

# AASHE Sustainability Policy

We are committed to modeling sustainability across our operations and activities. AASHE defines sustainability in an inclusive way, encompassing human and ecological health, social justice, secure livelihoods and a better world for all generations. We operationalize this commitment through sustainable practices that address the organization's environmental, social and economic impacts.

## Sustainable Practices

The following sustainable practices are organized consistently with the Sustainability Tracking, Assessment & Rating System™ (STARS). These practices are informed by the International Living Future Institute's JUST™ program, B Lab's B Impact Assessment, and other sustainability standards.

### Air & Climate

Recognizing the myriad negative impacts of global climate change, we are committed to:

- Minimizing direct greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and the indirect GHG emissions associated with employee commuting, business travel, purchased goods and services, and waste. We do this by supporting employee telecommuting; creating opportunities to offset GHG emissions associated with business travel; purchasing environmentally preferable products and moving toward zero waste.

### Buildings

Recognizing that buildings can be designed, built and maintained in ways that provide a safe and healthy indoor environment for inhabitants while simultaneously mitigating the building's impact on the outdoor environment, we are committed to whenever possible:

- Prioritizing office space, conference centers and other venues that are [LEED](#) certified, meet similar green building standards, or otherwise serve as local models of sustainability.

### Energy

Recognizing that implementing energy conservation measures and switching to renewables can reduce GHG emissions, save money and help support markets for cleaner, renewable sources of energy, we are committed to:

- Selecting office space, conference centers and other venues that meet minimum energy efficiency standards (e.g., [ENERGY STAR](#), LEED) and/or source clean and renewable energy (e.g., through green power purchasing or onsite renewables).
- Minimizing energy consumption in our office space and encouraging employees to adopt energy efficient practices in their home offices.

## Food & Dining

Recognizing that sustainable dining practices can help support ecologically sound, fair, humane and resilient food systems, we are committed to:

- Purchasing environmentally and socially preferable food and beverages (e.g., products that are Certified Organic, Fair Trade Certified, Certified Humane or sourced from local community-based producers).
- Making vegan and vegetarian options available and promoting low impact dining (e.g., “Meatless Monday” events) at all meals served at AASHE events.
- Minimizing food waste through source reduction, donation and/or composting.

## Purchasing

Recognizing that each purchasing decision represents an opportunity to choose environmentally and socially preferable products and services, and support companies with strong commitments to sustainability, we are committed to:

- Purchasing [EPEAT](#) Gold computers and office equipment.
- Purchasing paper with 100% post consumer recycled, agricultural residue and/or [Forest Stewardship Council](#) (FSC) certified content paper.
- Giving preference to FSC certified or local community-based printing services and soy or low-VOC inks.
- Giving preference to vendors and other business partners that are [B Corporations](#), disadvantaged businesses, social enterprises or local community-based businesses.
- Prioritizing working with business partners that share our commitment to sustainability, exceed minimum environmental regulations and adhere to the [fundamental International Labor Organization \(ILO\) conventions](#).
- Working proactively with our business partners to encourage more sustainable practices.

## Transportation

Recognizing the positive environmental, social and health impacts of using more sustainable transportation options, we are committed to:

- Minimizing the impact of employee commuting by supporting telecommuting.

- Minimizing the impact of conference travel through site selection and by encouraging attendees to use more sustainable transportation options and offset air travel.
- Minimizing the impact of travel to staff retreats and board meetings through site selection and by encouraging participants to use more sustainable transportation options and offset air travel.

## Waste

Recognizing the positive environmental and social impacts of minimizing waste and diverting materials from the landfill or incinerator, we are committed to:

- Limiting printing and pursuing other source reduction efforts.
- A zero waste goal for its office, conference and other events.

## Water

Recognizing the importance of protecting groundwater and public water supplies, we are committed to:

- Selecting office space, conference centers and other venues that employ water efficient fixtures and systems, water recycling and reuse, and/or other green infrastructure.
- The use of reusable beverage containers at all events and other strategies to minimize the consumption of bottled water.

## Coordination & Planning

Recognizing that sustainability requires accountability and transparency in operations and governance, we are committed to:

- Integrating organizational sustainability into our formal plans and reports.
- Adopting appropriate metrics to measure our sustainability performance. This may include internal metrics and/or external assessment tools.
- Working with the [principles of organizational democracy](#) in our operations and governance structures to ensure that all stakeholders have access to decision-making processes. This includes member-elected positions on formal governance bodies, voluntary advisory committees, and other mechanisms for stakeholder engagement.
- An annual 360 degree performance evaluation for staff that includes commitment to sustainability.
- Robust financial controls that include an annual independent audit.
- Maintaining a whistleblower policy that empowers employees to raise complaints or issues without fear of reprisal.

- Transparency in relation to the public and our members and employees (e.g., open book management practices, participatory budgeting processes).

## Diversity & Affordability

Recognizing that the historical legacy and persistence of discrimination based on race, gender, class and other differences makes a proactive approach to promoting a culture of inclusiveness an important component of creating an equitable society, we are committed to:

- Fostering diversity and inclusion in the workplace and the broader campus sustainability movement.
- Maintaining an anti-harassment and anti-discrimination policy for employees.
- The principles and practice of anti-oppression and environmental justice.
- Making our programs and services accessible and affordable to historically disadvantaged and low-income populations.

## Investment

Recognizing that environmentally and socially responsible investing can improve long-term fiscal health, encourage better corporate behavior, support innovation in sustainable products and services, and help build a more just financial system, we are committed to:

- Providing regular employees with a socially responsible retirement plan that is divested from fossil fuels.

## Public Engagement

Recognizing our responsibility to help catalyze just and sustainable communities, we are committed to:

- Collaborating with allied organizations and individuals, including historically marginalized and underrepresented groups, to help foster local, regional and global sustainability.
- Seeking to build equitable, sustainability-focused partnerships with local businesses, government bodies and non-governmental organizations in the communities in which we operate.
- Providing programs and services that have positive societal and environmental impacts, that improve the quality of human and animal life, and that make a positive contribution to community and society.
- Creating opportunities for sustainability-focused community service.

- Engaging in public policy advocacy to support the campus sustainability movement or advance sustainability broadly.

## Wellbeing & Work

Recognizing that an organization's people define its character and capacity to perform and that an organization's achievements can only be as strong as its community, we are committed to:

- Using full time employees as the primary basis of our workforce.
- Respecting the [fundamental International Labour Organization conventions](#) covering employee self-organization and the right to collective bargaining.
- Paying all of its employees a living wage as determined by the Living Wage Calculator.
- Pay equity, including a maximum compensation scale ratio of 1:5, where 1 represents the compensation of the lowest-paid full-time employee and 5 represents the compensation of the highest paid employee.
- Providing family-friendly benefits, which include:
  - Employee health, dental and vision benefits for which AASHE pays 100% and 50% of family health insurance plan costs and premiums.
  - 30 days paid leave for maternity and paternity leave (birth, adoption or foster placement)
  - Flexible work arrangements, including telecommuting opportunities, employee requested flextime (non-standard hours), and negotiated compressed work weeks.
- Offer annual employee continuing education and professional development.
- Conducting a regular survey/evaluation that allows for anonymous feedback to measure employee satisfaction and having a mechanism in place to address issues raised by the evaluation.
- Maintaining a formal grievance procedure to help resolve workplace problems.
- Making available wellbeing practices and activities at conferences and other events.

<http://www.aashe.org/sustainability-policy/>