La Crosse

Small Business

Toolkit

on
Sustainability

CLIMATE ALLIANCE
for the Common Good

2/8/2024

Contents

Use this sustainability toolkit to help your small business become more resilient, address pollution, preserve our environment, and become more profitable— through tips, how-to, and financial resources. With this, you can:

➤ Reduce business costs through energy-saving upgrades.
➤ Attract customers by marketing your sustainability.
➤ Increase profits, according to research by Harvard.

Your customers are already feeling the negative effects of changed weather patterns: 87% of La Crosse citizens report being affected by it. Draw in these potential customers and build customer loyalty by letting customers know you are part of a sustainable movement, reducing your environmental impact. Often, these changes produce financial savings, too.

> "[T]he average firm in La Crosse employs less than 20 people." [*La Crosse Climate Action Plan*]

> "Bottom line [for small businesses]: Adopting sustainable business practices can improve your profits both in the environmental and traditional sense." (*Forbes*)

Helping the Environment Helps Your Business

Backing policies that are good for the environment are good for your bottom line. A significant majority of consumers prefer purchasing from sustainable businesses. "87% of customers will purchase a product from a company that advocated for an issue they care about [...]".

"Focusing on sustainability in business models and corporate governance can give businesses a lasting competitive advantage, according to the Boston Consulting Group." *Forbes*

Businesses can help our planet through some simple changes and using affordable technology, while helping their businesses prosper.

Even "small businesses can make changes with significant impact" that help the environment and save money. These sustainability changes matter. "Increased droughts and other extreme weather events can threaten the economic base of entire regions." By investing in sustainability, your business is positioned to be successful. *Entrepreneur.com*

Why go sustainable: "It may seem counterintuitive that spending more money on sustainable business practices can boost a company's profitability, but studies show that the most sustainable companies are also the most profitable." *Harvard Business School*

Helping the environment helps the bottom line.

The *Climate Alliance for the Common Good* is a La Crosse, Wisconsin-based nonprofit dedicated to education about climate pollution, and solutions we have to address it.

www.climatealliancecg.org

Using the Toolkit

We can help our communities by taking concrete steps toward protecting our environment. We have the tools and the knowledge to make a difference, as described in this guide. Tools include:
- ➤ Actions to reduce costs while reducing polluting emissions.
- ➤ Guides and resources with more information on actions your business can take to help the environment and the company.
- ➤ Rebates and incentives that help your business save money while investing in sustainable technologies.
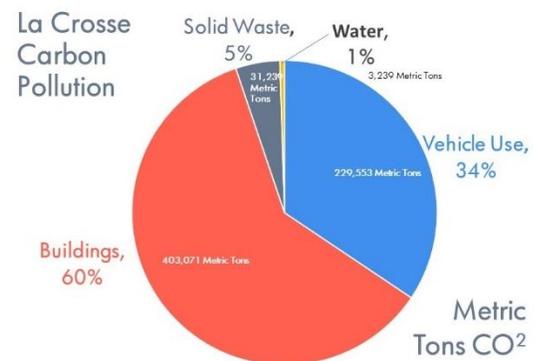- ➤ Steps for developing your sustainability action plan.

La Crosse Specifics

The biggest contributors to carbon pollution in La Crosse are, in order of size:
- ➤ Buildings
- ➤ Transportation
- ➤ Waste
- ➤ Water/Rainwater

These are addressed in order, with strategies that your business can use to limit the environmental impact of each—while saving money, protecting the environment, and helping your business.

La Crosse Carbon Pollution — Solid Waste, 5% (31,239 Metric Tons); Water, 1% (3,239 Metric Tons); Vehicle Use, 34% (229,553 Metric Tons); Buildings, 60% (403,071 Metric Tons); Metric Tons CO$_2$

Extreme weather on the rise — Flood, Storm, Drought. Number of events globally. Source: The Emergency Events Database (EM-DAT) | www.emdat.be © DW

In La Crosse, we have had increased severe storms, annual temperatures, and flooding. Even our growing season has changed. The La Crosse region is a USDA Hardiness zone of 5 instead of 4, changing the crops suitable for the region. Simply put, our environment has changed.
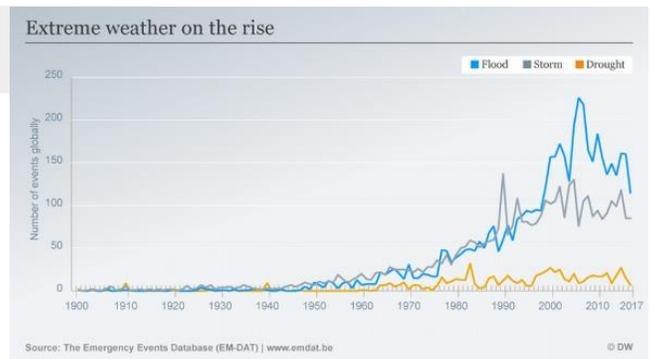
The good news is that over the last few years, county-wide emissions have already dropped. La Crosse's total emissions for 2019 were 775,227 metric tons. In 2020, emissions were 667,101 metric tons. This reduction is driven by reduced emissions from energy generation as reported by Xcel Energy, along with a slight drop in natural gas consumption, and a decrease in transportation volumes, presumably caused by COVID-19 related effects.

Buildings: Reducing Energy Use

Good news: "According to data from the U.S. Energy Information Administration, from 2007 to 2017, energy intensity decreased [...] 15 percent in commercial buildings (thousand Btu per square foot basis)."

Heat Pumps
"The most common type of heat pump is the air-source heat pump, which transfers heat between [the inside] and the outside air."

"The cost to heat with a heat pump is lower than oil, propane or electric baseboard; in some cases, much lower; cost is roughly on-par with natural gas heat, depending on electric and gas prices in your area[.]"

It may not be obvious, but it turns out that buildings are one of the largest contributors to carbon pollution; buildings in the La Crosse area account for 60.4% of the total. Commercial buildings—including industrial buildings—consume more than twice the energy of residential buildings per square foot of building space.

The primary reason buildings contribute to pollution is the power they collectively use. Higher energy expenditure is required to heat, cool, and light buildings, and to run business and manufacturing equipment.

Businesses in commercial buildings, along with building owners and developers, can make a huge impact—and save money—simply by reducing the amount of energy buildings require. For most businesses, the largest portion of energy is used for heating and cooling; the next biggest is used for lighting. Fortunately, some low-cost, easy-to-implement actions reduce energy bills.

La Crosse has a Climate Action Plan—if acted on, the plan recommendations will reduce energy cost per employee by an average of $518/job. These savings go directly to the bottom line.

Solution: Power Buildings using Electricity

Addressing buildings as a source of carbon pollution has a strikingly straightforward solution: use new technology that cheaply heats and cools relying on electricity. For example, buildings can be heated and cooled using the newest heat pumps, which use electricity very efficiently. In La Crosse, you may need a secondary furnace or heat source to use when temperatures plummet. Heat pumps are positioned to take advantage of energy rates that will fall as renewable energy is added to the grid. To determine the next steps, work with a local supplier of the newest heat-pump technology to figure out if such an investment is a good move.

In terms of cost, "renewables are the cheapest source of power." As the power grid increasingly adopts renewable energy, buildings that use electricity instead of oil and gas will significantly reduce emissions. They will also be much cheaper to heat and cool.

"Major opportunities to decarbonize the buildings sector include the substitution of electricity for direct fossil-fuel combustion and improved energy efficiency, including through wider deployment of 'intelligent efficiency' technologies."

"[B]uilding electrification, [...] describe[s] shifting to use electricity rather than fossil fuels for heating and cooling. The goal of such a transition: all-electric buildings powered by solar, wind and other sources of zero-carbon electricity."

Reducing Costs of Heating and Cooling Buildings

Building Automation

Consider fitting buildings with state-of-the-art automation systems, which "can boost heating and cooling efficiency more than 20 percent[.]" The cost of installing them may be offset by financial assistance through rebates and incentives; some are listed below.

Buildings Without Automation

For buildings *without* automated heating/cooling, check with the facilities or building manager to see if you can install a smart thermostat in your offices. These can be installed relatively inexpensively and reduce overall energy costs by lowering energy use. Smart thermostats can reduce cooling costs by up to 15%.

Energy-efficient Lighting

- LED lighting: Uses 75% less energy and lasts up to 25 times longer than other lighting methods.
- Motion-activated lights: Reduces energy from lighting by at least 25%. For example, in meeting rooms, these save 45% to 65% of the energy used to light the room.

Energy-efficient Office Equipment

- Upgrade to Energy Star office equipment and appliances. For example, an Energy Star computer uses 30%-65% less energy than standard computers.
- Ask employees to put their computers in sleep mode when the computer is not in use for a short period, such as 20 minutes. Also, discourage the use of screen savers.
- Switch to smart power strips. When these detect that attached equipment is sleeping, they shut down. Without this feature, power strips always draw power, even if everything attached to the power strip is sleeping or off.
- When getting new computers, get laptops rather than workstations when possible. Laptops use 80% less power than desktop computers.
- Consider finding a environmentally friendly hosting service for your company website. "Hosting services are the invisible fossil fuel consumers." Computing is energy-intensive, so using a planet-friendly hosting service, one that relies on renewable energy, makes a big difference in the business's environmental footprint. Check the TechRadar.com website for a list of energy-efficient web hosting sites, or try a simple search engine query, such as 'green hosting services.'

Energy Efficient Equipment Options for Businesses

Heating and Cooling
- ➤ Heat pump systems
- ➤ Boilers
- ➤ Air conditioning systems
- ➤ Smart thermostats

Appliances and Water Heaters
- ➤ Air cleaners
- ➤ Washers and dryers
- ➤ Refrigerators and freezers
- ➤ Dehumidifiers
- ➤ Water heaters, including heat pump and solar heaters

Office Equipment
- ➤ Computers
- ➤ Imaging equipment
- ➤ Monitors
- ➤ Phones/VoIP
- ➤ Uninterruptible power supplies
- ➤ Audio/Video

When a product is labeled 'energy efficient,' think 'savings to the bottom line.'

Larger Investments that Reduce Energy Use in Buildings

Greater investments in efficiency means greater savings. Investigate environmentally friendly options. If you don't own the building, consider working with your landlord to upgrade. These upgrades can include:

➤ Insulated windows.
➤ Building insulation improvement.
➤ Heat-pump and other updated energy-efficient HVAC systems.

Renewables

Solar and wind energy produce electricity that can greatly reduce your electricity bill.

➤ Building owners: Add solar panels to the building. Choose a local installer who can visit your site. With the newly available federal incentives, businesses can save 30-40% of the cost, greatly shortening the payback period.
➤ Renters: Choose solar through Xcel's Renewable Connect program, which lets you sign up for affordable all-renewable energy.
➤ For businesses renting space, talk to local suppliers to see if you can use a stand-alone solar system that can be off-grid or hybrid—that is, grid-connected and off-grid. Also, see if you can work with your landlord to add solar.

Renovation Upgrades and More

➤ In La Crosse, "an estimated 6% of total commercial building stock" is expected to be renovated, giving an opportunity for sustainable changes following net-zero building design principles as presented in *City of La Crosse Net Zero Energy [Building] Guide*.
➤ Organizations that rent space can may be able to collaborate with the building owner on a green-lease option, which lets you support the owner's efforts to create an energy-efficient building, saving tenant costs.
➤ Make sure your HVAC system is maintained, which drives down its energy use by 15-20% and prolongs the life of the equipment. This reduces energy costs.
➤ Working with the building owner as appropriate, consider planting shade trees outside your office to block solar radiation, dropping the temperature by 10-15 degrees Fahrenheit in the summer.

Heat pumps move heat around; furnaces generate heat by burning fuel; electric heat generates heat with very low efficiency. Moving heat (with a heat pump) requires less energy than generating heat. Heat pumps are affordable with current rebates and incentives.

Buildings: Guides

"Maximizing Energy Savings for Small Businesses"
https://www.nrel.gov/buildings/small-businesses.html. A guide on how to save energy, with resources listed.

"A Checklist for Building Owners Considering Solar Energy," https://sustainableenergyaction.org/resources/checklist-for-building-owners-considering-solar-energy/.

"Advanced Energy Retrofit Guides" https://www.energy.gov/eere/buildings/advanced-energy-retrofit-guides. US Department of Energy guides to retrofitting.

La Crosse Solar Ready Checklist. https://palebluedot.llc/lacrosse-solar-ready-guide.

"Important renewable energy organizations in Wisconsin" https://programs.dsireusa.org/system/program/wi.

Buildings: Incentives and Rebates

https://www.energy.gov/energysaver/financing-and-incentives. Search the nationwide list of rebate and incentives.

https://focusonenergy.com/solutions. "Focus on Energy is Wisconsin's statewide energy efficiency and renewable resource program funded by the state's investor-owned energy utilities and participating municipal and electric cooperative utilities." The site states "Focus on Energy offers rebates of up to $50,000 for businesses and up to $60,000 for agricultural producers."

https://www.energystar.gov/buildings/save_energy_commercial_buildings/finance_projects/find_rebates. A starting point for finding energy-efficient commercial building equipment eligible for rebates.

https://www.epa.gov/green-power-markets/inflation-reduction-act. A description of incentives and benefits through the Inflation Reduction Act. These include:
- Renewable Electricity Production Tax Credit (PTC)
- Business Energy Investment Tax Creit (ITC)
- Energy-Efficient Commercial Buildings Tax Deduction
- U.S. Department of Energy Loan Guarantee Program
- Energy-Efficient Commercial Buildings Tax Deduction

https://www.energystar.gov/products/business. A starting point for finding energy saving products and rebates.

https://www.epa.gov/grants. Grants that support small companies making changes to reduce their environmental footprint.

Energy Savings Potential

"On average, 30% of the energy used in commercial buildings is wasted, which presents building owners and managers with a huge opportunity for operating cost savings."

"Even with modest energy efficiency measures, you can get cost-savings of 20%."

"...lowering the average office temperature by 1° C in winter can cut energy consumption by 8%."

"For a business with a 5% profit margin over 3 years, $700-a-year savings from energy efficiency makes the same profit as $42,000 of extra sales."

Improving energy efficiency through "...retrofits are the most cost-efficient way to combat [pollution] and save on rising power bills" [Yale]...

Transportation: Reducing Emissions

Transportation is the second largest carbon pollution source in La Crosse. The good news is that with the recent generation of electric vehicles, sustainable transportation is increasingly affordable, and may save your business money.

MIT studies "found electric cars were cheaper." Electric car pricing has dropped dramatically. Further, battery-powered electric vehicles have some significant advantages over standard gas-powered cars:

➤ Far fewer moving parts that can break; reducing repair costs.
➤ Regenerative braking, reducing brake wear and tear.
➤ Inexpensive recharging.
➤ No oil changes required.

Small businesses and organizations can:
➤ Consider offering free EV charging. This draws in customers and helps employees. For example, you can erect solar panels over a parking lot to generate energy. "90% of employers that provide it receive positive feedback from their employees." This motivates employees to go electric. "Employees are six times more likely to own an electric vehicle if their workplace provides charging infrastructure." *Resilient Together Climate Action Toolkit*.
➤ Consider sponsoring bus passes.
➤ Offer a parking cash-out option for your employees; this provides an incentive for non-driving staff. This method pays to non-driving staff the equivalent of the real benefit of offering parking to staff who drive.
➤ Electrify your fleet if your business owns vehicles. Electric options are available for most equipment, including riding lawn mowers, forklifts, trucks, and delivery vans. Consider using Xcel's *Fleet Electrification Program* https://wi.my.xcelenergy.com/s/business/ev/fleet.

Low-pollution Commuting
➤ Encourage biking and walking to work. Consider installing a bicycle rack, possibly indoors. E-biking works too!
➤ Hold a bike-to-work event.
➤ Encourage use of public transportation and promote ride sharing/carpooling.
➤ Let employees telecommute at least a few days a week.

Telecommuting Advantages
$11,000: business savings per employee that telecommutes half of their working hours. *Resilient Together Climate Action Toolkit*.

No-cost employee benefit: Data shows the average employee saves up to $4,000 per year just by teleworking part-time. Further, a recent survey shows that 83% of employees prefer this—a point that helps you retain staff.

If half of the American workforce telecommuted half their work week, we could save 45 million metric tons of pollution –the equivalent of taking 10 million cars off the road. *Resilient Together Climate Action Toolkit*

Transportation Guides

Identify nearby EV charging stations:
https://palebluedot.llc/lacrosse-ev-guide#/find/nearest.

Tax Incentives for Businesses Going "Green"
https://www.wadvising.com/learning/insights/tax-credits-and-deductions-for-businesses-going-green/.

Transportation Incentives and Rebates

Interactive Incentive Finder for Wisconsin businesses. Search for tax credits and incentives.
https://www.revenue.wi.gov/Pages/Businesses/incentives-finder.aspx?type=Green%20Energy.

Business EV Charger Pilot Program: "Our electric vehicle (EV) charger pilot program can help your business offset the upfront costs associated with installing EV charging stations for your fleet, employee, customer or public use at your facility. "
https://www.wisconsinpublicservice.com/services/electric-vehicles/ev-business-charger-pilot.

Rebates and Programs, Wisconsin Public Service
https://www.wisconsinpublicservice.com/savings/business/.

Wisconsin electric vehicle rebates, tax credits and other incentives
https://www.edmunds.com/electric-car/tax-credits-rebates-incentives/wisconsin/.

Inflation Reduction Act incentives https://www.epa.gov/green-power-markets/inflation-reduction-act. A description of incentives and benefits through the Inflation Reduction Act.
   ➤ Reducing Waste to Save Money and the Climate-Alternative Fuel Vehicle Refueling Property Tax Credit (Corporate)
   ➤ Qualified Commercial Clean Vehicle Tax Credit

"it can cost about half as much to drive an electric vehicle (EV) as an equivalent gasoline vehicle"
[Energy.gov]

Eviscerating 7 EV Myths

1 Myth 1: EVs are worse than gas autos because of power plant emissions.

Fact: EVs have a smaller carbon footprint than gas cars.

2 Myth 2: EVs are worse for environment because of battery components.

Fact: EVs have lower emissions than gas cars; emerging battery technologies don't use rare earth minerals, and existing rare earth metals in batteries can be recycled and reused.

3 Myth 3: EVs will overpower grid.

Fact: EVs can help grid reliability when future vehicle-to-grid systems are available. Grid upgrades are underway.

4 Myth 4: There's nowhere to charge EVs.

Fact: The charging grid is expanding. Check local resources for list of charging stations near you (palebluedot.llc/lacrosse)

5 Myth 5: EV range too limited.

Fact: Average range supports daily use, and longer-range batteries are coming soon.

6 Myth 6: EVs are too small.

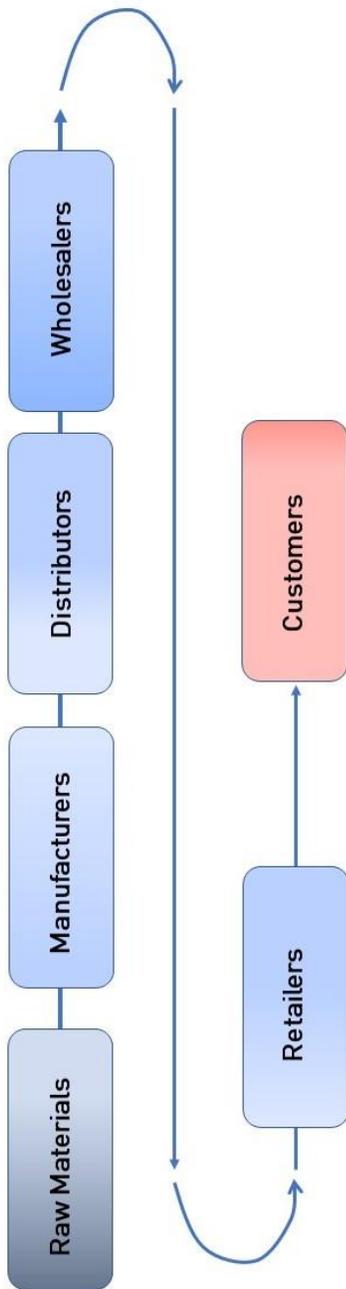Fact: EVs come in all sizes, including SUVs.

7 Myth 7: EVs are less safe.

Fact: EVs meet the same safety standards as gas vehicles.

For more information, click here (epa.gov).   11

Waste: Optimize Procurement, Limit Waste

Wholesalers

Distributors

Manufacturers

Raw Materials

Customers

Retailers

Sustainable Procurement

- If possible, use local suppliers to reduce pollution generated by shipping.
- Ask suppliers if they engage in sustainability. If they don't, encourage them to consider it. Working with sustainable businesses reinforces your commitment to sustainability, which supports your marketing efforts.
- Consider procuring through fairtrade partners, which ensures greater social equity, fitting with sustainability efforts. Sustainable solutions in globalization are important in increasing your business's sustainability and supporting marketing claims of sustainability.

If you are pursuing sustainable procurement, make sure you market that fact to your customers, employees, and procurement partners.

Reducing Waste

Most La Crosse waste goes into landfills, which themselves generate pollution by releasing gases. By doing what you can to reduce waste—such as recycling, and appropriate disposal of food, and hazardous and electronic waste—you can reduce your spending on hauling waste and protect the environment.

Recycling creates around 60 times more jobs than are required by waste disposal, helping the community. Recycling also helps reduce the cost of materials. For example, recycling aluminum saves 90% of the energy required to mine it, making aluminum much more affordable.

- ➤ Donations: Check to see if any of your used and still working electronics and office materials can be donated.
- ➤ Waste Audit: Determine one item your business significantly adds to the landfill, then ask your staff and waste and recycling haulers for ideas on how to reduce, reuse, or recycle that item. To help businesses with this, La Crosse county offers free waste auditing: https://www.lacrossecounty.org/hmp#audit.
- ➤ Compost: Collect compostables and compost. *Harters* and *Hilltopper* in La Crosse offer commercial composting. https://harters.net/composting/ and https://www.hilltopperrefuse.com/special-services.
- ➤ Recycling: Encourage recycling commercial paper, cardboard, plastic, glass, and styrofoam: https://www.lacrossecounty.org/hmp.
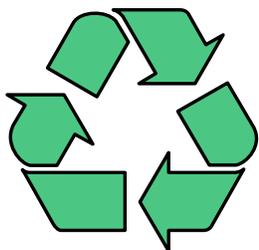
Managing Food Waste

➤ Get a headcount before ordering meals to limit excess food, which may go to waste.

➤ Encourage employees to take home leftovers.

➤ Collect food for composting. If you have large amounts of leftover food, contact local haulers for composting— farmers call compost black gold. Help the community!

➤ Add a vegetable-based meal option to business meetings that include meals.

Managing Electronic Waste

Check with La Crosse and independent recyclers to determine proper disposal of electronics and appliances that no longer work.

General Waste Guides

Commercial hazardous waste: La Crosse County offers hazardous waste collection options for businesses that generate a limited amount of hazardous waste. https://lacrossecounty.org/hmp.

Check with your recycler to determine the best methods of recycling. For example, Harter's offers composting, including food and yard waste, with instructions on what can be composted at https://harters.net/composting/.

Sustainable Procurement Guides

Sustainable Procurement Compilation from USGS https://sftool.gov/greenprocurement.

Sustainable Products and Services EPA https://www.epa.gov/greenerproducts/identify-greener-products-and-services.

Food Waste

According to the USDA:

"... food is the single largest category of material placed in municipal landfills, where it emits methane," which is a big source of pollution."

"In the United States, food waste is estimated at between 30-40 percent of the food supply."

"...households could save about $370 per person annually. Imagine what a family of four could do with an extra $1,500 each year." Businesses can also reduce food waste and save money.

13

Water: Reducing Waste

As drought and flooding increase, water conservation and protection are increasingly important. Water is a resource to be safeguarded.

Water and energy are intertwined, as well: processing, distributing, and heating water all use energy.

➤ Consider using native landscaping that does not need watering, given that up to 50% of water used in landscaping is lost to evaporation.
➤ Use smart fixtures that conserve water, yielding up to 20% water savings. *Resilient Together Climate Action Toolkit*.
➤ Use non-toxic deicers and salts.
➤ Reduce run-off: if updating or repairing a parking lot or walkways, consider using permeable surfaces including porous asphalt and permeable pavers to reduce runoff. To absorb run-off, strategically add areas with native plants.
➤ Consider collecting rainwater for re-use.

Water Guides and Rebates

https://sftool.gov/learn/about/45/water-efficiency. Resources on water-related topics, compiled by the US General Service Administration.

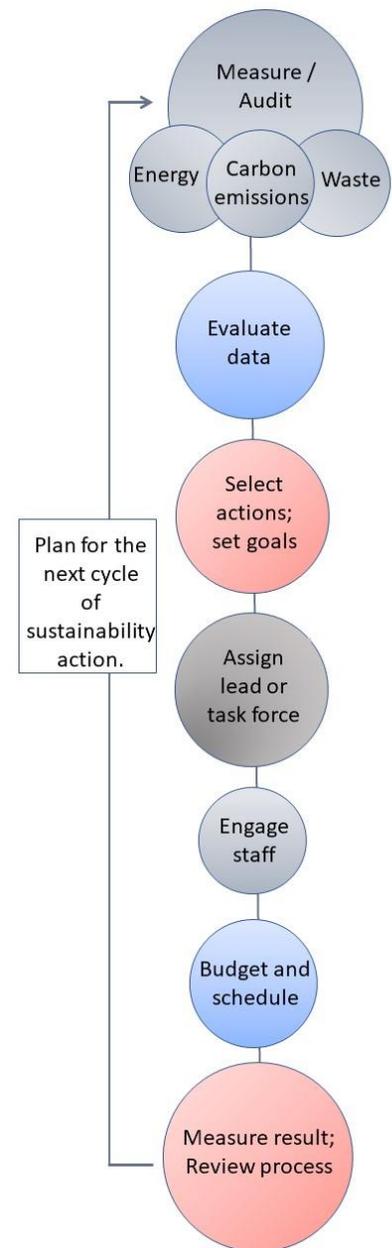https://www.epa.gov/watersense/watersense-products. List of EPA WaterSense labeled fixtures.

It's good for your bottom line and the environment to adopt water-efficient procedures, equipment and technology for space cooling, refrigeration, laundry, cleaning, and bathroom fixtures.

Making a Sustainability Plan

To define sustainability goals, consider whether you could (now or eventually) pursue any of these actions.

➤ Follow some initial steps:
  o Use straightforward online calculators to establish the organization's environmental footprint. Assemble a few months of utility bills before you start and estimate the location's footprint (i.e., how big the building is). This calculator is the easiest to use we've found.
  o If your organization relies heavily on transportation, you can also measure that as part of the business's footprint.
  o Ask for a free waste audit.
  o Perform an energy audit or pay for a comprehensive audit. These typically pay for themselves in a short period of time, by identifying easily addressed energy waste.

➤ Review the toolkit and prioritize actions that may be appropriate for your organization.

➤ Assign someone or a small group in your organization to take the lead in part or all of the sustainability effort.

➤ Ask project leads to encourage employees to contribute to sustainability goals.

➤ Create a rough schedule for the actions to be undertaken.

➤ Set aside a budget for this if your business can do so. For example, invest in LED lighting as existing lighting burns out, and sensors for light switches, as this has a short payback period.

➤ After you have completed some of the steps over a period of time, calculate the effect of your efforts in reducing the business's environmental footprint, and evaluate cost savings. Use this data to let your customers know you are investing in environmental protection and sustainability.

➤ Consider using the savings from the plan to fund additional sustainability upgrades.

➤ Build a sustainability-minded culture by encouraging staff involvement through green teams, creating a suggestion process, and more.

To measure the overall impact of your sustainability plan, calculate the business's carbon footprint, which is a common measure of an organization's pollution. This is described in a following section.

Measure / Audit

Energy | Carbon emissions | Waste

Evaluate data

Select actions; set goals

Plan for the next cycle of sustainability action.

Assign lead or task force

Engage staff

Budget and schedule

Measure result; Review process

The diagram is built on a process described by *wemeanbusinesscoalition.org*.

Energy Efficiency Audit

An energy efficiency audit is the most effective way to assess energy use and potential money-saving upgrades. La Crosse is planning to work with Xcel to establish a commercial and industrial energy efficiency audit/upgrade program. Contact Xcel to see if an audit option is available for your business.

Alternately you can audit the firm's energy use following the steps in this guide. (https://www.nerdwallet.com/uk/business-energy/how-to-create-an-energy-audit/)

You can also consider investing in a commercial energy audit, which typically costs in a "range from $0.20 - $0.55 per square foot of the building." Through the audit you can identify easily or inexpensively undertaken actions to reduce your overall energy bill, which nets ongoing savings for the organization.

Calculating Environmental Footprint

To calculate an organization's environmental footprint, assemble some basic data, such as:
  ➤ the location and type of business
  ➤ the size of the office or store
  ➤ the company's transportation
  ➤ the number of employees

Using this data, you can run a quick calculation using one of the following tools. The easiest to use is the calculator for small businesses: https://coolcalifornia.arb.ca.gov/calculator-small-business has a location drop-down menu for cities across the country; easy to use.

Additional Calculators

https://www.climateneutral.org/bee has a calculator to estimate carbon footprint. Once you register on the site, you can access the https://www.fueleconomy.gov/ use to determine mileage typical for your organization's vehicles.

https://www.epa.gov/climateleadership/simplified-ghg-emissions-calculator.

https://www.epa.gov/system/files/documents/2022-09/Simplified_Guide_GHG_Management_Organizations.pdf.

Local Guides and Checklists

The following materials are local to La Crosse.

- ➤ Buildings: Net Zero Energy Building Guide; Net Zero Checklist.
- ➤ Solar Energy: Solar Ready Guide; Solar Ready Checklist.
- ➤ Electric Vehicles: EV Ready Guide; Workplace EV Ready Survey.
- ➤ Alternate Fuels in La Crosse Area.

Sustainability Glossary

As the environmental threat develops, terms about pollution and how it relates to business continue to evolve. Following is a brief glossary of some current terms you may come across.

Decarbonization: "the process of stopping or reducing carbon [pollution] ... released into the atmosphere as the result of a process, for example the burning of fossil fuels" *Cambridge Dictionary*

ESG: Societal considerations for businesses that enhance profitability. ESG stands for Environmental Social and Governance, which "refers to the three key factors when measuring the sustainability and ethical impact of an investment in a business or company." *Market Business News*

Net-zero / Net-zero emissions: removing an equal amount of CO_2 from the atmosphere as we release into it." *World Economic Forum*

Scope 1 Emissions: company-generated emissions, such as from a boiler or generator, or fuel used by company vehicles.

Scope 2 Emissions: indirect emissions the company purchases, such as through a utility.

Scope 3 Emissions: emissions from outside the company, upstream and downstream, including from suppliers and freight.

Sustainability: "the practice of using natural resources responsibly today, so they are available for future generations ..." *National Geographic*

Triple Bottom Line: "a business concept that posits firms should commit to measuring [...the...] three Ps: profit, people, and the planet." *Harvard Business School*

Measurement Worksheet

To create a successful sustainability plan, measure your environmental footprint. Use this worksheet to get started.

Footprint Worksheet

Task	Value
From a year's worth of energy bills	
• For electricity, cost/year or kWh/year	_____ $/yr or kWh/yr
• For gas, cost/year or kWh/year	_____ $/yr or kWh/yr
• For heating oil, cost/year or kWh/year	_____ $/yr or kWh/yr
Waste: cubic yards per week (cubic yard=200 gallons)	_____ cubic yards
Recycling: cubic yards per week (cubic yard=200 gallons)	_____ cubic yards
Business Factors	
Number of staff	_____
Number of square feet of your business	_____ sq. feet
Estimate staff commute miles per year	_____ miles (total)
Estimate air travel for business per year	_____ miles (total)
Business owned vehicle (only gas- or diesel-powered)	
Vehicle 1	
• Miles per year	_____ miles/year
• MPG	_____ mpg
• Fuel type	Diesel Gasoline
Vehicle 2	
• Miles per year	_____ miles/year
• MPG	_____ mpg
• Fuel type	Diesel Gasoline

Calculate

Use these values to estimate carbon pollution. Consider using this easy-to-use carbon-footprint calculator, which lets you specify a type of business and a location, such as La Crosse, WI.

Sample Sustainability Plan

Following are some example initiatives and targets. This format can be adapted to a spreadsheet format and may simplify tracking goals and progress.

Initiative: *[category example - Reduce Energy Use]*				
Action (examples)	Target	Manager/Team	Timeframe (such as monthly)	Notes
power off computers				
maintain HVAC				
add solar panels				

Initiative: *[category example - Reduce Waste]*				
Action (examples)	Target	Manager/Team	Timeframe	Notes
set out recycling containers				
implement recycling				

Initiative: *[category example - Reduce Water Use]*				
Action (example)	Target	Manager/Team	Timeframe	Notes
install water-smart fixtures				

Initiative: *[category example - Reduce Transportation Pollution]*				
Action (examples)	Target	Manager/Team	Timeframe	Notes
offer public transportation passes				
encourage cycling/walk-to-work				

Initiative: *[category example – Contribute to Community]*				
Action (examples)	Target	Manager/Team	Timeframe	Notes
plant a pollinator garden in community gardens or on-site				
join a local organization to help with environmental project				

Start Here Checklist

Buildings

- ☐ Pursue an energy audit: request an audit or perform an audit using online tools.

- ☐ Start small: turns off lights and equipment when not in use.

- ☐ Use renewables such as renewable energy through Xcel Renewable Connect.

Water

- ☐ Use non-toxic deicers and salt.

- ☐ Install water-efficient fixtures for up to 20% savings.

- ☐ Check for plumbing leaks in the building.

- ☐ Use native landscaping.

Transportation

- ☐ Encourage employees to bike to work by adding a bike rack.

- ☐ Consider offering employees bus passes.

- ☐ Allow telecommuting to save money, energy, and time.

- ☐ Consider offering EV charging for employees.

Waste Reduction

- ☐ Plan ahead to reduce waste when serving food: get a headcount and request recyclable containers.

- ☐ Request a free waste audit from La Crosse County.

- ☐ Ask your employees for suggestions on how to reduce waste.

Notes