and be automatically entered into raffles throughout the year.

LEVEL	REQUIREMENTS	REWARDS
BRONZE	Achieved at least all prerequisites and at least 10 points.	Bronze level sticker and 1 raffle entry
SILVER	Achieved all prerequisites and at least 20 points	Silver level sticker and 2 raffle entry
GOLD	Achieved all prerequisites, at least 20 points, and completed all bonus questions.	Gold level sticker and 3 raffle entry (+1 raffle entry for every email provided)

Prizes change from year to year but may include reusable items such as totes, travel mugs, t-shirts, water bottles, plants, and more! Please note: you can recertify every year for a chance to win additional prizes!

If you have any questions or comments, please email us at sustainability@upenn.edu.

1 - Prerequisites

In order to become certified, you must complete all five of these actions.

- 1. I practice good recycling habits and have a recycling bin.**

[Click here](#) for a full list of recyclable materials and printable posters.

- 2. I turn off the lights when they are not in use, and use energy efficiency light bulbs, such as CFLs or LEDs, when possible.**

Residential LEDs use at least 75% less energy than incandescent bulbs and last much longer! [\[2\]](#)

- 3. I make an effort to tightly turn off faucets and showers and report any leaks to Penn Maintenance or my relevant facilities team.**

One dripping faucet can waste hundreds of gallons of water per year [\[3\]](#). [Click here](#) to initiate a maintenance request if you live on-campus.

- 4. I have encouraged or am going to encourage other students to receive their Green Living Certification.**

You can provide your friends emails at the end of the survey, and you must provide at least one referral to achieve gold!

2 - Waste

Each of these questions are worth 1 point towards certification.

- 1. I use reusable items such as water bottles, tote bags, to-go containers instead of disposable alternatives when shopping or eating out.**

Good news: tap water in Philly is safe to drink and consistently exceeds EPA testing standards! [\[4\]](#) Check out Penn's [hydration stations](#) to see where you can re-fill your water bottle and avoid more plastic waste!

- 2. At the Penn dining halls, I utilize the Green2Go program and return my Green2Go box rinsed after I use it.**

Download the "Reuzzi" app to check out a Green2Go container at any Penn dining hall. [\[5\]](#) Check out Penn Dining's [Green to Go](#) program webpage for more information.

- 3. I print double sided, reuse scrap paper, and adjust document margins and font size when printing.**

Bonus tip: Printing in black-and-white when color isn't necessary conserves ink!

- 4. I donate my unwanted items to PennMOVES at the end of the year, or to other donation outlets during the school year.**

Each spring, [PennMOVES](#) collects on- and off-campus residents' unwanted belongings for Goodwill Industries.

- 5. I compost my organic waste when possible.**

Penn's green compost bins, available at select dining halls, accept all types of food. [\[8\]](#)

- 6. I dispose of items that require special recycling methods in the proper collection locations, such as electronics and lightbulbs.**

[Click here](#) for more information about recycling specialty items like ink cartridges, batteries, CFLs, hardcover books, writing utensils, and electronics.

3 – Energy and Water

Each of these questions are worth 1 point towards certification.

1. I reduce energy use in my home by completing at least one of the following actions:
 - a. Dressing for the weather indoors to reduce heating and cooling needs.
 - b. Adjusting blinds or curtains to let in, trap, or reduce passive solar heat.
 - c. Adding weather strips or insulation kits to my windows and doors.

About 30% of a home's heating energy is lost through windows. Even keeping curtains shut at night reduces heat loss! [\[10\]](#)

2. I use the power management settings on my electronics, and either unplug my devices/appliances or use a power strip to turn off electricity when not in use.

Many plugged-in electronics draw power even when turned off, called "vampire energy." Turning off power strips is equivalent to unplugging! [\[12\]](#)

3. Before I leave for breaks or vacations, I unplug appliances and electronics, close my windows, and turn off the lights.

Forgetting to take these simple steps before leaving campus results in an unnecessary waste of energy for days or weeks at a time.

4. When doing my laundry, I wait until I have a full load, utilize the cold water setting, and/or use a drying rack instead of a drying machine.

Heating the water accounts for the majority of a washing machine's energy usage. [\[13\]](#)

5. I reduce water use in the bathroom by turning off faucets when brushing my teeth/washing my face, shortening the duration of my showers, and/or installing low-flow fixtures.

A bathroom faucet generally runs at one to two gallons of water per minute. [\[14\]](#)

6. I use the microwave or toaster instead of the oven to reheat foods.

Microwaves use only 20% of the energy that ovens use to reheat food! [\[15\]](#)

4 - Transportation

Each of these questions are worth 1 point towards certification.

- 1. I walk or bike to get around as an alternative to motorized transit when possible.**

You can use [Indego](#), a Philadelphia bike share service, to get around the city by bike! You can check out Philly's extensive bike lane system going from campus to Center City [here](#). [Click here](#) to learn more about the Walking Escort Service, offered 24/7 by Penn's Division of Public Safety, as well as safety tips.

- 2. I take public transportation when going somewhere not accessible via walking or biking, instead of using Uber, Lyft, or a cab.**

The [LUCY Shuttle](#) that travels all around UCity is FREE to anyone with a PennCard!

- 3. If I must use a car, I use a car-sharing service or carpool instead of owning a personal vehicle.**

5 - Purchasing

Each of these questions are worth 1 point towards certification.

1. **I research the impact my purchases have on humans and the environment, and tend to buy low-impact products when possible.**

Examples are products with recycled-content material or that avoid the use of polluting chemicals.

2. **I prefer to shop at stores or on websites that sell second-hand or ethically made products rather than purchasing new or mass-produced belongings.**

There are many great thrift stores in West Philadelphia and Center City.

3. **I prefer to buy local and/or organic foods.**

Locally grown produce requires less energy to be transported from the farm to Penn. On Wednesdays, visit [the farmers market](#) outside of the Penn Bookstore (it accepts Dining Dollars!). On Saturdays and Thursdays, visit the [Clark Park farmers market](#).

4. **I am vegetarian, vegan, or make an effort to reduce the amount of meat and dairy I eat.**

If every American did not eat meat or cheese for just one day a week, the carbon dioxide savings would be equivalent to taking 7.6 million cars off the road annually. [\[18\]](#)

6 - Involvement

Each of these questions are worth 1 point towards certification.

- 1. I am a member of an environmental group on campus.**

There are groups from consulting to beekeeping! Search the "environmental" tag on [Penn Clubs](#) to explore.

- 2. I follow at least one Penn Sustainability social media page.**

IG: [@pennsustainability](#)

FB: [Penn Sustainability](#)

X: [@GreenPenn](#)

LinkedIn: [Penn Sustainability](#)

- 3. I have taken an environmentally focused course or am enrolled in a sustainability major, minor, or concentration.**

Penn offers many different environmentally-focused classes, majors, and minors in all schools. The Environmental Innovative Initiative (EII) has an extensive [Sustainability Course Inventory](#) to help you find these in many different disciplines. [19]

- 4. I have researched how minorities and/or low-income peoples are disproportionately affected by climate change.**

As a starting point, you can subscribe to the City's Environmental Justice Advisory Commission's [newsletter](#).

- 5. I am socially or politicly engaged around sustainability issues I care about.**

You can confirm and update your voter registration through [Penn Leads the Vote](#)'s website.