

Greening the Library

It would be wonderful if we could all work in libraries complete with green roof, natural lighting and the latest green building materials, but of course this is not always the case. Short of campaigning to build a completely new state-of-the-art library, librarians need ways to go green within existing structures and systems. Improve your library's green rating through these green tips.

- Be careful in routine activities such as carpet cleaning. Avoid cleaners with perchloroethylene or naphthalene as these can actually increase carpet stains in the long run. Remember that there are green alternative products (See Bi-O-Kleen for plant-derived cleaners).
- If your library features a cafe or canteen, keep the goods local. And, of course, recycle!
- Many libraries have begun offering green-focused programming in response to community interest in green efforts. Some examples of this programming include book discussion groups with a green theme, youth programs focused on how to start a vegetable garden, or how-to workshops with focus on recycling or forms of alternative energy.
- Re-use programming materials whenever possible.
- Digitization projects are green in that they reduce the use of paper and encourage public engagement without requiring patrons to travel by vehicle to the library. When you do need to use paper at work, invest in recycled options.
- Consider implementing a bonus system that rewards employees for taking public transportation or creating a carpool. If you can't find carpool buddies, PickupPal is an online service offered in 106 countries which facilitates meeting people in your area who would like to share rides. See if there are registered members in your area.
- Do you really need new furniture? Try refurbishing the furniture in your library for a fresh new look instead of replacing everything.
- Encourage staff to turn off all electronic equipment at the end of the day. This can cut your energy use by 25%.
- Identify and use suppliers who will take back their packaging and re-use it.
- Make sure staff are educated about these green practices, and encourage them to pass the word on.

Teens Going Green

"The [Energy Action Coalition] is a group of youth organizations on college and high school campuses across the nation. Among their many projects is the Campus Climate Challenge. Their goal is to make schools energy efficient."

— Lewis, K. (2009). Teens Go Green! Scholastic Scope, 57, 15, 14.