Texas A&M University, Department of Residence Life

On-Campus Living Sustainability Guide

Prepared by the Graduate Assistant Sustainability Coordinator

2021-2022
Introduction

With the mandate of a sustainable campus and using A&M as a living-learning lab the Department of Residence Life felt the need to create a sustainability guide for the halls. We all must become more aware of the actions we as individuals, and Aggies, can take to help ensure that our impact on the environment is positive.

This guide, originally created in 2009 and updated annually, will outline the key factors in creating a “Green Hall/Apartment”, and what actions residents can take to create this environment.

Help us make sustainability an Aggie tradition!

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The 3 Pillars of Sustainability

Sustainability encompasses 3 pillars and these combined create a sustainable world. A&M defines sustainability “as the efficient, deliberate and responsible preservation of environmental, social and economic resources to protect our earth for future generations.” Learn more about each pillar and what they encompass below.

**Environmental (Planet) - managing our natural resources**
- Reducing fossil fuel consumption
- Increased waste management and recycling
- Renewable energy promotion and development

**Economic (Profit) - using resources responsibly and efficiently**
- Responsible purchasing by businesses and individuals
- Financial support for research and development
- Reducing unnecessary spending
- Creating new jobs and maintaining current jobs

**Social (People) - promoting positive social well being for all**
- Providing equal opportunities for all
- Access to adequate healthcare, education, and nutrition
- Promoting diversity and inclusion in all sectors of life
- Develop sustainable communities
What is green living?

Green living is…

1) Consuming less energy and natural resources
2) Producing less waste and diverting more of the waste that is produced
3) Reducing possible health problems
4) Gaining financial savings for both the resident and the institution

...while enjoying quality of life.
Identifying Challenges, Partners, and Expected Outcomes

Challenges within On-Campus Housing
1) Energy/material consumption - facilitates infrastructure
2) Education/awareness of individual impacts - student engagement

Sustainability Partners
1) The University President, The Vice President of Student Affairs, Board of Directors
2) Office of Sustainability, Transportation, Dining, Utility & Energy Services, and SSC Custodial/Maintenance
3) On-campus residents, who consume energy and materials

Expected Outcomes
1) Savings in energy costs and material purchases
2) Increased awareness of on-campus initiatives and organizations
3) Reduction in negative environmental and social impacts
Why should you live green?

• No Planet B
  • We only have one planet that can currently sustain life. If we frivolously waste resources, what will be left for us as we get older or for future generations? Each of us must learn to live within our means and be conscious about how our choices impact the planet and our peers.

• Quality of Life
  • Not only is living green better for the environment, it’s better for you too! For example, incorporating plants into your space improves air quality and has been shown to boost your mood and relieve stress.

• Money, Money, Money
  • By incorporating habits like utilizing natural light in your room, reducing single-occupant vehicle travel, and purchasing foods that are in season you’re not only helping the planet, but you’re also saving yourself money.

• Good Bull
  • As Aggies, we strive to exemplify the core values of A&M. Texas A&M is dedicated to creating well-educated Ags and a more sustainable campus.
Tips for Residents

• **Room**
  • Blackout curtains, which can be purchased at most retailers for about $20, improve sleep and keep your room cool
  • Open the blinds during the day to use natural light instead of electricity
  • Seasonally appropriate bedding/pajamas (i.e. cotton for summer/spring & flannel for winter)
  • When looking at decorating your room, check out thrift stores for unique items for a cheaper price while saving items from the landfill

• **Kitchen and Pantry**
  • Use a reusable shopping bag
  • Purchase locally when possible and only buy in-season fruits and vegetables
  • Put a pitcher in the fridge to filter tap water and keep it cool instead of running the faucet for cold water or use your hall’s water bottle filling stations
  • If you live in an apartment, only run a full dishwasher
Tips for Residents

- **Bathroom**
  - Turn off the faucet when brushing your teeth which saves about 4 gallons of water a day
  - Take shorter showers
  - Use hand towels or hand dryers rather than paper towels

- **Laundry**
  - Wash full loads of clothes in cold water
  - Use high efficiency washers and dryers
  - Air/hang dry laundry
  - Use eco-friendly detergents

- **Throughout your space**
  - Use LED light bulbs and rechargeable batteries
  - Add plants that filter the air
  - Use eco-friendly cleaning products
  - Plug electronics into power strips and turn them off when you leave to avoid phantom power
  - Adjust the thermostat higher in summer (75°F) and lower in winter (70°F) when you’re in the room
Tips for Residents

• **Engagement**
  - Run to be your hall council’s Eco Rep
  - Join a student organization with a focus on any of the 3 pillars of sustainability
  - Get involved with new initiatives in your hall/apartment community
  - Talk with your hall’s custodial staff about how important recycling is to you
  - Get involved with service projects on campus and in the BCS community (i.e. Aggie Replant Day, BIG Event, Stream Clean, etc.)

• **Academic Life**
  - Buy/rent used textbooks or e-textbooks
  - Buy recycled paper/notebooks, refillable pens
  - Take notes on laptop versus paper
  - Use double sided printing
Responsible Disposal

• Move-in
  • Pepsi
  Pepsi is a campus partner and they provide water during move-in. Not only do they provide water for volunteers and Ags, they even collect the empty bottles to recycle after!
  • Cardboard Corral
  While you move in don’t throw away your cardboard boxes. Put flattened boxes in the designated cardboard corrals near your hall so they can be recycled.

• Move-out
  • Donate, Don’t Dump
  Residence Life partners with nonprofits during move-out. Donation bins are available for residents to place their unwanted clothing and household goods.
  • Grocery Give & Grab (G3)
  Bins are placed at all hall 24 hour desks and Study Spectacular locations. Residents are able to donate unopened, unexpired, nonperishable food and can take food from the bins as well.
Responsible Disposal

We know it can be difficult to know what you can/cannot recycle, as well as where to take it. To address that, we have created this guide to recycling in Aggieland!

• What to recycle
  • **Paper/Cardboard**
    White paper, newspaper, mixed paper, office paper, cardboard, clean pizza boxes, etc.
  • **Plastic/Aluminum/Glass**
    A&M accepts all numbers of plastic. Make sure bottles/cans have been emptied and rinsed. Glass is accepted at the recycling drop-off centers on-campus.
  • **Electronic Waste**
    E-waste includes items such as batteries, cords, chargers, computer mice, and similar items.
  • **Inkjet and Laser Cartridges**

• Hazardous Waste
  Environmental Health and Safety (EHS) handles hazardous waste and monitors environmental concerns within buildings and around campus.

• Where
  • **On-Campus**
    • Recycling bins in your hall
    • Large green recycling containers
    • Recycling Drop-off Centers
      • Adriance Lab Rd.
      • Commons at Appelt Hall
      • Lot 32
      • Gardens Apartments near the Activity Center
    • Residence Community Centers and 24 hour desks
  • **Off-Campus**
    • Brazos Valley Recycling - Hwy 60 (3 miles)
      • 8825 Stewarts Meadow, College Station, TX 77845
    • Bryan Iron and Metal
      • 2011 Hwy. 21, Bryan, TX 77803
    • City of College Station Public Works Dept.
      • 310 Krenek Tap Rd., College Station, TX 77840
But What About the Odd Stuff…?

- **Best Buy (805 S. Texas Ave.)**
  - Cell phones, Batteries, TVs, Electronics, & Appliances
- **Brazos Valley Farmers Market (500 N. Main St.)**
  - Egg cartons and glass jars
- **Bryan Iron and Metal (2011 W. Hwy 21)**
  - Steels, electronics, appliances, computers
  - Buys and sells scrap metal in various forms
- **UPS Store (1511 S. Texas Ave.)**
  - Bubble wrap and packaging peanuts

Residence Life also offers convenient electronic waste (e-waste) recycling for residents in our residential neighborhoods. Visit our webpage [here](#) to learn more about what items are accepted and where you can recycle. UES also has a [Community Recycling Locations webpage](#) to learn where you can responsibly dispose of odd items.
Energy Conservation and You

Did you know your electronics consume energy even when turned off? That is called vampire energy. Follow the tips below to reduce your energy consumption and get rid of the vampires in your life!

1. Plug devices into a power strip and turn the strip off when not in use
2. Set your laptop standby settings to energy efficient
3. Be smart about upgrading your devices with more energy efficient ones
4. Turn in maintenance requests via Aggie Works in a timely manner if there are leaks or room temperature isn’t comfortable
5. When leaving a room, be sure to turn off the lights. We have handy stickers like the one to the right to remind you!
6. Power down devices when not in use rather than leaving them in standby mode
7. Did you know combination mini-fridges and microwaves are more energy efficient than using two separate appliances? Better yet, you can rent one while you’re living on campus!
8. Do you live in Krueger, Lechner, or McFadden? If so, you can get a programmable power strip from your hall office to use in your room!
Student and Campus Entities for Sustainability*

- Take the Sustainability Pledge created by the Office of Sustainability. You’ll be surprised at how many sustainable behaviors you already do!
- Get involved with sustainability initiatives
  - Aggie Eco-Representatives
  - Aggie Green Fund
  - Aggie Replant
  - Environmental Health and Safety
  - Environmental Issues Committee
  - Howdy Farm
  - Project Clean Plate with Chartwells
  - The 12th Can

The next few slides outline what these various entities do on campus.

*Please keep in mind that there are many campus entities that promote sustainability. More can be found by searching keywords like “sustainable” or “environmental” on MaroonLink.
Sustainability Initiatives

Aggie Eco Reps (AER)

- **Purpose Statement:** Providing students with the education and opportunity to promote and continue sustainability.
- Residence Life’s sustainability student organization
- Eco Reps are elected to each hall council
- Host a wide range of events and resource tables throughout the year
- Students can request diverse programs and bulletin boards from the AER to educate their hall or organization about sustainability
- No dues necessary to join!
Sustainability Initiatives

**Aggie Green Fund (AGF)**

- Grant-making organization for sustainability projects
- Awarded ~ $1.7 million to 60+ projects since 2011
- Applications for micro- and major-grants available
- AGF Advisory committee is made up of student, faculty, and staff representatives
- Past projects include…
  - Water bottle filling stations
  - Launched the Aggie Eco Reps and Howdy Farm
  - Green bike lanes
  - Water efficient showerheads

Residence Life has received multiple AGF grants including water bottle filling stations in all residence halls, light switch stickers, recycling containers in halls, and programmable power strips for residents.
Sustainability Initiatives

**Aggie Replant**

- **Mission:** Aggie Replant is a student-run, environmental service organization that unites Aggies and the community through selfless service during our annual Replant Day, which brings hundreds of students together to plant trees in the Bryan and College Station area during the fall term.
- Replant Day is “one of the largest student-run, environmental service projects in the nation”
- Created in 1991 by Aggie Scott Hantman to offset the amount of trees being cut down for Bonfire
- Dues are $40/year or $25/semester
Sustainability Initiatives

Environmental Health and Safety (EHS)

- **Mission:** Environmental Health and Safety supports and enriches Texas A&M University by providing quality programs and services that instill safety, health, and environmental stewardship.
- Offer a wide variety of safety training programs
- Hosts the annual Stream Clean in the fall where student, faculty, and staff volunteers work to clean the streams around campus
Environmental Issues Committee (EIC)

• **Mission:** As a representative of Texas A&M, we actively strive to provide and support: programs which enhance environmental education and awareness, programs which reduce the community's impact on the environment, and sound environmental legislation on and off campus, in order to improve quality of life.

• Committee within the Student Government Association (SGA)

• Coordinates A&M’s annual Earth Week in April

• Dues are $30/year or $20/semester with meetings on the 2nd and 4th Tuesday of each month at 8:30 pm
Sustainability Initiatives

Howdy Farm

- **Mission**: Grow healthy food and community, and to connect the two through experiential learning, interdisciplinary research, and promoting sustainable agriculture.
- Sustainable farm on campus created in 2009
- Managed by the Sustainability Agriculture Student Association (SASA)
- They sell produce at the Brazos Valley Farmer’s market from 8 am - 12 pm on Saturdays
- Check them out and sign-up to volunteer at [http://tamuhowdyfarm.weebly.com/](http://tamuhowdyfarm.weebly.com/)
Sustainability Initiatives

**Project Clean Plate**

- **Goal:** To encourage students to reduce food waste within the campus dining system
- Happens once a semester for 3 consecutive days during lunch hours at one of the all-you-care-to-eat dining facilities like Sbisa
  - Food is weighed on a scale as students come to deposit their plates in a dining facility.
  - Food waste totals are tracked and placed on a graph near the scale.
  - Aggie Eco Reps assist Chartwells in collecting and weighing food scraps.
The 12th Can Food Pantry

• “Our goal is to eliminate hunger at Texas A&M, bring awareness to food insecurity in college communities, and show others the power of the Aggie spirit.”
• Pantry located on campus in the Mail Services building on Agronomy Rd.
• Serves all students, faculty, & staff in need of assistance
Sustainability throughout the Year*

**Fall Semester**

August
- Cardboard collection in designated corrals during move-in

September
- AGF grant applications open

October - Campus Sustainability Month
- Aggie Replant Day
- Campus Sustainability Day

November
- Sustainability Dinner/Dinner with a Prof
- Texas Recycles Day
- Trex Plastic Film Challenge Begins

December
- AGF major grant abstracts due
- AGF major grant full applications open
- Grocery Give & Grab (G3) bins out during finals

**Spring Semester**

January
- U-Challenge Applications Live

February
- U-Challenge Applications Close
- AGF major grant full applications due and recipients announced

March
- AGF micro-grant applications close

April
- Earth Day/Week
- Brazos Valley Earth Day
- Trex Plastic Film Challenge Ends

May
- Donate, Don’t Dump! durable goods collection and G3 during move-out

*Please be aware that this is a general outline of events throughout the year. Dates and events are subject to change.
Residence Life Sustainability Partners

Office of Sustainability

Department of Multicultural Services

Environmental Health and Safety

Transportation Services

Dining Services

The 12th Can Food Pantry

Aggie Eco Representatives (AER)

Howdy Farm

Residential Housing Association (RHA)

Facilities Services (SSC)

Sustainability & Environmental Management Committee

Brazos Valley Recycling

Utilities & Energy Services
Residence Life’s Consumption

Shown are graphs depicting energy and water consumed by Residence Life as well as the waste produced by Residence Life facilities during each fiscal year.

These graphs were produced by UES Energy Stewards for educational purposes.
We are happy to report that despite our residential space increasing our total energy consumption has plummeted. Way to go, Ags!
Residence Life Resources

- **Sustainability Newsletter**
  Each month, Residence Life puts out a new Sustainability Newsletter. Themes vary month to month and have covered sustainable conferences, recycling, and self-care during finals.

- **Sustainable Staff Picks**
  Knowledge is gained through various types of media, including movies, documentaries, and books. Residence Life staff have picked out some of their favorites to share. Check them out on our website and let us know your favorites by emailing sustainability@reslife.tamu.edu or through our social media accounts.

- **Grant Writing Help**
  Have an idea for an Aggie Green Fund (AGF) grant, but don’t know where to start? Email sustainability@reslife.tamu.edu and the Sustainability Coordinator will contact you to help. The department has extensive experience with AGF grants with over 21 approved projects and funding totaling almost $400,000!
Residence Life Resources

- **Soles4Souls**
  
  Residence Life has partnered with Soles4Souls, a nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting sustainability and serving communities in need, to collect gently worn shoes. Shoes are collected and mailed to a Soles4Souls collection center. Donations are then sorted and any shoes that do not meet donation criteria are sent off to have the parts responsibly recycled. Shoes that meet the criteria for donation are packaged and shipped to communities in need around the world. Soles4Souls also helps create microenterprises that allow individuals to become financially stable by reselling shoes. Since the program launched in Spring 2021, **over 130 pairs** of shoes have been donated!

- **Trex Plastic Film Challenge**

  Aggies are challenged to collect at least 500 pounds of plastic film (i.e. Ziploc bags, grocery bags, etc.) within a six month time period. The challenge is in partnership with a Virginia-based company, Trex, that creates composite decking and outdoor furniture from 95% recycled materials, including plastic film. Collection bins are placed in residential neighborhoods on campus. Whichever area of campus collects the most film is gifted a bench made by Trex. Since the challenge was launched in November 2018, Aggies have collected and recycled **over 4,000 lbs.** of plastic film!
Residence Life Events and Programs

• **The Utilities Challenge (U-Challenge)**

The Utilities Challenge provides students the unique opportunity to gain access to data about residence halls at Texas A&M. Students will use this information, as well as the expertise of the staff from Utilities & Energy Services (UES) and the Department of Residence Life, to learn about the current proficiency of buildings and propose ways to increase the buildings’ efficiency and student engagement.

• **Sustainability Aggies Living Learning Community**

The purpose of the Sustainability LLC (abbreviated as SA – Sustainable Aggies) is to connect students from all majors and classifications who share an interest in learning more about sustainability globally and how to live a more sustainable lifestyle now and in the future. SA is dedicated to promoting sustainability through educating residents and showing them the power of collective individual actions.
Contact Information

Faculty & Staff Contacts
Texas A&M Office of Sustainability
Kelly Wellman, Director
979-845-1911 | kwellman@tamu.edu

Texas A&M Recycling
Thomas Marshall, Recycling Coordinator
tmarshall@tamu.edu

Texas A&M Department of Residence Life
Dr. Carol Binzer, Director of Administrative and Support Services
979-862-3158 | carolb@reslife.tamu.edu

Resources & References
The Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE)
2401 Walnut St. | Suite 102 | Philadelphia, PA 19103
888-347-9997 | info@aashe.org

Department of Residence Life - Sustainability
979-862-3158 | http://reslife.tamu.edu/living/sustainability/
sustainability@reslife.tamu.edu

Residence Life Organizational Contacts
Texas A&M Department of Residence Life
Kristianna Bowles, Graduate Assistant Sustainability Coordinator
979-862-3158 | kristiannab@reslife.tamu.edu

Residential Housing Association
Adam Jackson, 49th Session President (2021-2022)
rha-president@reslife.tamu.edu

Aggie Eco Reps (AER)
Jordan Franklin-Garza, 2021-2022 President
president.aggieecoreps@gmail.com

Social Media
Get in contact with Residence Life Sustainability! Follow us on our social media platforms below and use #AggiesGoingGreen to show us your sustainable actions!

Instagram: AggiesGoingGreen
Facebook: Aggies Going Green