

Frequently Asked Questions

Question: How do you define an “office”?

We define an “office” as a contiguous work area that shares common areas and resources. An entire department may constitute an office or there may be dozens of offices within one department. Offices big and small are welcome to participate! Please include part-time and full-time staff, students (including interns) and faculty. Your office should include kitchens, meeting rooms, storage rooms, and other commonly shared areas.

Question: Why was the program developed?

The Sustainable Office Program was created in the spring of 2015 to aid the university in achieving the sustainability goals outlined in the [2012 Sustainability Plan](#). Now, the program works towards achieving the goals in our [Campus Sustainability Plan 2020](#). The program is designed to engage faculty and staff on important topics, save money and resources, build a strong community, and ensure a sustainable future for our campus.

Question: What are the goals of the program?

1. Raise awareness, educate, and provide measurable guidelines for reducing the impact of office operations
2. Conserve water, save energy, minimize waste, and save money
3. Further integrate sustainability into campus culture
4. Support the [Campus Sustainability Plan 2020](#)
5. Promote campus policies that support sustainability
6. Recognize and reward leadership in sustainability

Question: Why should my office participate in this program?

- **Recognition:** Upon certification, your office will receive a certificate to display in a public area, a medallion window sticker, a logo to place on your website, an email signature, and recognition through Lehigh’s Office of Sustainability.
- **Support:** The Sustainable Office team is here to support your efforts, encourage your projects, and provide help when you encounter roadblocks.
- **Pride:** Your office’s efforts contribute to a more sustainable Lehigh and help us conserve resources, save money, and build a more sustainable community.

Question: What are the three steps to getting certified?

- Step One: Fill out the [Registration Form](#)
- Step Two: Complete and submit the [Baseline Survey](#)
- Step Three: Complete and submit the [Checklist of Actions](#)

Question: What are the levels of certification?

There are four levels in the Sustainable Office Program: bronze, silver, gold, and platinum. To achieve a level of certification, your office must complete the following number of items from the [Checklist of Actions](#):

- Bronze: 30 actions
- Silver: 60 actions
- Gold: 90 actions
- Platinum: 120 actions

Question: What are some tips before beginning the certification process?

You can visit our [resources page](#) before beginning the [Checklist of Actions](#) to find materials and information that will help you achieve some of the actions listed on the checklist.

Question: How can we get more information about the program?

You can read over our informational brochure [here](#), email sustainability@lehigh.edu with any questions, or schedule a meeting with a member of the Sustainable Office Program team.

Question: What is the Baseline Survey?

The [Baseline Survey](#) is a basic audit of your office space. It asks questions specific to the employees in your office, as well as, the physical space and appliances used. It should not take more than 30-45 minutes to fill out.

Question: How do I register for the program?

To register for the program, fill out the Registration Form on the [here](#).

Question: Do we need to re-certify? If so, how often?

As of now, a recertification is not required. However, it is highly encouraged so you can continue to challenge your office and improve your environmental efforts.

Question: Can we re-certify our office to get a higher level of certification? If so, how?

Yes, you can absolutely re-certify! To re-certify your office, contact the Office of Sustainability at sustainability@lehigh.edu. A member of the Sustainable Office Program team will meet with you to discuss the re-certification process.

Question: What are the responsibilities of an office's Sustainable Office Program Representative?

The Sustainable Office Program Representative is the contact between their office and the Office of Sustainability. They are in charge of filling out the [Registration Form](#), setting up meeting(s), filling out the [Baseline Survey](#), [Checklist of Actions](#), and other basic responsibilities.

Question: How long does it take to complete the Baseline Survey and Checklist of Actions?

The [Baseline Survey](#) takes anywhere from 30-45 minutes to complete. The checklist, being slightly longer, takes about 45-60 minutes.

Question: Does it cost anything to participate?

No. The Sustainable Office Program is free!

Question: Can we get credit for things we are already doing?

Yes! When filling out the [Checklist of Actions](#), your office can check off anything you currently do, or anything you are going to begin doing.

Question: What offices are already participating?

Lehigh currently has 16 offices certified and over 25 office in the process of certification. You can check out our [Offices tab](#) to see what offices are certified and what level of certification they have achieved.

Question: What are the categories covered in the Checklist of Actions?

There are eight categories in the [Checklist of Actions](#): participation and engagement, climate and energy, food and dining, purchasing, community building and social equity, transportation, waste, water, events and meetings.