



These Silver actions are simple and low cost! Review the actions below and select a minimum of 15 actions (75 percent) your office would like to achieve.

**Participation category:**

- 1. We include an introduction to our office's sustainability initiatives in new staff orientation.
- 2. Our office maintains an active sustainability committee to address and promote new initiatives.
- 3. We have submitted a Green Office story about our efforts to the Office of Sustainability.
- 4. We formally challenged another office to participate in the Green Office Program.

**Energy and technology category:**

- 5. We have replaced our old power strips with "smart" power strips.
- 6. We have replaced incandescent lights in desk lamps and overhead lighting with compact fluorescent lights (CFLs) or light-emitting diodes (LEDs).
- 7. We maintain living plants throughout our office to help improve air quality.

**Kitchen and lunch room category:**

- 8. We have eliminated bottled water (small personal bottles and larger 3-5 gallon bottles) from our office.
- 9. We buy condiments, coffee, and other supplies in bulk to minimize packaging waste.
- 10. We purchase and use green cleaning products for our office.

**Meetings and events category:**

- 11. We host sustainability special events (such as potlucks, films, lunch and learns).
- 12. We promote and enable alternatives to in-person meetings (such as video-conferencing, and conference calls).
- 13. We have decreased the number of giveaways, freebies and gifts purchased and offered by our office.

**Transportation category:**

- 14. We schedule regular vehicle maintenance for our fleet vehicles and are current with emission testing requirements.
- 15. Our employees take advantage of teleworking opportunities, where appropriate.
- 16. We have reduced our office's commuter carbon footprint by 10 percent from baseline levels identified in Bronze #20.

**Waste and recycling category:**

- 17. We buy recycled and environmentally friendly office products such as file folders, note pads, Post-It notes, desk accessories, etc.
- 18. We have eliminated disposable dishware (cups, plates, glasses, cutlery) for daily personal use and for meetings and events.
- 19. When we need new office furniture, we purchase from Terrapin Trader when they have something that will fill our needs.
- 20. We use either 100 percent recycled or tree-free paper for general purpose printing and copying.

**Write your own action:**

Write up to 1 action, not listed above, that is specific to your office.

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## Participation category:

### □ 1. We include an introduction to our office's sustainability initiatives in new staff orientation.

#### How to:

- Meet with your HR Coordinator to incorporate training (or provision of materials) for new employees about your sustainability initiatives.
- Use printed materials or presentations to inform new employees that being "green" is part of Terp culture and is standard operating practice for everyone in your office.
- Point out the location of sustainability-related infrastructure such as separation stations (recycling, compost, trash), Office Supply Reuse Zone, single-sided paper collection, etc.
- Show new co-workers your Green Office pledge, checklist, completed actions, and sustainability goals you hope to accomplish.
- Let new employees know who they can go to with questions, comments or ideas.

**Did You Know?** In a survey, commissioned by *National Geographic* magazine in February, 2008, more than 80 percent of U.S. workers polled said they believe it is important to work for a company or organization that makes the environment a top priority.

### □ 2. Our office maintains an active sustainability committee to address and promote new initiatives.

**How to:** Discuss the establishment of a permanent or standing committee with your dean/director/department head first. Committee members should include senior staff, specialized staff (e.g., IT, purchasing), and GO Reps or GO champions. Brainstorm ideas, activities and objectives that your committee would like to accomplish. Then, develop a short list of realistic and impactful priority initiatives that can be endorsed by senior staff. Set regular meeting times that will accommodate the majority of the committee members. Report out to the rest of your office at staff meetings.

**Did You Know?** The National Environmental Education Foundation (NEEF) found that, "By engaging employees, companies can spark innovative changes in everyday business processes that save money and reduce environmental and social impacts while also inspiring employees to make sustainable choices at home and in their communities," (March 2009).

### □ 3. We have submitted a Green Office story about our efforts to the Office of Sustainability.

**How to:** Brag a little and get the recognition you deserve! We can all learn from each other and a short anecdotal story can provide ideas and inspiration to your fellow GO Reps. Contact the Green Office Program at [atoews@umd.edu](mailto:atoews@umd.edu) to submit a success story. We will

share your story via the GO Reps list-serv, the ELMS page, the Green Office website or the Sustainability e-Newsletter.

**Did You Know?** Promoting the spirit of the Green Office program by celebrating your achievements is a great way to lead by example and motivate other offices.

### □ 4. We formally challenged another office to participate in the Green Office Program.

**How to:** Once your Green Office has been established, contact another office for a friendly challenge. It could be another office in your department or an office of your colleagues across campus. Share the GO flyer with another office and let the competition begin!

**Did You Know?** Friendly competition is good for us because it:

- Promotes growth;
- forces us to be more creative;
- is an effective teacher;
- promotes taking chances;
- makes us goal-oriented;
- keeps us focused;
- and can make relatively mundane activities a bit more exciting.

## Energy and technology category:

### □ 5. We have replaced our old power strips with "smart" power strips.

**How to:** A smart way to get rid of power vampires (or stand-by power) is by using smart power strips. Smart power strips automatically turn off power without needing to flip the switch or unplug your electronics. Smart strips can be used for computers, printers, fax machines, microwaves, telephones and other products that draw power when they are not being used.

**Did You know?** Vampire power energy waste contributes as much as 10 percent of electricity use in a home or office (Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory).

### □ 6. We have replaced incandescent lights in desk lamps and overhead lighting with compact fluorescent lights (CFLs) or light-emitting diodes (LEDs).

**How to:** Swap out incandescent lights with CFLs or LEDs in desk lamps and overhead lighting. Make sure to recycle or dispose of your old light bulbs appropriately. See the Tools section for more details on disposal and recycling.

**Did you know?** The United States Department of Energy found that using CFLs instead of comparable incandescent bulbs can save about 50 percent on your lighting costs. CFLs use only one-fourth of the energy and last up to 10 times longer (2010).

## Energy and technology category (continued):

### □ 7. We maintain living plants throughout our office to help improve air quality.

**How to:** Inexpensive indoor plants can be bought at local home improvement stores or started from clippings. Make sure to water plants regularly (but do not overwater as that can lead to microbial growth). Some indoor plants can even fare well in areas without natural light for periods of time (as long as they are rotated with plants in natural light).

**Did you know?** A study performed by NASA found that indoor plants help to mitigate common volatile organic compounds (VOCs) such as benzene and formaldehyde (1989). Plants also produce oxygen through the process of photosynthesis, which is essential for brain functioning. A plant can provide similar services to an air filter without using electricity or requiring filter changes, and brightens up office space at the same time!

## Kitchen and lunchroom category:

### □ 8. We have eliminated bottled water (small personal bottles and larger 3-5 gallon bottles) from our office.

**How to:**

- In accordance with Maryland Green Purchasing Guidelines, State funds should not be used for the purchase of bottled water.
- Purchase a reusable water bottle and fill it with water from nearby fountains or kitchen sinks.
- Leave a filter pitcher in your office refrigerator for communal use.
- Keep reusable coffee/tea mugs in the office for daily use and for use by guests and visitors.
- Retrofit the fountains in your building to include bottle filling apparatus. Get in touch with the University's Bottle Filling Station Committee by emailing atoews@umd.edu.

**Did You Know?** According to the Clean Air Council, 90 percent of the cost for bottled water is used for the bottle itself, marketing, shipping and packaging. Therefore only 10 percent of what you're paying is for the water you're drinking!

### □ 9. We buy condiments, coffee, and other supplies in bulk to minimize packaging waste.

**How to:**

- Buy nonperishable items such as ground coffee, sugar and creamer in bulk and use these to refill smaller containers as needed.
- To avoid contamination by spoons, purchase reusable, refillable "shaker" bottles for dispensing sugar and powdered creamer.
- Stock full size condiments (like salad dressing, mustard or ketchup), in your workplace. Many of the containers used to hold these items are recyclable — unlike single serving packets and creamers which are not recyclable.
- For instant coffee machines, such as Keurig, buy inexpensive, refillable cups or coffee pods. Buy your own bulk coffee and make custom "K cups" or pods.

**Did You Know?** The food concessionaire at the Statue of Liberty installed condiment dispensers that eliminated the need for more than 2 million single-serving condiment packets, and 330,000 single-serving creamer cups (EPA, 2012).

### □ 10. We purchase and use green cleaning products for our office.

**How to:**

- Purchase green cleaning products for use by employees in your office. These could include dish soap, multi-purpose cleaner, furniture polish, scouring powder and any other cleaner your office may stock. These do not include products used by our campus cleaning staff.
- Although products may make "environmentally friendly" claims, read labels carefully to verify the authenticity of sustainability. Look for products that meet these criteria:
  - > Non-aerosol
  - > Minimally packaged
  - > Non-poisonous
  - > Non-toxic
  - > Non-Corrosive
  - > Inexpensive
  - > Phosphate-free
  - > Natural scents
  - > Re-usable
  - > Available in bulk
- Avoid antibacterial products containing triclosan. These products may contribute to growth of antibiotic-resistant bacteria and can be toxic for the environment. Triclosan can be found in dish soap, sponges, cutting boards and food containers.

**Did You Know?** Cleaning products were responsible for nearly 10 percent of all toxic exposures reported to U.S. Poison Control Centers in 2000 (World Watch Institute). According to the EPA, some studies have shown that certain chemicals in cleaning products can cause eye and skin irritation. Data has shown that 6 percent of cleaning staff have had job related injuries due to chemical exposures (2010).

## Meetings and events category:

### □ 11. We host sustainability special events (such as potlucks, films, lunch and learns).

**How to:**

- Organize a local food potluck lunch. Local food is generally considered to come from a radius of 250 miles or less.
- Invite a guest speaker to your office. The Office of Sustainability may be able to connect you with a speaker on your desired topic.
- During holidays, organize a green wrapping or craft making lunch hour.
- Share your creative ideas with the Office of Sustainability.

**Did You Know?** Special events are a great way for people to learn about the importance of sustainability and how they can reduce their impact. They also provide a way for employees to get to know each other better to improve teamwork and morale.

## Meetings and events category (continued):

- 12. We promote and enable alternatives to in-person meetings (such as video-conferencing, and conference calls).

### How to:

- Video conferencing rooms are located across campus. Contact your dean/director/department head for more details and locations.
- Web cams allow video-conferencing directly from the desktop. Skype, Google Hangout and other software, can help you conduct meetings, interviews and educational sessions.
- Smartphones and tablets with cameras can easily be used for video-conferencing if a desktop web cam is not available.
- You can find many fee-for-use and free conference call services.
- Distribute meeting materials electronically in advance.

**Did You Know?** *The New York Times* reports that virtual meetings save company costs associated with travel and rented venue space. They also save time and increase productivity because employees do not have to take extra time for travel (2008). Virtual meetings can reduce an office's carbon footprint by eliminating the need for traveling via automobile, airplane, etc. (2010).

- 13. We have decreased the number of giveaways, freebies and gifts purchased and offered by our office.

### How to:

- Consider this action for events such as Maryland Day and First Look Fair.
- Before you order corporate gifts or giveaways, consider the environment. Is it necessary to provide a gift or giveaway?
- Remember that many people appreciate a personal thank you rather than gifts.
- Ensure that the give-away items you choose relate to the goals/mission of your office, serve a useful purpose and are made from recycled/reclaimed materials.

**Did You Know?** According to World Watch Institute 12 percent of the world's population (living in North America and Western Europe) accounts for 60 percent of consumption spending. Consider the first "R" which reminds us to reduce our consumption.

## Transportation category:

- 14. We schedule regular vehicle maintenance for our fleet vehicles and are current with emission testing requirements.

### How to:

- Check tire pressure every time you fill up with gas. To find the recommended tire pressure for your vehicle's tires, refer to the tire information placard, which is normally located on the edge of the driver's door, the doorpost or another conspicuous location. If you cannot find the tire information placard, check the owner's manual.
- Contact Motor Transportation Services to schedule maintenance and repair.

**Did You Know?** According to the U.S Department of Energy, fixing a car's failed emission test can result in a savings of 15 cents per gallon. Repairing serious car problems can result in 40 percent improvement in fuel efficiency (2012).

- 15. Our employees take advantage of teleworking opportunities, where appropriate.

### How to:

- Check with your supervisor, department head or HR coordinator to find out if teleworking is an option for your position. Also, check your collective bargaining agreement — exempt and non-exempt staff may have different provisions.
- If appropriate, work with your supervisor to develop a schedule that provides benefits to the employee and the employer.

**Did You Know?** According to the Telework Research Network, telecommuting part-time could reduce carbon emissions by over 112 billion pounds per year which is the equivalent of taking all of New York City's Commuters off the road. Additionally, teleworking has been shown to increase employee productivity. Employees take teleworking as a signal of trust and confidence which can increase morale.

- 16. We have reduced our office's commuter carbon footprint by 10 percent from baseline levels identified in Bronze #20.

### How to:

- Participate in ZimRide, which offers an online carpool matching service at UMD.
- Take the Metro to campus to reduce emissions and avoid traffic.
- If you live close to campus, consider cycling or walking. Start off by commuting one day each week on good weather days.

**Did You Know?** Shuttle UM serves many peripheral areas around the UMD campus. DOTS offers a 50 percent discount on commuter permits for carpooling and 20 percent discount for low emission vehicles. They also provide a Guaranteed Ride Home for unexpected emergencies to commuters who regularly use alternative transportation.

## Waste and recycling category:

- 17. We buy recycled and environmentally friendly office products such as file folders, note pads, Post-It notes, desk accessories, etc.

**How to:** Use the university's Environmentally Preferable Procurement Policy (EPP) to guide purchasing decisions for your office supplies. The environmental impact of products should be considered along with price and other factors.

**Did You Know?** According to the EPA, purchasing recycled products saves energy, natural resources, clean air and water, landfill space, and money and creates jobs. Conservatree.org reported that one ton of recycled paper can save up to 17 trees, resulting in an annual uptake of 250 pounds of carbon dioxide from the air.

- 18. We have eliminated disposable dishware (cups, plates, glasses, cutlery) for daily personal use and for meetings and events.

**How to:**

- Create a plan for the elimination of disposable dishware and utensils. This may be a process that takes some time.
- Find a space for reusable items in the office kitchen or a centrally-located storage area. This may be a cupboard, shelf or storage container.
- Send out a bulletin notifying office employees of this change. You may also want to share this information at a number of staff meetings prior to implementation.
- Ask your co-workers to bring in a personal mug, plate and utensils for at-work use.
- Save money and reduce resource consumption by purchasing cups, plates, glasses, and cutlery from second-hand stores.

**Did You Know?** According to the Clean Air Council, every year Americans dispose of enough paper and plastic utensils to circle the equator 300 times. Buying reusable products not only helps reduce the amount of waste generated from discarding disposable items but also helps reduce pollution and waste throughout the entire manufacturing process.

- 19. When we need new office furniture, we purchase from Terrapin Trader when they have something that will fill our needs.

**How to:** Visit the Terrapin Trader Showroom on Tuesdays-Fridays from 10:00am-3:00pm to look for office furniture. It is located in the Physical Distribution Center at the end of Rossborough Lane across from Maryland Fire and Rescue Institute.

**Did You Know?** Looking on campus for your product needs is the first step in the university's official procurement process. The University of Maryland has a guide for purchasing called, "The 6 Step Guide to Making a University Purchase." You can find it at [www.purchase.umd.edu/](http://www.purchase.umd.edu/).

- 20. We use either 100 percent recycled or tree-free paper for general purpose printing and copying.

**How to:**

- Comply with the University of Maryland Policies and Procedures for Environmentally Preferable Procurement (EPP), which include a provision that by July 1 2012, only general purpose office paper made from 100 percent post-consumer recycled content shall be procured.
- Take advantage of UMD's Master Contracts with Rudolph's and Guy Brown which have excellent pricing on post-consumer and tree-free paper.

**Did You Know?** Between FY 2007 and FY 2010, University departments decreased their use of copy paper by an astonishing 50 percent, saving \$506,884 in three years! During that time, use of paper made from virgin tree fiber decreased 51 percent while use of paper made from 100 percent recycled post-consumer content (PCC) increased 460 percent.

## Write your own action:

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Category:

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