



WACIF

Sustainability Resource Hub

In partnership w/



ECOLYTICS

WACIF Small Business Sustainability Guide

A Practical Toolkit for Building a Stronger, More Resilient Business

Running a small business today is not easy. You're balancing rising costs, changing customer expectations, staffing challenges, and an increasingly complex regulatory environment. On top of that, there's growing pressure to "be sustainable." This guide is here to make that practical.

Sustainability does not mean becoming an environmental expert, expensive consultants, or overhauling your business overnight.

It means building a business that lasts. A business that:

- Manages costs wisely
- Keeps customers loyal
- Attracts and retains strong employees
- Reduces risk
- Contributes positively to the community

This toolkit gives you simple, actionable steps to get started.



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Part 1: Why Sustainability Matters for Small Businesses

Why Data Tracking Is the Key

As the founder of Ecolytics, I've seen firsthand how small businesses transform when they start tracking their sustainability data. The shift isn't just environmental; it's operational, financial, and strategic.

When you measure your impact, three things happen:

You prove your impact. Customers, investors, and partners increasingly want proof — not promises. Tracking data lets you tell your sustainability story with credibility. 70% of consumers now actively verify companies' sustainability claims.

You find hidden savings. Energy use, waste, supply chain costs — when you measure them, inefficiencies become visible. Data turns guesswork into targeted cost reductions. A study of 100 businesses found that smart lighting upgrades alone cut energy costs by 40% on average.

You unlock new opportunities. Grant applications, corporate contracts, and government RFPs increasingly require sustainability metrics. Show your maturity as a business even if you are 'small'.

Part 2: Self-Guided Worksheets/Templates

Self Assessments

1. Sustainability Readiness Assessment

A structured planning tool for translating sustainability goals into specific, measurable actions. Review this plan monthly and update actions quarterly.

2. “What to Measure” Guided Worksheet

The goal is to prevent “data overwhelm” and help you start with metrics you can track today using tools you already have.

3. Stakeholder Mapping Worksheet

Every business operates within a web of relationships, and this helps you focus your sustainability efforts where they’ll generate the most value.

4. Triple Bottom Line Decision-Making Worksheet

A practical framework you can use before making any significant business decision.

Templates

1. Sustainability Action Plan Template

A structured planning tool for translating sustainability goals into specific, measurable actions. Review this plan monthly and update actions quarterly.

2. Simple Carbon Footprint Starter Template

A monthly tracking sheet designed for small businesses with no prior carbon accounting experience.

3. Vendor Responsibility Checklist

A scoring checklist for evaluating current suppliers and new vendors on sustainability criteria.

4. “Quick Wins” Implementation Guide

Part 3: Case Studies

Retail Example

Hospitality / Food Example

Consulting / Professional Services Example

Product-Based Microbusiness Example

Solopreneur Example

Part 4: Additional Resources

Slide Decks

- [Session 1 Slides \(Insert link here\)](#)
- [Session 2 Slides \(Insert link here\)](#)

Session Recordings

- [Session 1 Recording \(Insert link here\)](#)
- [Session 2 Recording \(Insert link here\)](#)

Further Reading & Free Tools

Sustainability Assessment

[B Impact Assessment \(Free\) — B Lab](#)

A free, comprehensive self-assessment tool from B Lab that evaluates your business across governance, workers, community, environment, and customers. You can use it to benchmark your practices even if you don't pursue formal B Corp certification. As of 2026, new certifications use the updated V2.1 standards.

[Basic Sustainability Assessment Tool \(BSAT\)](#)

A free, generic sustainability assessment tool designed for any-size organization in any sector. Especially helpful for SMEs and organizations with minimal sustainability staff.

Government Resources

[EPA Resources for Small Businesses](#)

The EPA's central hub for small business environmental assistance, including compliance guidance, state-by-state technical assistance programs, and the Smart Steps to Sustainability guide. Includes a free helpline at 800-368-5888.

[EPA Smart Steps to Sustainability Guide](#)

A step-by-step sustainability guide from the EPA designed specifically for small businesses, covering energy, waste, water, transportation, and green purchasing.

Part 4: Additional Resources

Government Resources (Continued)

EPA Smart Steps to Sustainability Guide

A step-by-step sustainability guide from the EPA designed specifically for small businesses, covering energy, waste, water, transportation, and green purchasing.

SBA Green Business Resources

The Small Business Administration's sustainability guidance including green lending initiatives, SBDC support, and information on SBA loan programs for climate-related projects (up to \$2M for clean energy through the Community Advantage program).

Energy Tracking

ENERGY STAR Portfolio Manager

A free online tool from the EPA to benchmark your building's energy, water, and waste performance against similar buildings nationwide. Over 450,000 buildings benchmarked. All you need are your utility bills and basic building information to get started.

DCSEU — DC Sustainable Energy Utility

Free energy assessments, rebates, and no-cost green training and certification programs for DC businesses and residents. A key local resource for DC-based entrepreneurs.

Carbon Footprint Calculators (Free, Small Business Focused)

SME Climate Hub Business Carbon Calculator

Three free calculators from the SME Climate Hub: a simple tool for single-site small businesses, an advanced spreadsheet for multi-site operations, and a Scope 3 tool for supply chain analysis. Updated with 2025 emissions factors.

Carbon Trust SME Calculator

An online calculator from the Carbon Trust designed for small and medium businesses to calculate emissions from fuel, processes, and purchased electricity.

Part 4: Additional Resources

DC–Area Specific Resources

WACIF Sustainable DC Project

WACIF's signature initiative backed by a \$3.6M grant to help BIPOC and women-owned businesses access the green economy, including sustainability advising, green certification support, procurement assistance, and access to capital.

DC Department of Energy & Environment — Business Resources

Resources and incentives from DOEE for DC businesses interested in sustainability, including environmental compliance information, financial incentives, and sustainability programs.

CBE Sustainable Energy Grant Program (FY26)

Grants from DC's Department of Small and Local Business Development for Certified Business Enterprises pursuing opportunities in energy efficiency, electrification, and renewable energy.

Bethesda Green — Green Business Certification

A nonprofit offering green business certification, incubation, and educational programs for businesses in the greater DC metro area.



Ecolytics is a single platform to manage your company's sustainability. We specialize in working with B Corps and mission-driven businesses to streamline the process of reaching most rigorous standards of corporate sustainability.

Learn more at ecolytics.io

Sustainability = Building a Business That Lasts.



This toolkit is meant to support you — not overwhelm you. Use what's helpful. Adapt what fits. Share what you learn. Sustainability is not a competitive advantage reserved for large corporations. It is a practical strategy for small businesses that want to thrive for the long term.

Thank you for being part of a business community that believes profitability and responsibility can go hand in hand. We look forward to seeing what you build next.