

CLIMB Fund

Lending for Opportunity



**SUSTAINABILITY RESOURCES
FOR
SMALL BUSINESSES
2024**



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Acknowledgements

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Eco-Friendly Products and Green Supply Chains

Going from plastic to paper packaging or compostable and biodegradable materials is a great way to reduce the impact of your business. Private companies can allow your business to transition to plastic-free packaging.

Eliminating single-use products like plastic cutlery, beverage containers, bags, food containers, straws, and other disposable goods can greatly reduce landfill contribution and pollution. Instead, replacing these products with metal reusable cutlery and straws, paper or biodegradable bags, straws and food/drink containers allows for materials to be recycled, composted, or used several times to help reduce rapid consumption of environmentally harmful plastic products.

Beyond packaging and single-use plastics, many cleaning product, health or beauty, and home good can be replaced by a more sustainable product, whether using cleaning and personal care supplies sold in compostable packaging or as dissolvable tablets, or using garbage bags that are compostable.

Buying products that are locally sourced not only supports the local economy, but also reduces the pollutants released in large-scale manufacturing, packaging, shipping, and landfill waste.

Check out these additional packaging and green supply chain resources:



Energy Efficiency

Understanding your business's energy use can help reduce your emissions and save costs on energy bills. Tools like [ENERGY STAR](#) help determine your energy use patterns and set goals to lower emissions. Through energy efficiency improvements such as upgrades in building insulation, interior lighting, and HVAC systems, along with moving towards [clean energy](#) sources such as wind and solar power, you may be [eligible for federal tax credits](#) and can save on overall utility costs.



The [ENERGY STAR](#) Benchmarking Starter Kit lets you gather a free baseline energy report from which you can improve your energy efficiency.

Paperless Operations

There are many ways to reduce paper use by digitalizing your business.

Transitioning to barcode and QR code products, using digital databases and software, POS systems, and offering virtual services all help eliminate paper use. Digitalization saves money, increases outreach, saves time, and reduces environmental impacts associated with paper production and use.

When paper use is necessary, making sure to recycle all paper allows for more mindful paper use and lowered environmental impacts.

Software like [Adobe Scan](#) can make digitalization user-friendly by easily scanning and saving PDFs and official documents.

Sustainable Transportation

Businesses can transition to using electric powered vehicles to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. In addition, encouraging employees to use sustainable methods of commuting to work, including walking, biking, or ride sharing, can help reduce the impact of your business.

Avoiding frequent business trips and flying while prioritizing working from home when possible are all additional ways to limit environmental impacts.

Using alternative fuels produced with renewable resources can eliminate reliance on traditional fossil-fuel sourced gasoline. To find alternative fuel stations near you, check out the [U.S. Department of Energy Alternative Fuels Data Center](#).

Environmental Certifications

There are countless sustainable certifications available to show your commitment to sustainable business operations. Depending on your business's industry, you may be eligible to pursue various nationally recognized sustainable certifications.



CLIMATE
NEUTRAL



Certified



Corporation

Waste Management

These businesses and websites provide scheduled recyclable and compostable waste pickup services or drop-off sites across the state. Composting and recycling can help limit your business's waste and landfill contributions to create less wasteful operations.



Statewide business recycling and composting directory



Business compost private pickup service – Statewide



Free weekly business recycling pickup through the City of Charleston



Business compost private pickup service - Charleston



Business recycling pickup service – Berkeley, Charleston, and Dorchester counties.



Business recycling pickup service

Your Carbon Footprint

A carbon footprint is the total amount of greenhouse gas emissions generated per person, household, or business. Simple changes in business operations can help reduce your business's carbon footprint and lower utility costs. The [EPA Simplified Greenhouse Gas \(GHG\) Emissions Calculator](#) is a tool developed to help small businesses easily assess their own energy consumption, travel, and waste data to estimate your carbon footprint for free. There are several categories of measurement with this tool, including scope 1, 2, and 3 emissions, such as electricity, air conditioning, natural gas, business travel, employee commuting, waste generation, and more. By using this comprehensive calculator, businesses can begin creating a baseline GHG assessment that helps them understand their current environmental impact, set future emission goals, and measure their progress over time.

