

**Council for Older Adults
Green Initiatives
Summary of Effort to Become a More Environmentally Friendly Organization**

APRIL 2010

The following bullet points summarize the actions taken by Council for Older Adults staff to reduce waste, conserve and better manage our limited resources toward the goal of being better stewards of our environment.

Purchasing Changes

- Purchase 50% of office paper containing a minimum of 30% post-consumer recycled content
- Purchase 100% Post-it notes containing a minimum of 30% post-consumer recycled content
- Purchase 100% Paper towels containing a minimum of 65% post-consumer recycled content
- Purchase 100% Toilet paper containing a minimum of 30% post-consumer recycled content
- Purchase at least 50% reusable rather than disposable office items, such as refillable pens, erasable whiteboards and wall calendars
- Purchase supplies (toilet paper, hand soap, etc.) in bulk
- Use biodegradable or compostable “to-go” food containers such as paper or bio-based plastics

Solid Waste Reduction and Reuse

- Discontinued use of all Styrofoam and non-recyclable plastic food service containers.
- Designed marketing materials that require no envelope
- Eliminated duplicate mailings of subscriptions by contacting the subscriptions department to request that all but one be removed
- Update our own mailing list annually to avoid duplicate mailing being sent to customers
- Reduced the number of newsletters that are mailed through expanded use of website
- Reduced junk mail received by removing our organization’s name from national databases at <https://www.dmachoice.org>
- Reduced junk faxes by contacting number listed on bottom of fax and requesting permanent deletion of our number
- Leased copiers and printers that have a duplexing function for double-sided copies
- Made two-sided printing and copying standard practice throughout organization.
- Paper copies of memos, reports and other communications have been replaced with PDF files and attached to emails in order to stop printing individual copies for each staff member
- Replaced disposable utensils and tableware with reusable alternatives
- Donated unwanted furniture, supplies, electronics, scrap materials, linens, etc., to other nonprofits. Reuse packaging (bubble wrap, cardboard boxes, and polystyrene peanuts)

- All office paper products, magazines, newspapers and cardboard is recycled, cutting our waste disposal and related costs in half
- Approximately 600 pounds of tin cans per month are recycled from our kitchen by a volunteer
- Purchased reusable kitchenware (silverware, mugs, plates, etc.) for staff use
- Reuse envelopes and file folders
- Trained housekeeping staff to reuse clean trash liners
- Keep a stack of previously used paper for fax machines and/or printers. Use the backsides for notes, drafts, internal memos, etc.
- Recycle cans, plastic, glass
- Recycle toner and inkjet cartridges

Water Usage

- Water, gas and electric utility usage is tracked monthly to watch for trends and to identify possible leaks or other problems
- Regularly check for and repair leaks
- Facility uses high efficiency 1.6 GPF toilets
- Facility uses high efficiency 1.0 GPF urinals
- Outdoor area is cleaned with a broom and damp mop instead of a hose
- Do not hose off or wash cars, equipment, floor mats or other items where runoff water flows into the storm drain; if possible direct water to landscaped areas
- Keep receiving areas and dumpsters clear of litter and use tight fitting lids on receptacles
- We use no outside landscape irrigation
- Use facility-wide aerators / restrictors installed during initial construction
- Installed special water filtering system in pool which keeps pool cleaner and has reduced the need to empty and refill the pool on a frequent basis

Employee Practices

- Developed a **Green Team** comprised of staff and charged with the responsibility to review current practice, make recommendations for change and monitor changes over time.
- Provided ongoing incentives or training opportunities to encourage staff participation in our green initiative including: training programs, new employee orientations, employee rewards for resource saving ideas, staff meeting discussion and presentations, providing employee reference materials on our website and periodic reminders regarding our organization's ongoing environmental commitment
- Informed our clients, supporters and donors regarding our nonprofits environmental efforts
- Created policy requiring staff members to power down all computers when work is completed
- Designate time at staff meetings or other employee gatherings to cover existing new and environmental efforts
- Educate staff on the need and benefit of using all resources efficiency

- Use dishwasher only when full
- Regularly clean litter and debris in front of facility, attempting to minimize the amount of litter entering the storm drain

Landscape

- Plant environmentally-friendly and native plants.
- Annually apply mulch to all exposed landscape to increase moisture retention, reduce weeds, and prevent soil erosion
- Instruct landscapers and staff NOT to hose off hard surfaces, simply dry sweep the area

Energy Efficiency

- Computer monitors have been programmed to go into sleep mode after 15 minutes or less
- Facility uses only high efficiency light bulbs and fluorescent tubes
- Occupancy (motion) sensors have been installed in low traffic areas such as storage, bathrooms, meeting, storage, coat, and electrical rooms
- Light master system settings are reviewed weekly to identify and save on lighting cost
- Lighting has been reduced in nonessential areas
- Outdoor lighting is set to follow sunrise / sunset time tables for this area
- An independent Energy Star assessment of facility's energy use has been completed and recommendations implemented
- Energy Save feature has been set as default on all photocopiers
- All replacing equipment and appliances have and will be Energy Star compliant
- Insulated all water heater, storage tanks and hot water pipes
- In most cases, pump pots, instead of electric burners, are used to maintain temperatures of hot liquids (coffee and/or tea)
- Implemented an office-wide policy that prompts staff members to turn off equipment and lights when not in use
- Light fixtures and diffusers are cleaned regularly for optimal light output
- Workspace arranged to take advantage of areas with natural sunlight
- Task lighting is used where extra light is needed, rather than lighting an entire area
- The main hot water tanks are controlled by a timer system to reduce energy usage
- The pool spa jet pump is controlled by a timer system to reduce energy usage

Energy Efficiency/ Heating, Ventilation & Air Conditioning (HVAC) Units

- The HVAC system is operated by a programmable prism control system which maintains optimal operating temperatures throughout the seasons
- All windows use high efficiency (low E) glass
- Where appropriate, window film to reduce solar heat gain has been applied
- Adjustable mini blinds used on outside glass windows
- Caulk and/or weather-stripping is used around windows and doors
- Preventive maintenance performed regularly through an HVAC maintenance contract
- Filters replaced every 3 months, or sooner if required

Chemical Use & Pollution Prevention/Equipment and Facilities

- Non-toxic, biodegradable cleaner stocked for daily use
- Use of bottled water has been discontinued
- Use only non-toxic, low-VOC office supplies, such as White Out, white board pens, etc.
- Use low-mercury fluorescent
- Educated cleaning staff of our eco-friendly preferences
- Vinegar and water used by facility maintenance for window washing
- All chemical products are stored in their original containers or properly labeled secondary containers with tight fitting lids
- Chemical products are stored in secure, controlled areas, away from ignition sources and food storage areas
- New pool water filtering system has reduced the amount of chemicals needed to keep pool clean and safe
- Utilize only proper government authorized Hazardous Waste Drop-off facilities for the following:
 - Batteries (rechargeable and alkaline)
 - Paint
 - Used toner and ink-jet cartridges
 - Cleaning and maintenance chemicals
 - Compact fluorescent lamps and fluorescent tubes
 - Electronics
 - Aerosol cans that are not completely empty of contents

Transportation

- Provide a secure location for staff to store bicycles or install a bike rack in or near facility
- Provide bus (DATA) maps and information to those using our facility (where available)
- Care Consultants (social workers) are assigned clients in clusters and nearest to their homes to reduce the number of miles traveled for in-home visits
- Meals on Wheels delivery routes are designed to minimize the number of miles traveled
- We shop for facility needs at local businesses within close proximity
- We maintain vehicles to optimize miles per gallon, including adjusting tire pressure, filter, oil, etc.
- Shower facilities are available for employees who walk, jog, or bike to work