

Ann Arbor Green Business Challenge

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the Green Business Challenge?

The Ann Arbor Green Business Challenge (GBC) is a program intended to recognize and support businesses in taking actions to become more sustainable. By providing recognition, technical support, and peer learning opportunities to our local businesses we can make notable progress towards our community's goal of achieving a just transition to community-wide carbon neutrality by 2030 (known as [A²ZERO](#)), while simultaneously honoring the sustainability actions of our local businesses and solidifying Ann Arbor's position as a national leader in sustainability.

Why should a business participate in the GBC?

Participating businesses are eligible to receive recognition, technical support, and awards for achieving substantive progress towards the objectives of the program. Participating in the program is also an important part of how Ann Arbor seeks to achieve community-wide carbon neutrality by 2030. As independent leaders of the community, businesses are an indispensable part of this effort, and the GBC is an excellent way to visibly demonstrate that leadership.

What if I'm new to sustainability? Will I score poorly?

If you are new to sustainability, that is ok! The GBC is designed so that businesses of any experience level can participate and achieve recognition. Moreover, scoring poorly does not come with any penalties. This is a voluntary program, and the goal is to help Ann Arbor progress towards greater community resiliency and sustainability, rather than a high score. And we have a lot of technical support options available to help you grow and continue on your sustainability journey.

What kind of support is provided to those that participate in the GBC?

Participants in the GBC will be provided technical assistance in the form of guidance, resources, branding, and implementation support. Special coffee hours with local and regional businesses working on sustainability activities will also be provided to GBC participants. And GBC participants will be active participants in helping the Ann Arbor Office of Sustainability and Innovations shape our service offerings for local businesses.

What kind of recognition is available to GBC participants?

GBC participants can achieve four certification levels – bronze, silver, gold, and platinum. Participants will receive an official marker of their certification level that can be displayed within the business. Businesses of any experience level are also eligible for media and marketing recognition to celebrate their work to create a more sustainable community.

Who created the GBC?

The GBC was created by the Ann Arbor Office of Sustainability and Innovations in partnership with Ann Arbor SPARK. This program was modeled off a Green Business program launched in the early 2010s by ICLEI-Local Government for Sustainability.

How long is a GBC certification good for?

GBC certification is relevant for two year(s). To stay involved, businesses have to resubmit their paperwork at least every two years. However, if a business would like to be reclassified, they can submit their verification paperwork annually.

How do I demonstrate compliance with the GBC?

To submit materials for verification and compliance, please email sustainability@a2gov.org with the subject line "Green Business Challenge Submission: [Business Name]" where "Business Name" is the name of your business. Please label all attachments clearly to indicate what criteria it meets. The full compliance checklist can be found on the A2 GBC website: <https://url.a2gov.org/A2GBC>.

Can I be kicked out of the GBC?

Businesses can be kicked out of the GBC under certain circumstances. Participants who falsify their accomplishments to OSI will be removed from the program and barred from participating in the future.

Can I get help in completing the GBC?

Yes! Throughout the Challenge we'll be having technical assistance meetings, coffee hours, and special events to help you make progress on your sustainability goals. In addition, each of the seven criteria within the Challenge have a staff member from the Office of Sustainability and Innovations available to help answer your questions. Check out the GBC Toolkit for contact information or send your questions to sustainability@a2gov.org.

How do I perform an energy benchmark assessment?

Performing a water or energy benchmark assessment is one of the few required elements businesses need to perform to become certified in the GBC. Fortunately, the city has produced extensive technical assistance resources to help you navigate this requirement. You can find resources on how to benchmark [here](#). If you still have questions, please contact sustainability@a2gov.org and OSI will help connect you with resources that will help address your needs.