

# RHA Sustainability Guide

**For RHA Officers, BOLDs, & BoDs**

A guide for sustainability awareness in your  
residence halls and in your positions.



## Welcome!

Welcome to your very own sustainability guide. Inside you will find a lot of helpful information on how to be sustainable in your residence hall and your position, whether that be an officer, a Lead Director, or a member of your hall's Board of Directors. It covers many topics such as the importance of sustainability on our campus, tips catered to your position in RHA, and being a peer educator in your community. As a member of the Residence Halls Association, you have the power to influence your residents' actions for good, while planning fun and sustainable programs for them to attend. You do not have to be an Eco-Rep to keep sustainability a priority while planning your awesome programs, or even to encourage fellow residents to practice sustainable behaviors while living in your hall. Thank you for reading this guide and taking an interest in cultivating good stewardship at OSU and within RHA! If you have any questions about or suggestions for this guide, feel free to contact RHA's VP of Sustainability at [eco-reps@okstate.edu](mailto:eco-reps@okstate.edu).

## Table of Contents:

I.	Sustainability at OSU.....	2
	a. History.....	2
	b. Importance.....	2
	c. Progress & Goals.....	3
II.	Sustainability within RHA.....	4
	a. Board of Directors.....	4
	b. Board of Lead Directors.....	5
	c. Officer Positions.....	6
	d. Sustainable Programming Checklist and Ideas.....	9
	e. Sustainable Behavior in Residence Halls.....	11
	f. Encouraging Sustainability.....	13
III.	Resources.....	14
	A. Contact Info	
	B. Helpful Social Media Accounts to Follow	
	C. Glossary of Terms	
	D. Stuff to Think About (Energy, Transportation, Waste Minimization, Water, Food, Consumerism)	
	E. Tips & Advice for Encouraging Green Behavior	

# Sustainability at OSU

## History

In 2007, OSU faculty and staff made the decision to start a sustainability task force. Through growth and noticing a need to improve in this department, a Sustainability Coordinator position was created in 2012 along with a Sustainability Strategic Plan that outlined objectives, goals, and implementation timelines. This plan was just the beginning of the sustainable development OSU Strives for.

Currently, the OSU Sustainability Office employs a full-time Sustainability Coordinator and six part-time students, “Sustainability Interns,” who aid as a connection to the student body. They are all aided by the Sustainability Stakeholders, comprised of faculty and staff who represent various specialties and areas of the campus.

*“As a premier land-grant institution, Oklahoma State University is dedicated to the stewardship of resources entrusted to us. Through its sustainability practices, OSU seeks to more effectively and responsibly serve its university community, as well as the citizens of Oklahoma, our country, and the world. OSU faculty, staff, and students will advance all aspects of sustainability through instruction, research, outreach, administrative decision-making, innovative design and operation of our physical facilities, and our daily behavior.”*

-President Burns Hargis

## Importance

At Oklahoma State University, sustainability is a mantra. We strive to include it in every aspect of our campus, and it is part of what it means to be a true cowboy. Our University’s core value is Stewardship of Resources, and to us that means participating in and enacting green initiatives to impact every corner of our campus.

OSU is working toward the advancement of sustainability through the effort of students and faculty whether that be research, outreach programs, or administrative decision-making. To be a part of this larger-than-us mission is to dedicate yourself to the betterment of not just our campus, our state, our country. It is dedicating yourself to the betterment of our entire planet.

Within OSU’s Residence Halls Association, sustainability is an attitude that is spreading through the halls more and more each year. RHA is known for shaping future leaders; having sustainable education and experience prepares students to be future leaders of environmental stewardship during their time at OSU and beyond. RHA is proud to cultivate a habit of living sustainably within the residential halls, and we cannot continue this legacy without your help.

## Progress & Goals

OSU is saving energy and money with our light switches that remind students and faculty to turn off the lights when they are not in the room, and this is just one of the small ways that we are encouraging sustainable habits in and out of the classroom. OSU's Energy Management Department has saved the university over \$41 million through their green initiatives.

OSU was recognized in 2014 as a national leader for our use of green power practices and technology with a Green Power Leadership Award from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and is only one of the four organizations nationwide to be chosen as a Green Power Partner of the year for leadership, strategy, and impact on the green power market. We were also the only educational organization awardee in 2014 across all categories. Even more impressive, as of 2013, an average 72 percent of OSU Stillwater's total electrical need is provided by wind generated power. OSU signed a wind power contract with Oklahoma Gas & Electric in 2011 for the construction and constant use of our own wind power farm in Blackwell, called the "Cowboy Wind Farm." This recently put OSU on the EPA's 2017 Green Power Partnership Top 30 Colleges List at number 13.

What are some more sustainable aspects of our campus? OSU's Multi-Modal Transportation system runs a fleet of compressed natural gas-fueled buses as well as the Orange Ride bicycle rental and repair shop for all students to use. Buildings under construction also feature energy-efficient lighting, high levels of insulation, high-efficiency equipment such as ground-source heat pumps and the use of natural daylight. Buildings on campus feature heating and cooling by the use of steam and chilled water produced at plants on campus. Here is something that may surprise you: our Student Union has recently received LEED certification for Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design. To become LEED certified, the Union had to meet many prerequisites set by the U.S. Green Building Council. The Student Union also collects and reuses at least 93.2% of rainfall, uses at least 46% less fresh water, and saves more than 2.7 gallons of drinking water each year.

As you hopefully know (and utilize frequently), OSU has two recycling programs: OSU Recycles and ResLife Recycles. OSU Recycles serves all non-residential buildings on campus and ResLife Recycles serves all of the residential halls. OSU is able to recycle paper, cardboard, plastics #1 and #2, and aluminum cans. Every bottle and can recycled through OSU Recycles helps to benefit veterans through PepsiCo's commitment to the Entrepreneurship Boot camp for Veterans with Disabilities. OSU Facilities Management began its recycling efforts in 1991, and the recycling of plastic bottles and aluminum cans was added in 2010.

Although OSU has achieved many milestones in sustainable development, there is always room for improvement. For information on OSU Sustainability's Strategic Plan (updated Fall 2016) please follow this link: [https://migrate-fm.okstate.edu/energyservices/sustainability/site-files/images/sites/default/files/sustainability\\_strategic\\_plan\\_web.pdf](https://migrate-fm.okstate.edu/energyservices/sustainability/site-files/images/sites/default/files/sustainability_strategic_plan_web.pdf). The plan includes goals on developing campus sustainability, continuing education, stakeholder activity, marketing/outreach/education, and sustainability measures.

# Sustainability Within RHA

## Board of Directors (BoDs)

If you are on your hall's Board of Directors, you are in a position of leadership within your hall. You have the power to influence your peers' actions for good, and also to give them a fun time at the events that you plan. Below is a list of some different ways to be sustainable in your position specifically, with explanations.

- Lead by example by modelling sustainable behaviors. See *Sustainable Behavior in Residence Halls* (Page 11)
  - If your peers see you acting sustainably, it is more likely that they will adopt the same habits. If you are out and about in your halls common areas, or if you are at an event that you had a hand in planning, make sure you are recycling correctly, turning off lights when they aren't in use, and being conscious of the waste that you are creating. If you need a way to remember this behavior, think *Reduce, Reuse, Recycle!*
- Plan a program based on education and awareness that will be fun, but also teach your residents something about sustainability.
  - A great example of this is a showing of the movie *Wall-e*. Everyone loves watching movies and getting free food, but taking a few minutes out of the event to teach the residents about sustainability, whether that be a flyer on recycling correctly or a game about reducing waste, will make for a memorable program.
- Have the correct recycling bins at any program you put on, and making a few announcements on what at your event is recyclable.
  - If there are not lounge recycling bins in your hall, contact [sustainability@okstate.edu](mailto:sustainability@okstate.edu) to get the problem fixed. If there is a bin or two but you expect there to be a lot of people at your program, email [eco-reps@okstate.edu](mailto:eco-reps@okstate.edu) or talk to the VP of Sustainability about renting out a few smaller bins to use for your events.
  - Making an announcement every now and then at your event if you are providing something that you know is recyclable- like aluminum soda cans- will encourage your residents to take advantage of the recycling bins in your lounge, and hopefully teach them a habit as well.
- Follow the *Sustainable Programming Checklist* (Page 9) when you are programming as a BoD.
  - Going down this checklist while you are planning your event will surely make it as sustainable as possible. Compostable paper plates may be a few more dollars, but in the long run they are much more sustainable than Styrofoam plates because they can biodegrade.
  - Buying products that are environmentally friendly or recyclable, having eco-friendly prizes at your event, or even encouraging residents to bring their own mug for free hot chocolate are some easy ways to make your programs greener.

## Board of Lead Directors (BOLDs)

If you are a part of the Board of Lead Directors, you influence not only your hall residents, but also the other members of your BoD greatly. You are capable of leading your Board of Directors to more sustainable program planning through resources such as the Eco-Reps, sustainable team building activities, and educational meetings. Below is a list of some ways to be more sustainable in your position and encourage sustainability in your BoDs, with explanations.

- Lead by example by modelling sustainable behaviors. See *Sustainable Behavior in Residence Halls* (Page 11)
  - If your peers see you acting sustainably, it is more likely that they will adopt the same habits. Modelling sustainable behavior by even just using a reusable water bottle at all of your BoD meetings has the power to encourage others to do the same. If you are out and about in your halls common areas, or if you are at an event that you had a hand in planning, make sure you are recycling correctly, turning off lights when they aren't in use, and being conscious of the waste that you are creating. If you need a way to remember this behavior, think *Reduce, Reuse, Recycle!*
- Utilize the RHA Eco-Reps by inviting them to come to a meeting to talk about sustainability, or by partnering with them on a program.
  - The Eco-Reps are a major resource for BoDs when it comes to sustainable behavior and programs. Reach out to the VP of Sustainability to invite Eco-Reps to come to your BoD meetings and present on encouraging sustainability in your hall, or sustainable programming.
  - You can also ask the VP of Sustainability if you can rent out sustainable games such as Trashketball or the Clothespin Game that can double as team builders for your BoD.
  - Partnering with the Eco-Reps on a sustainable event is a great way to increase attendance at your programs and ensure they are sustainable and fun.
- Head a program based on education and awareness that will be fun, but also teach your residents something about sustainability.
  - A great example of this is a showing of the movie *Wall-e*. Everyone loves watching movies and getting free food, but taking a few minutes out of the event to teach the residents about sustainability, whether that be a flyer on recycling correctly or a game about reducing waste, will make for a memorable program.
  - Since you are the leader of your BoD, you are capable and encouraged to collaborate and come up with sustainability-based programs that increase awareness to put on. Getting your BoD involved in this can make a huge difference in hall sustainability.
- Have the correct recycling bins at any program you put on, and making a few announcements on what at your event is recyclable.
  - If there are not lounge recycling bins in your hall, contact [sustainability@okstate.edu](mailto:sustainability@okstate.edu) to get the problem fixed. If there is a bin or two but you expect there to be a lot of people at your program, email [eco-reps@okstate.edu](mailto:eco-reps@okstate.edu) or talk to the VP of Sustainability about renting out a few smaller bins to use for your events.



- Making an announcement every now and then at your event if you are providing something that you know is recyclable- like aluminum soda cans- will encourage your residents to take advantage of the recycling bins in your lounge, and hopefully teach them a habit as well.
- Follow the *Sustainable Programming Checklist* (Page 9) when you are programming as a BoD.
  - Going down this checklist while you are planning your event will surely make it as sustainable as possible. Compostable paper plates may be a few more dollars, but in the long run they are much more sustainable than Styrofoam plates because they can biodegrade.
  - Buying products that are environmentally friendly or recyclable, having eco-friendly prizes at your event, or even encouraging residents to bring their own mug for free hot chocolate are some easy ways to make your programs greener.

## Officer Positions

Below is a list of ways for the RHA officers to practice and encourage sustainability while in their positions of leadership. First we have a list of ways every officer can achieve this, and then smaller lists of ways for each specific position to practice sustainable behavior.

- Lead by example by modelling sustainable behaviors. See *Sustainable Behavior in Residence Halls* (Page 11)
  - If your peers see you acting sustainably, it is more likely that they will adopt the same habits. Modelling sustainable behavior by even just using a reusable water bottle at all of your meetings has the power to encourage others to do the same. If you are in the office or attending a program, make sure you are recycling correctly, turning off lights when they aren't in use, and being conscious of the waste that you are creating. If you need a way to remember this behavior, think *Reduce, Reuse, Recycle!*
- Act as an advocate for the RHA Eco-Reps by supporting their endeavors.
  - You can do this by encouraging residents to attend their programs, attending their programs yourself, and being a voice when it comes to educating on eco-friendly behavior.
- Be willing to ask questions to further you, and the team's knowledge on sustainability for the betterment of the organization
  - Being willing to absorb information and learn as a group will help us work toward the common goal of improving the organization in terms of sustainability.
- Only print our documents when it is absolutely necessary to avoid wasting paper, ink, and electricity.
  - If something needs to be a physical copy, think about cutting the amount in half and having people share the document.
- Keep a recycling bin at your desk in the REO, and recycle correctly.

## President

- When it comes to New Student Orientation, think of alternative ways to get information out that is not printing a large number of pamphlets.
  - Using flash drives with information on them is an idea that saves paper, and gives students a useful piece of merchandise. Sometimes pamphlets are not avoidable, but if they are then not only will our organization come off as more sustainable, but we will stand out, more to incoming freshman.
- Instead of printing out a number of paper agendas, documents, and bills for meetings, encourage everyone to bring their electronic device and access the documents virtually to save trees.
- In terms of BOLD development and socials, try to keep them as sustainable as possible as an example for the BOLDs and how they should lead.
  - This varies, but think “avoiding waste, buying compostable materials instead of plastic, and doing activities on laptops instead of paper”
  - For socials and catered food, buy compostable or paper plates and encourage goers to bring reusable cups or water bottles for drinks.

## VP of Administration & Finance

- When organizing and tending to the REO storage closet, take all necessary measures to NOT throw anything away.
  - This does not mean do not get rid of anything that we do not need anymore. Before you throw something in the trash, ask yourself if it can be donated to any organization or just donated in general, and if it is no longer usable ask yourself if it can be recycled (on or off campus). If it is an electronic that is broken it is likely that it is recyclable at the Convenience Collection Center, or Best Buy.

## VP of National Communications

- When planning for conferences and delegating spirit tasks, talk a few minutes to educate on how these tasks can be done sustainably and encourage it.
  - Using materials that you are already in possession of, like past spirit pins that can be repainted and glued, is a great way to be more sustainable in your possession.
  - When making the display, a great challenge to the delegates would be to ask them to make the display using as many recycled materials as possible. Using past ducks from the storage closet, old wood that can be repainted, and recycled paper from the REO are all good options.
- Also for conferences, encourage delegates to bring OSU merchandise for the Swap Shop instead of buying new items to bring.
- For BOLD meetings, avoid printing out agendas and bills and instead tell BOLDs to bring their laptops to view the documents to save paper.
- When having BOLDs list their preferences for committees to be a part of and for officers to have their 1:1s with, have them do this online in Google Forms instead of on physical paper.



- In terms of BOLD development and socials, try to keep them as sustainable as possible as an example for the BOLDs and how they should lead.
  - This varies, but think “avoiding waste, buying compostable materials instead of plastic, and doing activities on laptops instead of paper”
  - For socials and catered food, buy compostable or paper plates and encourage goers to bring reusable cups or water bottles for drinks.

### VP of Programming

- Follow the *Sustainable Programming Checklist* (Page 9) when you are programming an event with your team.
  - Going down this checklist while you are planning your program will surely make it as sustainable as possible. Compostable paper plates may be a few more dollars, but in the long run they are much more sustainable than Styrofoam plates because they can biodegrade.
  - Buying products that are environmentally friendly or recyclable, having eco-friendly prizes at your event, or even encouraging residents to bring their own mug for free hot chocolate are some easy ways to make your programs greener.
- Utilize the RHA Eco-Reps by inviting them to come to a meeting to talk about sustainability, or by partnering with them on a program.
  - Reach out to the VP of Sustainability to invite Eco-Reps to come to a Programming Board meetings and present on sustainable programming, or conduct a sustainable activity for educational purposes.
  - Partnering with the Eco-Reps on a sustainable event is a great way to increase attendance for both parties and ensure the program is sustainable and fun.

### VP of Marketing

- When deciding which marketing materials to purchase for the year, consider looking at quality over quantity.
  - Not only is being an item that will last the more sustainable option, but it will also help us as an organization stand out to students if the swag that we use to promote ourselves is useful, good quality, and able to be used for a significant amount of time.
  - Items that are better quality, or are from more reputable or sustainable companies may be more expensive but in the long run this will help our organization be and appear more green to our university.
- Promote sustainability with the swag items that we give out during the year.
  - Reusable totes, utensils with a keychain to attach to your backpack, and notebooks or pens made from recycled materials are all great examples of swag items that promote the organization, and sustainability.
- Partner with the RHA Eco-Reps social media pages for contests or campaigns, and help promote sustainable events going on within RHA.
- Have a page on the RHA website for sustainability, where residents can go to for tips and videos on the topic. (VP of Sustainability will provide tips and videos)

## PTP Chairs

- When buying merchandise for the conference to give out, consider buying items that will be useful for years to come, and look at quality over quantity.
- If possible, use past years' merchandise if there is any to avoid buying new items and creating a bigger surplus.
- If possible, have a creative theme that will allow you to utilize decorations that we already have to prevent them from going to waste and to prevent having to buy brand new ones.
- Have a good quality reusable water bottle be one of the swag items for the attendees of the conference, and do not buy plastic bottled water since these were given out to be used.
- Consider having reusable utensils on a keychain be one of the items given out, to avoid having to buy plastic disposable ones and to encourage sustainability.
- When it comes to food, buy compostable or paper plates instead of plastic or Styrofoam.
- When transporting food or any supplies needed for the conference, opt for cardboard boxes or reusable bags instead of plastic bags.
- Make sure that wherever the conference is held, there are convenient recycling bins located where students can see them, and make an announcement early on to point out where they are if needed.
- To teach incoming students about sustainability resources on campus, not just RHA sustainability, invite OSU Sustainability department to be one of the presentations for the conference.

## Sustainable Programming Checklist and Ideas

### Sustainable Programming Checklist:

- Am I using reusable shopping bags to get supplies for events? If not, investing, or making some out of t-shirts is a good idea!
- Am I buying minimally packaged foods, with as little plastic as possible? (buying food in cardboard is better than plastic, even if it is #1, 2 or 5 which can be recycled)
- Am I buying snacks in bulk from Sprouts when possible to avoid plastic packaging? If your event will have snacks- instead of buying packaged snacks from Walmart, take a small reusable bag to Sprouts and use their bulk bins! They have great snacks and it is not much more expensive, plus you buy by the pound.
- Am I buying organic or fair trade foods?
- Am I purchasing only what is needed for the event to avoid waste? Do I have a plan for leftovers?
- Have I considered having finger foods that do not require me to buy plastic utensils or plates, only napkins?
- Am I only printing one flyer for each floor, and utilizing hall GroupMes and social media to market my event, instead of printing a ton of flyers and hanging them everywhere?
- Is there a convenient recycling receptacle next to each trash can at my event?

- Instead of using solo disposable cups for drinks at my event, have I considered buying aluminum cans of soda and making sure they get recycled?
- If I am supplying cups, plates, or utensils, am I buying environmentally friendly paper or bamboo products? Am I avoiding Styrofoam?
- If my event has a prize involved, am I buying locally or from a sustainable brand?
- During my event am I role modeling positive habits around recycling, energy, and water conservation?
- At the end of my event, am I recycling the acceptable items and turning off all electronics and lights?
- Local shops in Stillwater:** Typo Market, Rhinestone Cowgirl, Chillwater Apparel, Walls, Wooden Nickel, Whiskey Creek Boutique, Knoblock & Co, Himalayan Grocery Store (carries food)
- Thrift shops in Stillwater:** Habitat Restore, Elite Repeat Quality Resale, Goodwill Store, Karmen Korner Resale Shop, Salvation Army Thrift Store, Adult & Teen Challenges Super Thrift, Freecycle Stillwater (online), The Thrifty Butterfly
- Sustainable online brands:** Boie USA, Pela Case, Package Free Shop, Sprout Pencils, Guided, Dropps, Rareform, Earth Hero, Wild Minimalist, Eco & Basics, Lush, Plastic Free Pursuit, Keep Cup, Plastic Freedom, Decomposition Books

### Sustainability-based Program Ideas:

- **BYOM - Bring Your Own Mug:** An event encouraging people to bring their own cup for some free hot chocolate or coffee, maybe add a movie or a game night in as well!
- **Zero-Waste Party:** Market this as an event to produce zero trash, hype the event up, buy snacks from the bulk section in sprouts, have a Kahoot on sustainability topics, have green prizes and have a good time!
- **Lights Out Party:** (specifically for Earth Hour in March) Everyone turns off the lights in the hall and goes outside for some s'mores, music, and stargazing to celebrate Earth Hour!
- **Meatless Monday:** Have a bunch of plant-based foods and meat alternatives to encourage consuming less meat and eat interesting healthy foods.
- **Organic Tie Dye:** Make dye out of plants and purchase clothes from the thrift store for people to tie dye with organic dye!
- **Love the Earth, Love yourself:** A spa event making organic and sustainable bath bombs, exfoliants, hand masks, or face masks!
- **Sustainability Bingo:** A bingo event where each square on the bingo sheet is a way to be sustainable, have green prizes for the winners!
- **Sustainable Trivia Night:** An event utilizing Kahoot to teach people fun new ways to be sustainable, have green prizes for winners!

## Sustainable Behavior in Residence Halls

### RECYCLING RIGHT

A very simple way to be more sustainable while living in a residence hall is by recycling correctly through ResLife Recycles. Below is an image depicting what you can and cannot recycle in your lounge recycling bins, and the blue recycling dumpsters outside of your hall. If you do not know where your hall's blue dumpster is, go to this link: <https://fm.okstate.edu/energyservices/sustainability/resliferecycles/maps.html>. If you wish to check-out your own personal 7 gallon recycling bin for your room, contact [eco-reps@okstate.edu](mailto:eco-reps@okstate.edu).



### NO SORTING NEEDED!

- No need to remove labels
- **RINSE** food containers
- Leave staples
- Loose items only
- No plastic bags

Accepted			Not Accepted	
<b>Cardboard</b>	<b>Paper</b>	<b>Cans</b>	<b>Plastic</b>	<b>Food Glass Bags</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clean, non-greasy pizza boxes, cereal boxes and all cardboard boxes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All paper products like magazines, newspapers, paperback books and envelopes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All aluminum cans like soda cans, and rinsed tin cans</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Any plastic bottles, tubs, jars or jugs marked #1, 2, &amp; 5, rinsed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No paper, plastic, or foam food containers or cups</li> <li>• No paper towels or tissues</li> <li>• No food contaminated material</li> <li>• No waxed paper cartons</li> <li>• No plastic cutlery</li> <li>• No electronics</li> <li>• No greasy pizza boxes</li> <li>• No plastic bags or films</li> <li>• No glass of any kind</li> </ul>
<p>Questions? Call Republic Services 405-377-1053 Or visit <a href="http://Sustainability.okstate.edu/ResLifeRecycles">Sustainability.okstate.edu/ResLifeRecycles</a></p>				

### Reducing Waste

If you think sustainability, the phrase “Refuse, Reduce, reuse, recycle” probably comes to your mind pretty quickly. To lessen the amount of trash that you produce daily and lower your own environmental footprint, follow the phrase in order.

- **REFUSE:** Refuse plastic bags at the grocery store, refuse straws when you go out to buy a drink, and generally refuse single-use items that you know will end up in the trash.

- **REDUCE:** Reduce your plastic use by refusing anything that is disposable, like paper plates, plastic straws, cups, and anything of that sort. You can also reduce the amount of trash you throw away by replacing plastic items with compostable ones. For example, plastic toothbrushes for bamboo ones, and toothpaste in a disposable tube to toothpaste that comes in a glass jar that can be reused.
- **REUSE:** After reducing the amount of single-use items you use, you would naturally turn to reusing items like water bottles, grocery totes, cardboard boxes, metal straws, reusable cups, and anything else that could replace something that is commonly disposed of after one use.
- **DONATE:** This is not included in the phrase, but it most definitely should be included in this guide. If you have any items you do not want anymore, donating is a much more sustainable option than trashing something that can be rehomed. Below is an image with where to donate certain items in Stillwater.

### Reducing Energy Usage

The best way to reduce your energy consumption while living in your hall is to turn off the lights when you are not in the room, and unplug any electronics and charging cords when they are not in use. Another great way is to angle your blinds upward when you want to heat up your room, and angle them downwards when you want to keep your room cool. In terms of your thermostat, it is best to set it on auto cool 74-78 degrees, and on auto heat 68-72.

### Reducing Water Usage

You can easily reduce the amount of water that you use on a daily basis by being conscious of the faucet. When washing dishes and brushing your teeth, turn off the faucet when you do not need it right that moment. You can also time yourself to try and lessen the amount of time you spend in the shower. When washing your laundry, wait until you have a full load and opt to washing in cold water to save energy at the same time.

### Other Quick Tips

- Purchase locally-produced foods and goods
- Print and copy double-sided
- Only buy food that you will eat, and eat your leftovers when you have them to avoid food waste
- Buy products made with recycled content
- Rent, borrow, share or buy used instead of buying items new
- Walk places, ride a bike, carpool, or take the bus instead of driving places

**Donate,  
Don't Dump!**

**Clothing, linens, accessories**  
 The Thrifty Butterfly  
 1593 Cimmaron Plaza  
 Karman Korner Resale Shop  
 819 S. Main St.  
 Goodwill Store  
 811 S. Main St & 801 E. Lakeview  
 Salvation Army Thrift Store  
 211 E. 9th St.  
 St. Andrew's Thrift Shop  
 504 W. 3rd St.  
 Elite Repeat Quality Resale  
 711 S. Main St.  
 ATRS Clothing & Shoe Donation Bin  
 Located around Stillwater

**Furniture, home decor, appliances**  
 Habitat ReStore  
 505 E. 18th Ave.  
 Elite Repeat Quality Resale  
 711 S. Main St.  
 Goodwill Store  
 811 S. Main St & 801 E. Lakeview  
 Salvation Army Thrift Store  
 211 E. 9th St.  
 Karman Korner Resale Shop  
 819 S. Main St.

**Bicycles**  
 Habitat ReStore  
 505 E. 18th Ave.  
 Red Dirt Pedalers c/o Cooper's  
 220 S. Main St.

**Shoes, purses, belts**  
 Stillwater Shoe Repair  
 901A E. 6th Ave.  
 See above clothing & accessories

Questions? Email [sustainability@okstate.edu](mailto:sustainability@okstate.edu)

## Encouraging Sustainability

As a peer educator, you have to find the delicate balance in how to remind people about sustainable behavior, without becoming nagging and annoying. Nobody will listen to a “self-righteous environmentalist” and nobody wants to feel guilty about his or her choices or lifestyle. peer educator is trained to enlightens their peers on a certain topic. They are also a type of mentor. It is possible that the residents you may be talking with will have different interests and values and the issues you bring up may be the first time they are hearing about them.

Two important rules when engaging in conversation are:

1. Listen. If you don't listen to peers, why should they listen to you? Hear them out. What are the needs of this person? What are the barriers they are facing?
2. Question your assumptions. Find the source of what's really happening in the situation. Things may not be as they seem. For example, a resident might not recycle because he sees housekeepers put recycling in the trash. It is more likely that the housekeeper is placing trash and recycling in her wheeled barrel, but when she gets outdoors, she separates the bags into the appropriate dumpsters. Follow the recycling!

By being a leader in RHA, you may be equipped with knowledge on sustainability that other residents may not have or understand. They also may not be as invested or interested as you are. It is up to you to demystify eco-friendly practices and make them seem interesting, if you want to be a peer educator with your programs.

- Act as role models
- Educate and lead by example
- Be a resource for students
- Be knowledgeable about sustainability living practices (on campus)
- Empower your peers to take action
  - As a peer educator with more knowledge and interest on the subject of sustainability, you will succeed by empowering your peers, instead of constantly correcting them. This will help them receive your constructive criticism and make them more likely to change their actions.





## Resources

### Contact Info

**Ilda Hershey** – *Sustainability Coordinator*

Facilities Management  
227 Central Plant  
Stillwater, OK 74078  
[ilda.hershey@okstate.edu](mailto:ilda.hershey@okstate.edu)  
405-744-4728  
<https://sustainability.okstate.edu>  
@OSUgreen

**Jenny Cundiff** – *Energy Manager*

Energy Services  
223 Central Plant  
Stillwater, OK 74078  
[jenny.cundiff@okstate.edu](mailto:jenny.cundiff@okstate.edu)  
405-744-3945  
<https://energy.okstate.edu>  
@OSUgreen

**Fred Dillard** – *Student Leadership Coordinator*

Housing and Residential Life  
001A Stout Hall  
Stillwater, OK 74078  
[fred.dillard@okstate.edu](mailto:fred.dillard@okstate.edu)  
405-744-6929

### Helpful Social Media Accounts to Follow

@OSUgreen  
@RHAEEcoReps  
@OSUPark\_Ride

@NetImpact\_OSU  
@OSUWasteMgt  
@AASHENews

### Glossary

**AASHE:** Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (OSU is a member).

**Audit:** inspection of something (usually trash or recycling bins or dumpsters).

**Biodegradable:** a product that will break down within a reasonably short period of time after customary disposal (aka it will continue to break down into small pieces but may not completely degrade). Not the same as compostable.

**Climate change:** a change in global or regional climate patterns that are attributed largely to the increased levels of atmospheric carbon dioxide and other gases such as methane.

**Community Recycle Bin:** recycle bins at hall desks or resident lounges that are for recyclables generated in those community spaces (not for personal use).

**Compostable:** organic (carbon-based) goods that break down into nutrient-rich soil. Not the same as biodegradable.

**Composting:** Composting mixes organic waste such as food, and dead leaves, with air, water, and microorganisms to become nutrient-rich soil, which can be used as fertilizer.

**Eco-footprint:** The impact of human activities on the environment, usually measured in terms of land and water required to produce goods and services consumed.

**Greenhouse gas emissions:** Atmospheric gases that contribute to the greenhouse effect (CO<sub>2</sub>, CH<sub>4</sub>, and NO<sub>2</sub>).

**LEED:** Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design is the most widely used green building rating system in the world and is available for virtually all building, community, and home project types.

**OKRA:** Oklahoma Recycling Association – dedicated to providing education and referral services about integrated solid waste management.

**OrangeRide:** A bicycle rental and repair program offered to promote affordable and convenient transportation to the campus and Stillwater community. Located at the Multi-modal Transportation building.

**OSU Recycles:** OSU's dual-stream recycle program for non-residential areas of campus.

**Pedestrian cans:** outdoor trash or recycle bins.

**Personal recycle bins:** Recycling bins that residents keep in their rooms (<https://sustainability.okstate.edu/resliferecycles/personal-bins>)

**Post-consumer recycled content:** Products made from materials that come from consumer recycling (ex: disposable water bottles could be recycled into carpet).

**Pre-consumer recycled content:** Things made from materials that have been recycled by producers/factories but have not been used or recycled by the consumer (ex: paper scraps from a mill that are reused in the paper-making process).

**Recycle bins:** Bins that recycled materials can be put in. Depending on the location, the accepted materials may be different (will be labeled).

**Recycle dumpster:** These green or blue dumpsters can be found outside around campus. Custodians and residents empty recycling bin contents into recycle dumpsters, which are serviced by Republic Services.

**Refuse:** This noun means trash (anything that can't be recycled). Refuse goes to the local landfill.

**ResLife Recycles:** OSU's single-stream (AKA mixed) recycling program, which is run through OSU's Residential Halls. (See <https://sustainability.okstate.edu/RLR> for more information).

**Roll-off:** Temporary extra-large open-top dumpster (usually used during move-in recycling), which is designed to roll on and off its transport truck.

**STARS:** A program of AASHE that stands for Sustainability Tracking, Assessment, and Rating System. It allows colleges and universities to self-report, track, and measure their sustainability efforts in a comprehensive way.

**Sustainable Development:** Meeting human development goals without compromising the ability for future generations to meet their own needs.

**The 3 R's:** Reduce your consumption and waste! Reuse what you have! Recycle what cannot be reduced or reused

## Stuff to Think About

### Energy – Why conserve energy?

- Conventional energy production/distribution pollutes the air and adds to climate change
- Mining coal destroys landscapes by flattening mountaintops and filling in valleys and streams
- To reduce the University's operating budget

*Fast Fact: On average, 72% of OSU's electricity comes from the Cowboy Wind farm!*

Read more here: <http://bit.ly/OSUenergyprogram> & <http://bit.ly/EPAOSU>

### Transportation

The use of cars and trucks is one of the most environmentally damaging behaviors and of course, it is one that most of us engage in. They not only cause air pollution but water pollution as well from manufacturing and gasoline. Fortunately, alternative transportation, including walking, biking, and The Bus, is available for OSU students.

*Fast Fact: Nearly twenty-six percent of greenhouse gas emissions in the United States are due to transportation (this makes it the second largest contributor after electricity production).*

Read more here: <http://bit.ly/zipcarOSU> & <http://bit.ly/OSUcngas>

### Waste Minimization

1. Reduce – The less stuff we buy, the less waste we will generate. Unfortunately, our reliance on disposable products has become a way of life and can be difficult to get away from. Can you think of things that we buy that we could do without or borrow instead?
2. Reuse – Reduce the amount of waste we create by reusing things that we do buy. When shopping, look for durable, reusable goods (ex: reusable mugs, bags, water bottles, utensils).

3. Recycle – This seems to be the “R” that everyone loves because it requires little change in lifestyle, but the other “Rs” are more important than recycling. After you have reduced and reused as much as you can, recycle (if possible)! At OSU, there are two recycling programs: *OSU Recycles* for campus buildings (classrooms, offices, labs, Edmond Low, and the Colvin) and *ResLife Recycles* (Res Halls).

*Fast Fact: Recycling one aluminum can save enough energy to run a TV for three hours or listen to a whole album on your iPod. Americans throw away enough aluminum to rebuild our entire commercial fleet of airplanes every three mos.*

Read more here: <https://sustainability.okstate.edu/recycling-overview>

## Water

As you might have expected, the US consumes more water per capita than any other country in the world. In 2015, it was estimated that about 265,600 million gallons per day were used solely for domestic use (<https://water.usgs.gov/watuse/wudo.html>). Domestic water use includes drinking water, sanitation, and lawn watering.

*Fast Fact: One bottle of water wastes the equivalent of five bottles of water in manufacturing... and Americans drink 21 gallons of bottled water per capita per year.*

Read more here: <https://utilities.okstate.edu/domestic-water-production> & <https://www.watercalculator.org/> & <http://bit.ly/back2tap>

## Eating for the Environment

Do you know the environmental impacts of the food that you eat? Did you even know that your food *had* a carbon footprint? It does, in fact, and this footprint comes from all aspects of your food – the type of food (meat and animal products have the highest footprint), transportation, packaging, etc. There are ways to lessen your footprint such as buying in bulk, eating more plant-based foods, and eating locally and seasonally. Also trying to buy more organic and fair trade food helps the environment and farmers.

*Fast Fact: According to the Worldwatch Institute, the food eaten in the United States typically travels between 1,500 and 2,500 miles from farm to table.*

Read more here: <http://bit.ly/OSUdining> & <http://foodstudies.okstate.edu/>

## Conscious Consumerism and Purchasing

The power of a dollar – what are you supporting with your spending? Our industrial economy has transformed from producing primarily durable goods to disposable and cheap goods with one-time or few-time uses. Overt consumerism has incentivized Americans to buy more and as a result, throw away more. Purchasing used items from thrift stores helps keep clothes and other items out of landfills and gives them a longer life. Shopping local, organic, fair trade, and avoiding excess packaging are all ways to shop more conscientiously.

*Fast Fact: Fashion is one of the top 5 most polluting industries in the world.*

Read more here: <http://bit.ly/cowboysforsj> & <http://bit.ly/prosandconsofdonating> & <https://www.goodguide.com>

## Tips & Advice for Encouraging Green Behavior

**Say it. Repeat it. Say it again.** Habits are formed from repeating actions. Messages on sustainable behaviors have to be given repeatedly for them to be remembered.

**Innovate** – What’s going on in your hall that you can turn into an opportunity or important issue? Look to make a difference. Don’t be afraid of crazy ideas – they might just work!

**Promote the positive** – Remind and encourage positive behaviors without becoming overbearing or annoying.

**Be sensible** – Appeal to people’s sensibilities and try to find connections between the behaviors you want to see and issues they care about. Open up to constructive conversations.

**Be a people person** – People respond more positively to those they have a relationship with. Get out there and say hello!

**Be present** – Consider posting your availability on your door and bulletin board so that residents know when to find you in the hall.

**Network** – Work with BoDs and other groups on campus and in your hall to make your event more visible and known. Your attendance is much more likely to increase when people know you!

**Be resourceful** – Try to reuse materials and host events that are as waste-free as possible.

**Be specific** – Let your residents know what they can do in specific language. Focus on concrete actions they can take, not what they are not doing.

**Set a good example** – Role model the behaviors you are asking your peers to do.

**Keep learning** – Be knowledgeable about what’s going on around you. Learn about and share where energy comes from, where waste goes, and behaviors that matter.

**Identify roadblocks** – Figure out what could be a barrier for peers engaging in sustainably friendly behaviors, such as lack of knowledge (easiest to address), lack of opportunity to do the right thing (e.g., no control over heating and cooling in a building), lack of interest (hardest to address), lack of time, lack of money, and lack of motivation. Once you know the barriers, find creative solutions.

*This guide was adapted from the NAU Eco-Rep and OSU RHA Eco-Rep handbooks, and was last updated 6/03/2020.*