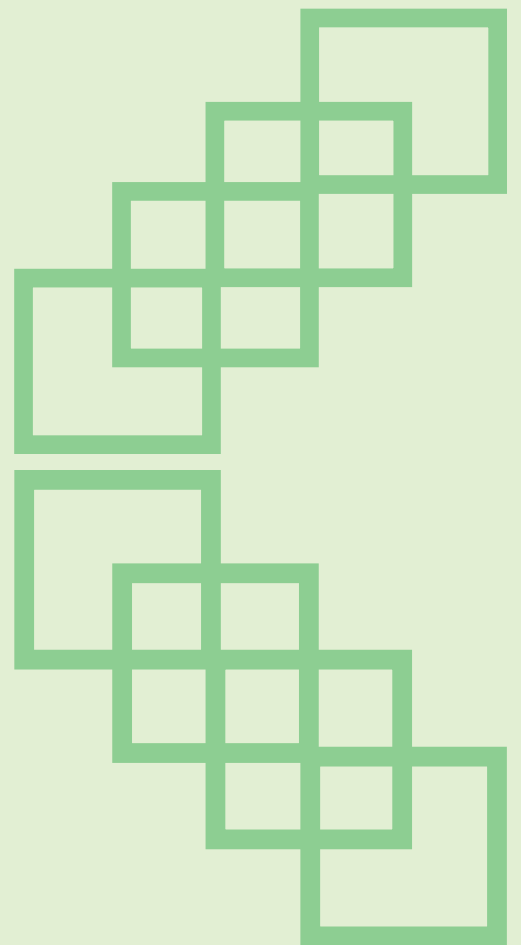




**UPDATED & FULLY DIGITAL  
FOR SMALL BUSINESSES!**



# **SMART STEPS TO SUSTAINABILITY 2.0**







**Develop a sustainability plan specifically for your small business needs. Move beyond environmental compliance and into sustainable practice.**

# WE LISTENED

## Thinking Small Business First: Professionalism, Innovation, Collaboration, Advocacy.

The mission of the [U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Office of Small Business Programs](#) is to support the protection of human health and the environment by advocating and advancing the business, regulatory, and environmental compliance concerns of small and socio-economically disadvantaged businesses.

### Guide Overview

This Smart Steps to Sustainability's 2.0 Guide is an updated and condensed version of the original 70-page [Smart Steps to Sustainability Guide](#) published by EPA's Small Business Office in 2009. It is intended to help small businesses move beyond environmental compliance and into sustainable practices by providing awareness, understanding and resources to help develop sustainability goals.

This guide is intended to provide the small business community with an up-to-date, streamlined and more efficient resource for busy, small business owners to help green their business. To get your business on the fast track to sustainability, this greening guide will help you:

#### REALIZE

the impact your business has on the environment.

#### UNDERSTAND

the political and regulatory forces that are encouraging sustainable business practices.

#### EXPLORE

opportunities to help your business to become more sustainable.

#### DEVELOP

and implement a strategy to minimize your impact and share your efforts with your customers.

### Small Business Environmental Compliance Assistance

Don't miss this helpful online resource in complying with environmental regulations. The [National Small Business Environmental Assistance Program](#), which is funded under an EPA cooperative agreement, provides free and confidential assistance on various environmental regulations specifically for small business.

## Need to better understand your regulatory compliance requirements?

There is assistance to help your small business comply with environmental regulations, which is confidential and free of charge. Contact your state [Small Business Ombudsman](#) or [Small Business Environmental Assistance Provider](#).

### Benefits of Greening

Environmentally friendly business practices can yield enormous rewards, both for the environment and the business.

Ask yourself, “What makes **my company** sustainable? What sustainability goals will make the greatest impact for my business, including within my supply chain?”

What makes a company sustainable? The characteristics of a greener, more sustainable business:

- incorporates “green thinking” in company culture;
- eliminates inefficiencies;
- minimizes its impact on the environment; and
- evolves and adapts while streamlining its processes for resource efficiency.



#### SAVE MONEY

from reduced waste and increased efficiency



#### REDUCE CONCERNS

about health and safety liability by going beyond environmental compliance standards



#### IMPROVE PUBLIC RELATIONS

and attract earth conscious consumers



#### DEMONSTRATE LEADERSHIP

and differentiate your business from competitors

### What is your handprint?

Based on the ecological footprint concept, which focuses on the negative environmental impacts (like the amount of waste or resources used) the ecological handprint focuses on the positive environmental impacts that one can make to counteract their ecological footprint.

### Have a strategy

Creating a greener business means establishing an awareness of your company's impact on the environment and fostering a culture that minimizes this impact. A strategic approach to greening puts your business on the path to sustainability and provides the flexibility to thrive in the future.

# OPPORTUNITIES

## Updates to Executive Orders & Sustainability Initiatives

**Executive Order (EO) 13514** was signed on October 5, 2009 by President Barack Obama. EO 13514 established requirements that federal agencies reduce their environmental impacts by setting sustainability goals and strategic plans to achieve those sustainability goals through facility and workforce planning efforts in reducing energy and water consumption, waste diversion and fleet management.

On March 19, 2015, President Barack Obama signed **Executive Order 13693** “Planning for Federal Sustainability in the Next Decade” which revoked and replaced EO 13514, **EO 13423**, and several other sustainability Presidential Memorandums. Executive Order 13693 sets forth new federal-wide sustainability goals through 2025 with a focus on reducing direct federal agency greenhouse gas emissions by at least 40% over the next decade.

Executive Order 13693 builds off much of what was established in EO 13514, which requires all federal agencies to set sustainability goals in the environment, energy and economic performance, including reducing waste and pollution while increasing energy and resource efficiency. EO 13514 introduced new greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions management requirements, expanded water reduction requirements for federal agencies, and addressed waste diversion, local planning, sustainable buildings, environmental management, and electronics stewardship. Once agencies have set approved goals (and the plans on how to reach those goals) the Office of Management and Budget then issues each agency an annual report card on how well they have prepared to reach their goals. Considering that the federal government occupies nearly 500,000 buildings, manages a fleet of over 600,000 vehicles and purchases over \$500 billion a year in goods and services, these sustainability goals and plans can potentially make a big impact, not only in environmental benefits, but also in how businesses work with the federal government in providing goods and services. (source: [www.whitehouse.gov](http://www.whitehouse.gov))

Federal contractors that are focused on sustainability will be helping agencies reach their sustainability goals through their green contract services and products, which is making them more valuable and marketable to the federal government. In fact, the new EO 13693 has gone into even greater focus (than EO 13514) on the federal government supply chain and non-federal partners. Based on the “Planning for Federal Sustainability in the Next Decade” language, major federal suppliers, starting in FY 2016, will be required to measure and report on their green house gas emissions and sustainability data. In addition, plans for the largest procurement agencies to implement future contract clauses, which encourage suppliers to manage and reduce green house gas emissions on upcoming procurements are imminent.

## Making Progress

As the largest energy user in the Nation, the Federal Government leads by example to reduce its emissions of climate-changing greenhouse gases. In 2010, the President set a goal for the Federal Government to reduce its direct emissions of greenhouse gases by 28 percent by 2020. The Federal Government is on track to meet that goal, already reducing its greenhouse gas emissions by 17 percent. In their Fiscal Year 2015 Sustainability Plans, agencies outline the actions they will take to continue their progress. [source: Whitehouse.gov](http://source:Whitehouse.gov)

## Performance.gov

The Administration is doing its part to create a government that is more effective, efficient, innovative, and responsive. [Performance.gov](http://Performance.gov) outlines current cross-agency sustainability goals and priorities.



## Federal Agencies Go Green

Responding to the President's challenge to cut waste, save money, and better serve the American people, [Performance.gov](#) provides a window into the Obama Administration's approach of improving sustainability performance and accountability in the federal government. All federal agencies are now required to measure, manage and reduce their environmental footprint. Now that EO 13693 has gone on to develop even stronger language for the government's supply chain (including non-federal partners) it is scrutinized more closely to ensure the federal government is reaching its sustainability goals.

What do these changes mean for you as a small business? If you are a small business with sustainability goals in mind, that is looking to work with the Federal Government, you will have an advantage over other similar small businesses that may not consider their environmental impacts. Environmentally friendly small businesses, in all industry sectors, that are able to show the sustainability benefits as a federal contractor will have an upper hand in the solicitation process because of the new federal sustainability plans. To learn more about how federal agencies lead by example in reducing the federal government's environmental impacts go to [The Federal Green Challenge](#).

## Green Procurement

EPA has steadily increased its green procurement initiatives into all their contracts, which ensures that green practices are being followed when contractual work is being carried out. Some of the initiatives include green contracting clauses, which can be as simple as requiring double sided printing of documents on recycled paper, while others may give specific direction to the contractor in the type of green service or resource EPA expects the contractor to use. Important procurement and purchasing programs at EPA include:

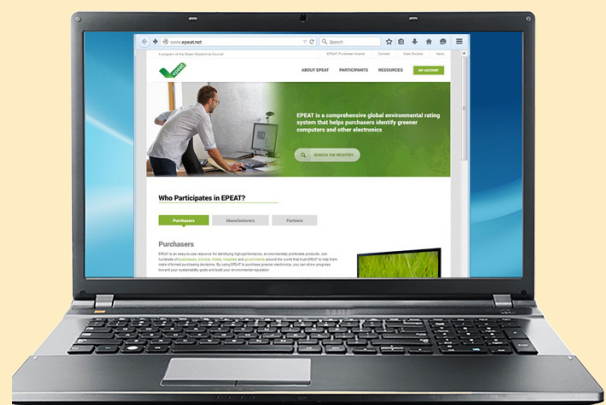
[Comprehensive Procurement Guidelines](#) promotes the use of material recycled from solid waste purchasing products with recycled content.

[Environmentally Preferable Purchasing](#) helps the federal government "buy green".

[EPA's Greener Products](#) provides "one stop shopping" for a broad selection of information and tools on greener purchasing, including information specifically geared for the small business purchaser.

## Make Informed Purchasing Decisions

EPEAT is an easy-to-use resource for identifying high-performance, environmentally preferable products. Join hundreds of businesses, schools, hotels, hospitals and governments around the world that trust EPEAT to help them make informed purchasing decisions.





## EPA Programs of Interest to Small Business

As a small business, there are many opportunities to partner or benefit from EPA sustainability programs, tools and research. Whether your business is in need of reducing its energy, water and resource use or needs to better understand what green products are available for purchase, EPA can provide your small business with assistance in reaching your sustainability goals. Consider joining into a voluntary partnership with EPA. Below are just a few EPA partnership programs that may be of particular interest to your small businesses.

**ENERGY STAR for Small Business** helps small businesses save energy and money through the ENERGY STAR network and by using ENERGY STAR products.

**Green Power Partnership** has more than **1,300 Partner organizations** (large, medium and small) voluntarily using billions of kilowatt-hours of green power annually.

**Green Chill Refrigeration Partnership** helps food retailers reduce refrigerant emissions and decrease their impact on the ozone layer and climate change.

**SmartWay** helps businesses reduce their transportation-related emissions by creating incentives to improve supply chain fuel efficiency.

**WasteWise** is helping businesses apply sustainable materials management practices to reduce Industrial wastes.

**BurnWise** is helping manufacturers improve air quality through developing and distributing cleaner, more efficient wood-burning appliances.

**PestWise** is helping promote environmental innovation in pest management.

**WaterSense** is helping connect the various utilities, local governments, manufacturers, retail and distributors, builders, and other organizations that are working to promote the WaterSense label and water efficiency.

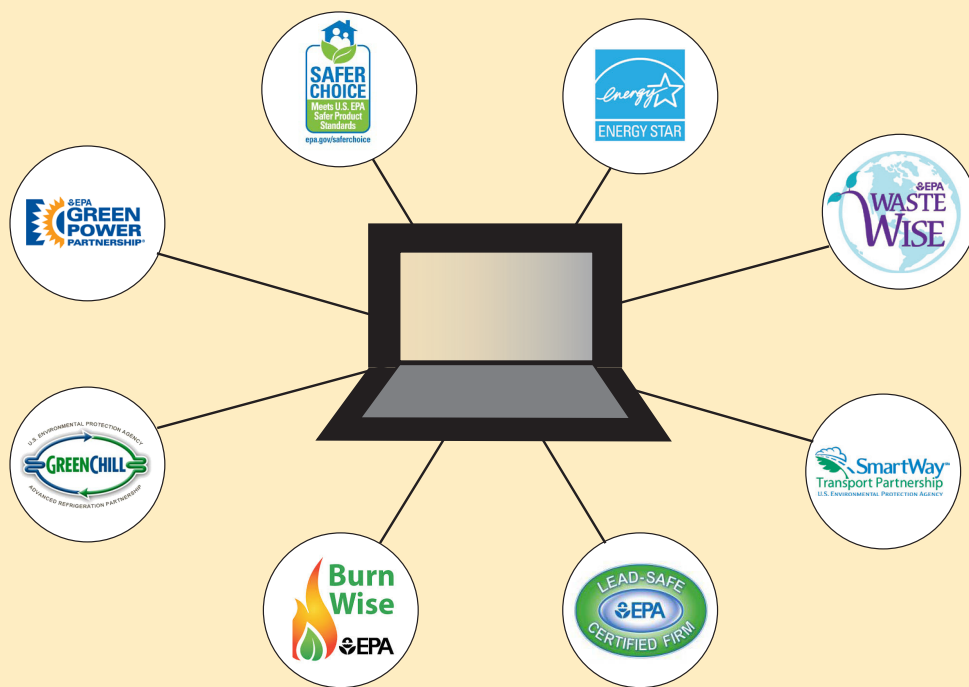
**Safer Choice** is helping consumers, businesses, and institutional buyers identify cleaning and other products that perform well and are safer for human health and the environment.

**Lead Safe Certification Program** is helping to Lead-Safe certify (or renew) renovation firms.

**Sustainable Materials Management** is helping original equipment manufacturers and retailers promote responsible electronics recycling.

**Food Recovery Challenge** is designed to help participants save money, help communities, and protect the environment by purchasing less, **donating extra food**, and **composting**.

**E3: Economy-Energy-Environment** helps communities, manufacturers and manufacturing supply chains adapt and thrive in today's green economy.





Today, more than ever, consumers have the ability – and the interest – to invest in clean energy. Clean energy includes energy efficiency and clean energy supply options like highly efficient combined heat and power as well as renewable energy sources. Go to **EPA's Clean Energy Programs** to find the right program for you.

## Join Together with Small Businesses

ENERGY STAR's **Small Business Network**, which lists more than 12,000 small businesses, throughout the country, who have committed to improving their energy efficiency with ENERGY STAR. These leaders recognize that saving energy is not only good for the environment, it's good for their bottom line. The small businesses that have joined this network are varied in size and in industry. Everything from an auto collision repair shop in Dover, Tennessee to a home improvement firm in Oxford, Massachusetts are proud to carry the ENERGY STAR promotional mark to show their customers and clients that they are committed to saving energy. **EnergyStar Workbook for Small Business** has excellent guidance for a variety of small business types.

## Financial Incentive Programs for Small Businesses Going Green

Want to green your business but need financial assistance to help get you there? There are federal and state grant and loan programs that might be just the right "green incentive" to get you on your path towards sustainability. Here are a few listings to help you find the right program for you.

**SBA's Listing of Environmental Grants and Loans** provides small businesses find financial resources to pay for energy efficient upgrades, for innovative environmental products and technologies and to support environmentally friendly business.

**Database of State Incentives for Renewables and Efficiency** provides source information on incentives and policies that support renewables and energy efficiency throughout the United States.

## Sector Specific Tools

### Retail Establishments

The **Gateway to State Resource Locator** is a one stop shop for programs and resources to help prevent and resolve environmental issues at retail establishments, including both regulatory compliance assistance and sustainability resources. Remember, your business must first meet its environmental regulatory obligations before it can go beyond compliance and into truly sustainable business practices.

### Lead Paint

In December of 2014 EPA announced 61 enforcement actions that require renovation contractors and training providers to **protect people** from harmful exposure to lead dust and debris. Enforcement actions that are required by EPA's Lead-based Paint Renovation, Repair, and Painting (RRP) standards. Read the **Press release**.

### Pollution Prevention

EPA's Toxics Release Inventory (TRI) Program's **P2 Search Tool** now helps you identify Pollution Prevention (P2) successes and visually compare P2 performance at both the facility and corporate level. View the **TRI presentation slides** from their February 2015 webinar to learn more.

# 5 SMART STEPS

This guide provides a five-step strategy and step-by-step worksheet to help you create a more environmentally-responsible company and lay the foundation for a sustainable future.

## START GREENING HERE

### Step 1: Get Ready

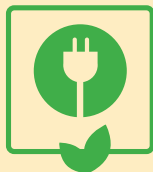
Commit and plan!  
Lay the groundwork for success:

- assess your compliance
- engage your employees
- find support
- build your environmental knowledge
- plan accordingly

### Step 2: Get Started

Decide how green you want your business to be, select the best approach to get there and assess the impact your business has on the environment.

- define your vision
- choose your approach
- assess potential business and environmental impacts



### Get the Work Sheet

Access the Smart Steps to Sustainability Guide's [Smart Steps Worksheet](#) where you can input your own business information, goals and plans based on what you have learned from this guide.

### Greening with U.S. EPA

Don't miss EPA's [Office of Sustainability site](#) for online sustainability information, tools, and resources.

### Step 3: Set Goals

Choose your greening goals and identify the actions to achieve them. Use the [Smart Steps Work Sheets](#) to help identify and prioritize goals.

- identify smart goals specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, time-bound
- select and prioritize goals that help you reach your objectives
- define responsibilities

### Step 4: Go Green

You and your employees know best how to make a strategy work. Keep your goals in mind as you move forward.

- implement your greening strategy
- set a good example
- communicate/educate
- reward teamwork

### Step 5: Innovation

Ensure continuous improvement and innovation. Discuss how to make sure your company continues to reduce its environmental impact and flourish at the same time. This includes ideas for measuring progress and updating goals.

- measure progress
- keep up the communication
- develop a strategy for updating your goals and activities
- identify further opportunities like positive “handprint” actions

## Proper Messaging

Your sustainability message is important! Substantiate your claims carefully before touting the environmental advantages of your product or service. When you make promises without limits or caveats the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) refers to them as “unqualified claims”. [FTC’s Green Guides](#) were issued to help marketers ensure that the claims they are making are true and substantiated. The guidance they provide includes:

- general principles that apply to all environmental marketing claims;
- how consumers are likely to interpret particular claims and how marketers can substantiate these claims; and
- how marketers can qualify their claims to avoid deceiving consumers.

WE  GREEN!

# GREEN & BEYOND

**We hope that this guide will help you build a better understanding of how to go green with your business.**

The process of becoming sustainable may not always be easy but your efforts are important. You will give customers a green option and make your business more marketable to those that seek out an environmentally sustainable partnership, including the federal government.

## **Tips to Remember:**

- consider sustainability in all of your decisions and actions
- communicate your efforts
- be a leader in your industry and community
- strive to stay ahead of advances in green technology and ways for your business to improve

## **Additional Sustainability Resources**

[Small Business Administration's Green Business Guide](#) provides various tools and resources for the green-minded.

[Envirofacts](#) is a one-stop-source for environmental information.

[Green Certification](#) lists various green certifications and ecolabeling programs.

[4Core: Resource Smart Business Program](#) helps local business owners and employees work smarter, not harder. It is a voluntary six step certification program that helps businesses increase their competitive advantage by reducing their resource consumption.

[Green Seal](#) uses science-based programs to empower consumers, purchasers, and companies to create a more sustainable world.

[Best Management Practices](#) to Mitigate Toxics and Implement a Greening Program for Small Manufacturing Businesses is a 15 page guide from \*Region 2's Office of Pollution Prevention and Climate Change Section.

[UseReusables](#) provides free educational resources, training workshops and expert advice to help business transition to reusable transport packaging. The program offers valuable resources and grants.

[Quick Tips Guide](#) is targeted for Small Manufacturing Businesses on Reducing Toxic Releases Related to Storm Events in

\*Region 2. (Region 2 serves NY, NJ, Puerto Rico & the U.S. Virgin Islands)



# GREEN POWER LEADERSHIP AWARDS

A 2014 Green Power Leadership awardee, the [June Key Delta Community Center](#), of Portland Oregon is a blueprint of how to build and live sustainably. This reclaimed brownfield site serves as a gathering place for the community, a facility to house social, economic, and environmental service programs, and a model for green power and sustainability in the community. This site features an 18 kilowatt rooftop solar array and countless additional sustainable design features. June Key Delta Community Center uses 100% green power, equating to about 25,000 kWh annually.

[Phoenix Press, Inc.](#) is a family-owned and operated printer located in New Haven, Connecticut. In 2010, the printer installed one of the state's largest wind turbines, a 100 kilowatt turbine that produces approximately 165,000 kilowatt hours of electricity a year. The turbine provides 40% of Phoenix Press' yearly electricity use. In addition to providing electricity, the highly visible wind turbine serves as an educational and community centerpiece. Phoenix Press was a 2010 Green Power Leadership awardee.

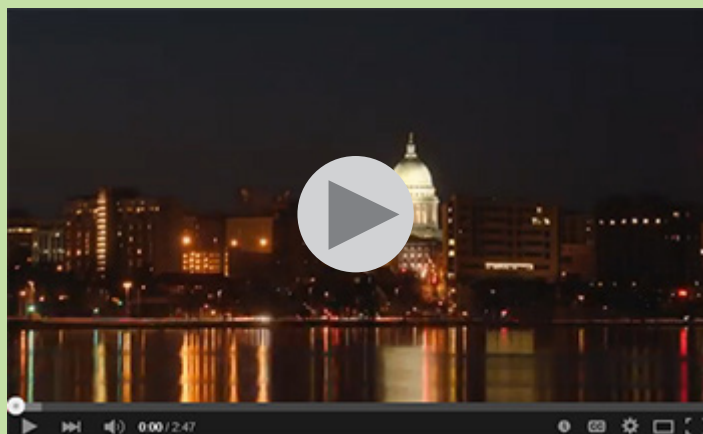
[The Joinery](#), a hardwood furniture producer, has been on the forefront of small businesses and environmentally safe initiatives. The Joinery purchase renewable energy certificates from wind power for its 15,000 square foot workshop and 7,000 square foot showroom in Portland, Oregon. Their green power usage is around 148,000kWh, which represents about 60% of their annual usage. They received a Green Power Leadership Award in 2009.

Disclaimer: Reference herein to any specific commercial products, process, or service by trade name, trademark, manufacturer, or otherwise, does not necessarily constitute or imply its endorsement, recommendation, or favoring by the United States Government. The views and opinions of authors expressed herein do not necessarily state or reflect those of the United States Government, and shall not be used for advertising or product endorsement purposes.

## Showcase Communities

[EPA's Climate Showcase Communities Program](#) helps local governments and tribal nations pilot innovative, cost-effective and replicable community-based greenhouse gas reduction projects.

Madison, Wisconsin is one of EPA's 50 Climate Showcase Communities. *Sustain Dane*, the City's only comprehensive sustainability organization, runs the [MPower Business Champion](#) program. It is a voluntary program that helps businesses identify and accomplish five carbon reduction projects over the course of a year. *Sustain Dane* provides the resources and tools that businesses need to achieve their carbon reductions, and the businesses save money.



# GREENING GUIDE TOOL BOX

## Federal Directory

### Small Business and Sustainability Links:

Smart Steps to Sustainability 2.0 is best utilized in its electronic format. If you are reading a hard copy of this guide and would like additional information, the list below is a collection of quick reference links.

**Smart Steps Worksheet:** MicroSoft Excel spreadsheet to enter sustainability goals for your business.

[http://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2016-02/smart\\_steps.xls](http://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2016-02/smart_steps.xls)

**ENERGY STAR** <http://www.energystar.gov>

**EPA Contracts Greening Government Procurement:**

<http://www.epa.gov/contracts/greening-government-procurement>

**EPA Asbestos & Small Business Ombudsman**

<http://www.epa.gov/resources-small-businesses/asbestos-small-business-ombudsman>

**EPA's Sustainable Purchasing Program Guidance**

<http://www.epa.gov/greenerproducts/sustainable-purchasing-program-guidance-landscape-scan-available-resources>

**EPA Greener Products** <http://epa.gov/greenerproducts>

**EPA Green Power Partnership** <http://www.epa.gov/greenpower>

**EPA Office of Small Business Programs**

<http://www.epa.gov/aboutepa/about-office-small-business-programs-osbp>

**EPA's Compliance Assistance Centers**

<http://www.epa.gov/compliance/compliance-assistance-centers>

**EPA Waste Resources** <http://www.epa.gov/epawaste>

**EPA WaterSense** <http://www.epa.gov/watersense>

**EPA Safer Choice** <http://www2.epa.gov/saferchoice>

**EPA SmartWay** <http://www.epa.gov/smartway>

**National Small Business Environmental Assistance Program** <https://nationalsbeap.org/>

**SBA's Green Business Guide** <https://www.sba.gov/green-business-guide>

**SBA's Office of the National Ombudsman** <https://www.sba.gov/ombudsman>







**UPDATED FROM 2009  
& FULLY DIGITAL!**

EPA's Office of Small Business Programs Greening site has more sustainability tools and resources specifically for small business. [www.epa.gov/osbp/greening](http://www.epa.gov/osbp/greening)