

# Living Sustainably in Centennial Hall

At ESF we try to “Practice What We Teach” by living sustainably while on and off campus. Sustainability is a journey and it looks different for every person. We hope that this short sustainability guide will help as you make the transition to living in Centennial Hall. Understanding your lifestyle, your ability and desire to make changes, and learning how to live in a new place, let alone doing it sustainably, takes time! Be gentle with and support yourself and try to do the same for those living with you on campus. This short guide will provide information about the following items:

- Sustainable Materials Management (Compost, trash and recycling)
- EcoReps
- Centennial Hall’s LEED Gold Rating
- How to Live Sustainably in the Dorm
- Sharing your ideas with the Office of Sustainability

## Sustainable Materials Management

We traditionally think about materials that are thrown in the trash as "waste" and therefore, they are assigned minimal value. The term "materials management" recognizes that all items have inherent value and are oftentimes created from finite resources (think traditional plastics) and harmful extractive practices. Sustainable materials management challenges us to systematically rethink how we use (or avoid using) and reuse materials more productively throughout their entire lifecycle.

Did you know that the “three-Rs”: reduce, reuse, recycle, are organized by level of importance? Through sustainable materials management, the emphasis is heavily placed on the first “R”, source reduction (ex: not using or producing something in the first place). All members of the campus community are encouraged to help in this effort by reducing what they purchase, reusing what they can, and avoiding single-use products, even when they are recyclable or compostable.

SUNY ESF has set ambitious [zero waste goals](#)! We have dedicated ourselves to reducing “waste” sent to landfills and incineration by 90% *and* to achieving a recycling/compost rate of 90%, by 2025. These goals are also supported by our Green Purchasing & Break Free From Plastic [policy](#).

In Centennial Hall, you will have access to compost, recycling, and trash bins found together on every floor.

## Compost

Centennial Hall offers composting throughout the dorm! Bins can be found in trash rooms and we are piloting individual compost bins in select rooms during the Spring 2023 semester. A recent trash audit showed that 30% of the trash that Centennial Hall produces could have been composted! Strive to reduce food waste first and foremost, but be sure to compost what you must discard.

The campus Cafe offers a variety of compostable take out containers and items. Due to supply chain inconsistencies, these items may change over time. It is important to pay attention to signage posted by the Cafe and in the Centennial Hall trash rooms for the most up to date information about product compostability. [OCRRA](#), the Onondaga County Resource Recovery Agency, only accepts [BPI certified single use items](#) as compostable. If you are unsure if an item is BPI certified, please place it in the trash to avoid contaminating the compost. See the complete list of accepted items on the flier below or the signage posted by the bins.

### Compost

-  Fruits & Vegetables
-  Pasta, Bread, & Grains
-  Meat & Fish
-  Tea Bags & Coffee Grounds
-  Paper Towels & Napkins
-  Most Campus Take-Out Items  
Including: All to-go containers, excluding triangle-shaped and reusable containers, soup cups, drink cups, lids, straws, utensils, stirrers, coffee sleeves, and napkins
-  Plant Material



*Items beyond this list are only compostable if they are BPI Certified*

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## Recycling

Did you know that recycling rules differ throughout the country and also vary from county to county in New York State? While you are in Onondaga County, please follow the recycling guidelines provided by the [Onondaga County Resource Recovery Agency](#) (OCRRA). Use their “How do I get rid of...” toolbar if you have questions about the best method of disposal or recovery for a wide variety of items. The educational signage hanging in every trash room was created using OCRRA’s guidelines! **Recyclables should never be bagged.** Bags damage recycling sorting equipment and should always be avoided.

### Recycling

-  Newspapers
-  Magazines
-  Cardboard
-  Cans
-  Glass jars & bottles
-  Plastic bottles & jugs
-  Milk & juice cartons
-  Stackable plastic dairy tubs

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Cardboard and paper is recycled separately from plastic, aluminum and glass in Centennial Hall. You will find distinct recycling bins in each trash room. Please pay close attention to signage directing you to different recycling bin types!


Pizza boxes can be recycled, as long as they aren't soaked in grease. Cardboard boxes of all sizes should be flattened before being placed in the proper bin. Papers, newspapers and magazines should be loose (unbound). Styrofoam egg cartons, flexible plastics (ex: bread bags), clamshells (ex: berry containers), frozen food boxes and single use plates and cups should be placed in the trash.

## Trash

Strive to reduce your use of single use items whenever possible and prioritize durable, reusable items. If you do have an item to discard, it is important to "Know Before You Throw". Be sure to properly place items in either trash, recycling or compost bins. Trash items improperly placed in recycling or compost bins lead to "contamination". This can damage machines used to separate materials and will decrease the value of the recovered material.

## Trash

-  Styrofoam
-  Wrappers
-  Plastic Bags
-  Chip & snack bags
-  Plastic and coated (shiny) paper plates & cups
-  Plastics (*see recycling and compost fliers for exceptions*)
-  Non-compostable Take-Out Items

  
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## EcoReps

The EcoReps mission is to "educate fellow students about the core tenets of sustainability, promote environmentally conscious decision making, encourage sustainable lifestyles, and foster a connection with both the general ESF campus community and the greater Syracuse area".

For over ten years, ten EcoReps have been hired each academic year to educate their fellow Centennial Hall residents about sustainability!

EcoReps create a series of activities based upon monthly themes (food, conservation, water, energy, zero waste and transportation). Each month EcoReps create bulletin board displays and weekly social media posts, as well as lead educational, experiential and engagement activities.

Open EcoRep positions are posted on [Handshake](#) during move in each Fall semester. Incoming students should keep an eye out for informational emails and outreach if they are interested in becoming an EcoRep!



## Centennial Hall Sustainability

Soon, you will be living in a LEED Gold building! LEED, or Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design, is a program that assigns buildings to one of four categories based on the number of credits they earn by possessing certain characteristics. There are four categories which a qualifying building can achieve: Certified (40-49 points), Silver (50-59 points), Gold (60-79 points), and Platinum (80+ points). Centennial Hall is LEED Gold certified.



You can view [Centennial Hall's LEED scorecard](#) for a detailed breakdown of the credits that Centennial Hall achieved. Centennial Hall was constructed using sustainable building materials where possible and prefabricated modular units that minimized waste and helped keep the project on a tight construction schedule. Windows were designed to take advantage of natural lighting, minimize heat loss and provide for natural ventilation. The storm water management system uses rain gardens to essentially eliminate runoff. Space for automobile parking is limited and the building also includes a popular indoor storage and cleaning facility for residents' bicycles.

## Living Sustainably in Centennial Hall

### *Attend EcoRep events*

- EcoReps, your peer sustainability educators, will be holding events throughout the academic year! Follow [@ESFSustainability](#) on Instagram and [ESF Engage](#)

and [EcoReps on ESF Engage](#) to learn about planned events. Be sure to take in the artistic and educational beauty of the EcoReps bulletin boards, which can be found throughout the dorm.

*Understand and reduce your energy use*

- Visit the [Mighty Oak Energy Dashboard](#) to see campus energy use in real time!
- [According to this study](#), the average dorm room consumes 30% of all electrical energy use while vacant! Turn off and unplug devices when not in use.
- Set your thermostat at 68 in the winter and at 78 during the warmer months. Keep your curtains or blinds open in the winter and closed during warmer times.
- If your heat or AC is running, make sure windows are closed.
- Take shorter, cooler showers.
- Use task lighting, with LED bulbs, rather than overhead lighting and remember to turn off lights when you leave the room!
- Share appliances whenever possible, but purchase [Energy Star](#) or [EPEAT](#) certified devices when a necessity.
- Wash your laundry in cold water.
- Report drafty or leaky windows to Centennial Hall staff.

*Understand and reduce your consumption (and what you throw away!)*

- Donate usable items during move-out and volunteer to help sort and prepare items for summer storage. The Mighty Oak Student Association's SustainabiliTEAM operates the move-out program, so be on the lookout for information about this as the semester progresses. The items stored over the summer are distributed to incoming students during move-in.
- Decorate and furnish your room with items that you can reuse for the rest of your time at ESF and beyond. Ask yourself "How much use/enjoyment will I really get out of this" before making a purchase.
- Audit your trash, recycling and compost! Understand what you use and discard so you can make a plan to reduce and replace single use items with durable alternatives. Ex: swap paper towels for microfiber cloths or rags made from old clothes. Check out our student created [How to Start a Zero Waste Lifestyle Guide](#).
- Borrow or thrift everything that you can.
- Gift experiences, rather than things.
- Gather some friends and buy in bulk. If you are able, buy fresh, minimally processed food to cut back on packaging.
- Bring your own reusable container for leftovers when going out to eat.

- Organize food in your fridge by making an “eat me first” space. Prioritize leftovers, food close to its expiration date and opened items that you may otherwise not see.
- Request a free menstrual cup during Campus Cup signup, which will take place during the beginning of the Fall semester! Missed the signup? Email the [Office of Sustainability](#)
- Keep a set of real dishes on hand and bring them to dorm events. ESF has a strong “Lug Your Mug and Pack Your Plate” culture, so you won’t be alone!
- Say no to freebies and giveaway items that you know you won’t use long term. If you feel up to it, kindly suggest some more sustainable alternatives to the event organizers.

*Learn about and create a welcoming space for other’s experiences and realities*

- Recognize that sustainability cannot exist without equity and social justice.
- Attend [Office of Inclusion, Diversity and Equity](#) events on campus.
- Engage in environmental and racial justice discussions on campus.
- Learn from, amplify and advocate for those with perspectives different from your own.
- Challenge problematic processes, conversations and assumptions through direct action.
- Participate in mentorship programs and provide opportunities for traditionally underrepresented people who are part of the campus community.
- Incorporate environmental justice into your areas of influence (ex: coursework assignment and club activities).

*Use public transportation*

- Centro buses operate in the Syracuse area and [schedules](#) can be found online. They also offer a [Trip Planner](#) and [Bus Tracker](#). Still a bit [confused](#)?
- The [Connective Corridor Bus](#) is a free loop bus service between the University Hill and downtown Syracuse.
- Syracuse University also offers campus shuttles with pre-determined loops, on demand shuttle services that will take students to locations near campus (ex: Syracuse Hancock Airport and the Regional Transportation Center) and safety escort services (both walking and shuttle). Learn more about these services by visiting [SU's campus shuttle website](#).
- ESF has a bike library program! Five bicycles are located outside of Moon Library and are available to rent for 24 hours at a time. Membership to ESF students is free and bikes are rented from Moon Library with the swipe of an ESF ID card. Visit Moon Library to complete forms and view a short (10-15 minute)

safety presentation.

*Eat locally*

- See the list of sustainable and culturally diverse restaurants in ESF's [Sustainable Event Certification Guide](#). This list includes restaurants and caterers in Syracuse that offer locally-sourced, minimally-processed, vegan and vegetarian, low-waste, and/or minority- and woman-owned restaurants. This Guide also includes a list of questions to ask local food establishments when planning an event.

## **Share Your Ideas!**

Ideas to improve campus sustainability? Would you like to suggest items to include in next year's version of *Living Sustainably in Centennial Hall*? We would love to hear from you. Email the [Office of Sustainability](#) to share your ideas or to set up a time to connect.