



## ABOUT SAGE

The *Save. Act. Grow. Earn.* (SAGE) Sustainable Business Program is your "one-stop-shop" for business sustainability. SAGE provides FREE and confidential advice, assistance, and resources that integrate sustainability into your business practices to help you identify and act on relevant economic, environmental, and social opportunities

### Benefits



#### Save Money

Cut costs through increasing operational efficiency



#### Gain Recognition

Responsible practices benefit customer and employee relations



#### Reduce Footprint

Minimize use of critical resources to benefit human health and the environment

# SAGE CERTIFICATION GUIDE

## Certification Overview

The SAGE Certification recognizes business for completing sustainability best practices in six different categories: General, Energy, Waste, Transportation, Water, and Community. The certification is managed and administered through Green Business Tracker (GBT), a database of best practices or "measures." *All businesses located in Westminster are eligible.* Assistance, advice, and resources to help you get certified are offered at no-cost from SAGE advisors and City of Westminster staff.

### Why Certify?

Join the growing list of SAGE Certified businesses who have gained consumer and employee recognition for their beneficial business practices. In particular, through completing the certification checklist you can find ways to cut costs, save money, conserve resources, engage with the community, and reduce waste. Upon completion, the SAGE Certified Business logo on your door will highlight that your business is committed to benefitting the local Westminster community and environment.

## Benefits of Certification

Upon certification, your business will be promoted through:

- Social media announcements on City and Westminster Chamber channels (Facebook and Twitter)
- Recognition and profiles in City newsletters and publications
- Placement on the SAGE Certified Business Directory and Map
- Window decal, signage, and a certificate displaying your sustainability accomplishments on-site
- "SAGE Certified" logo file for your website and virtual content
- Inclusion in SAGE marketing media: videos, publications, & reports
- Self-marketing toolkit to communicate and promote your achievements



SUSTAINABLE  
WESTMINSTER

## Certification Process

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The certification process consists of the following three distinct steps:



### Step 1: Checklist Assessment

- **Register your business on *Green Business Tracker (GBT)* and access your sector specific checklist. Work through the checklist and indicate each measure with the following:**
  - “Yes” if you have already implemented the measure
  - “No” if you have not implemented the measure
  - “N/A” if the measure is not applicable to your business



### Step 2: Implement Measures

- **To become SAGE Certified, you must complete:**
  - ALL “Core” measures in the General, Energy, Waste, Transportation, and Water areas
  - Any single (1) measure in the Community category
  - Any three (3) “Elective” measures in any category
  - Identify and complete the measures you need to become certified. SAGE advisors are here to help and provide resources, and assistance.



### Step 3: Verify and Get Recognized

- **To verify the completion of measures, you must:**
  - Have a site-visit, either in-person or through a virtual meeting with a SAGE advisor. See the “SAGE Certification Verification Guide” for details.
  - Submit a form of verification (photo, receipt, policy, etc.) for measures not appropriate for verification during the site-visit.
  - Once all measures are completed your business will be sent certificate, a window decal, educational posters and other materials to help you spread the word about your sustainable practices. Your business will be listed on the SAGE website, directory and map, and included in marketing materials.

## Frequently Asked Questions

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- *Is there a cost to certification?*  
No, SAGE Certification is a FREE service provided by the City of Westminster for all businesses!
- *Do I get credit for sustainability related projects I'm already doing?*  
Yes! In fact, your business may already qualify. You can get credit for existing practices, as well as newly adopted ones implemented to meet the SAGE Certification requirements.
- *Do I have to do everything on the GBT checklist to become certified?*  
No. Although you must complete the required "Core" measures in the General, Energy, Waste, Transportation, and Water categories and one measure in the Community category. You only need to complete at least 3 "Elective" measures in any of the categories. The certification checklist is intended to give businesses flexibility in their approach to becoming certified.
- *How do I determine if a measure is N/A?*  
There are a couple of reasons why a measure could be N/A to your business. If you do not use, possess, or have control over a piece of equipment or policy in your building (perhaps because you do not own your facility), that measure would be considered N/A.
- *I lease the space where my business is located, can my business still get certified?*  
Yes. Businesses that do not own their own building are able to earn Green Business certification. We will work with you to develop customized approach to meeting the program requirements.
- *How much time will I need to get certified?*  
The amount of time required to complete the certification process varies depending on the complexity of your business and the sustainability practices already in place. Regardless, SAGE advisors will work with you to become certified in the timeframe that best works for you.
- *How long does my certification last?*  
Certifications are valid for 3 years, but re-certifying is easy! A SAGE advisor will reach out to your business to conduct another site-visit to ensure certification measures are being maintained. However, an additional 2 "Elective" measures must be completed in any categories of your choosing each re-certification cycle. For example, for your initial certification, you must complete all "Core" measures, 1 measure in the Community category, and a total of 5 "Elective" measures.
- *Can certifications be taken away?*  
SAGE reserves the right to revoke certifications if businesses are not in compliance with City and State codes, laws, regulations, and/or do not uphold certification measures.

