



*In the heart of the Blue Ridge Mountains, Watauga County, N.C. is a place of amazing beauty with pristine natural resources and a rich cultural heritage. Preserving and protecting these assets is good for the environment and the local economy. The Watauga Green Business Plan is a voluntary, market-driven program that educates, certifies and recognizes small businesses that have made a commitment to reduce their environmental impact and help build a sustainable community.*

## **BACKGROUND**

The Watauga Economic Development Commission initiated the Watauga Green Business Plan as a first step in distinguishing Watauga County's encouragement and cultivation of sustainable enterprises. The program gives entrepreneurs the tools they need to adopt practices that reduce their environmental impact, improve their operational efficiency, and enhance their business reputation.

The goals and structure of the program were developed through a collaborative process facilitated by the Appalachian State University Energy Center involving representatives from small business, local chambers of commerce, and technical experts.

## **HOW THE PROGRAM WORKS**

At the heart of the Watauga Green Business Plan is a certification process that evaluates the breadth and depth of a business' commitment to reducing its environmental impact and supporting a sustainable community.

The basis of the evaluation is the **Green Business Scorecard**. The Scorecard reflects best practices in eight areas of environmental and community stewardship: regulatory compliance, solid waste management, environmentally and socially responsible purchasing, energy conservation and efficiency, water conservation and quality, protecting and promoting natural and cultural resources, alternative transportation, and community involvement and leadership.

In order for a business to become certified, it must meet specified implementation goals from a minimum number of measures from across these best practice categories. Additionally, participants agree to take certain steps to encourage employee participation and raise the visibility of the program.

Following a self-assessment, an interested business pays a nominal certification fee and arranges for an on-site verification visit by a member of the **Green Business Team** in order to confirm adoption of best practices and implementation goals.

Based on the level of performance, a participating business is awarded a Level of Green Excellence ranking of one, three, or five stars. Certification is valid for two years.

Businesses just getting started, but still wishing to participate in the program may be awarded provisional certification for up to one year. During this period, the business commits to put best practices in place and meet minimum implementation goals.

## **WHY GO GREEN?**

Implementing environmental and community stewardship practices improves operational efficiency, enhances business reputation, and increases profitability.

As many of the measures save resources and reduce consumption, they result in lower operating costs, boosting profitability and freeing up cash flows for business investments. Furthermore, recognition of

environmental and community leadership engenders existing-customer loyalty and attracts new business.

Moreover, certified green businesses benefit through shared marketing and promotion, reductions in operating costs and increased profitability, market and product differentiation and recognition of environmental and community leadership.

Each participating business receives a certificate indicating its Level of Green Excellence, a window decal, high-resolution artwork for use in advertising materials, and a listing on the Watauga Green Business Plan website. Businesses achieving a Five-Star Level of Excellence also receive a plaque in recognition of their superior level of achievement.

## GREEN BUSINESS PLAN SCORECARD

The Green Business Plan Scorecard evaluates the breadth and depth of a business' commitment to reducing its environmental impact and supporting a sustainable community in eight categories of stewardship.

To become certified, a business must earn a minimum number of points by meeting specified implementation goals from any combination of measures from across the stewardship categories.

For most measures, a business can earn up to 5 points, depending on the level of implementation specified in the measure description. Measures designated as **"BONUS"** are eligible for additional points, while those designated as **"PREREQUISITE"** are required and receive no points.

Additionally, participants agree to take certain steps to encourage employee participation and raise the visibility of the program.

## LEVELS OF GREEN EXCELLENCE

Based on the number of points earned, businesses receive a Level of Green Excellence award ranking of one, three, or five stars. Certification is valid for two years.

Level of Excellence	Points Required
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★	45
★★★	90
★★★★★	135

Businesses just getting started, but still wishing to participate in the program may be awarded provisional certification for up to one year. During this period, the business commits to put best practices in place and meet minimum implementation goals sufficient to meet at least a one star Level of Green Excellence.

## PROGRAM INTEGRITY

As a voluntary program, it is the responsibility of the business to maintain the stewardship measures which earned the certification. If the program receives reports of non-compliance and the business fails to take corrective action then the participant may be removed from the program.

## HOW TO CERTIFY YOUR BUSINESS

There are three steps to becoming a Watauga Green Business Plan participant: Evaluation, Implementation, and Certification.

### 1. EVALUATION

As a first step in becoming a certified green business, you should review the Green Business Scorecard and conduct a self-assessment. In order for a business to become certified, it must meet the specified implementation goals from a combination of measures listed in the Scorecard.

With a copy of the Scorecard, walk through your operations to see if you already comply with some items listed. You may find that many of the recommended measures are already in place or easy to put into practice. Other measures may require some planning and the investment of time and resources. Take the time to think through how each measure might be implemented in your business.

Additionally, take time to complete the Performance Indicators portion of the Scorecard. These factors will assist in tracking your performance improvements.

## 2. IMPLEMENTATION

The next step in becoming certified is to implement measures in areas that need improvement as identified in the self-assessment.

The Watauga Green Business Plan provides a number of services designed to assist you in understanding and meeting the requirements to become certified.

Tip sheets and other helpful resources are available online at the Watauga Green Business Plan website, [www.GreenBusinessPlan.com](http://www.GreenBusinessPlan.com).

The Watauga Green Business Plan Coordinator may also be able to arrange a pre-certification site visit from a volunteer or pair your business with a Green Business Plan Mentor.

## 3. CERTIFICATION

When you believe enough measures are in place to qualify as a certified green business, submit a

completed copy of the Scorecard and the Participant Application Form, along with a check for the certification fee, to the Watauga Green Business Coordinator. Be sure to retain a copy of the application package for your records.

Upon receipt of your application, the Coordinator will arrange for an on-site verification visit. The verification visit consists of a short tour of the facility to confirm implementation of best practices and to assure program integrity and accountability.

During the on-site verification visit, the business may be asked to provide documentation or other evidence to confirm implementation.

Assuming the site-visit is a success, the business will receive a Welcome Package including a certificate indicating the achieved Level of Excellence. If the site-visit reveals deficiencies, the business may be granted provisional status for up to one year. During this period, the business commits to put best practices in place and meet minimum implementation goals.

# PARTICIPANT APPLICATION FORM

## CONTACT INFORMATION

Business Name:

Business Owner or Contact Person:

Address:

City:

State:

Zip:

Telephone Number:

Fax:

Email Address:

Website:

## BUSINESS INFORMATION

Type of business/organization (circle all that apply):

*Attraction*  
*Office*

*Construction*  
*Restaurant*

*Lodging*  
*Retail*

*Medical*  
*Other (please specify)*

Description of business to appear on [www.GreenBusinessPlan.com](http://www.GreenBusinessPlan.com):

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## CERTIFICATION FEE

The certification fee is applied on a sliding scale based on the number of full-time equivalent employees (FTEs), which can be calculated by dividing total annual labor hours by 2080.

Number of Employees	Certification Fee
0-10 FTEs	\$100
11-20 FTEs	\$150
21-50 FTEs	\$250
More than 50	\$500

**Please remit payment along with a completed Participant Application Form and Green Business Scorecard to:**

Green Business Plan  
c/o Watauga County EDC  
P.O. Box 404  
Boone, NC 28607

Please make checks payable to Watauga County. Payment is non-refundable.

### OFFICE USE ONLY

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Check #: \_\_\_\_\_

Initial: \_\_\_\_\_

# PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

These indicators provide a snapshot of your business' environmental performance and provide a useful tool to track performance improvements.

## FACILITY PROFILE

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Year structure constructed or renovated:

Total Square Footage:

Own/Rent

## ENERGY USAGE

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*Average Monthly*

*Electricity Usage (kWh):* \_\_\_\_\_

*Average Monthly*

*Electricity Cost (dollars):* \_\_\_\_\_

*Average Monthly Heating*

*Oil Usage (gallons):* \_\_\_\_\_

*Average Monthly Heating*

*Oil Cost (dollars):* \_\_\_\_\_

*Monthly Propane*

*Usage (gallons):* \_\_\_\_\_

*Monthly Propane*

*Cost (dollars):* \_\_\_\_\_

## WATER CONSUMPTION

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*Monthly*

*Water Usage (gallons):* \_\_\_\_\_

*Monthly*

*Water Cost (dollars):* \_\_\_\_\_

## SOLID WASTE

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*Monthly Amount of Solid Waste*

*Sent to Landfill (tons):* \_\_\_\_\_

*Monthly Amount of Solid Waste*

*Diverted from Landfill (tons):* \_\_\_\_\_











**Building Envelope**

**Score:**

Install ENERGY STAR-qualified windows. [5 points-comprehensive implementation, 3 points-partial implementation]

Install high performance attic and ceiling insulation [5 points if attics are R-48 or cathedral ceilings are R-38]

**Go Carbon Neutral**

**Score:**

Eliminate your carbon footprint with the purchase of renewable energy credits from N.C. Green Power. [5 points- 100% of monthly electricity usage offset, 4 points- 75% of monthly electricity usage offset, 3 points- 50% of monthly electricity usage offset, 2 points- 25% of monthly electricity usage offset, 1 point- 10% of monthly electricity usage offset]

**Innovative Practice**

**Score:**

A business may score additional points for implementing green business practices related to energy efficiency but not included in the scorecard. [Up to 10 points]

Comments

Multiple horizontal lines for entering comments.







