

Sustainable IGH Community Recognition Award Actions



RECOGNITION LEVELS:

There are four Sustainable IGH Recognition award levels: Bronze, Silver, Gold and Special Recognition. Applicants may apply annually to advance to a higher award level in future years.

Recognition Level	Requirement
Bronze	Complete all required actions.
Silver	Complete all required actions + 5 additional actions
Gold	Complete all required actions + 10 additional actions.
Special Recognition	One resident and one business may be selected annually by the Environmental Advisory Commission and City Council for demonstrating significant achievements.

REQUIRED ACTIONS:

All five bolded actions below are required for an award. Example activities for each required actions are provided.

❑ **Practice energy efficiency.**

• **Examples for residents include:**

- i. Using LED light bulbs
 1. Xcel Energy offers discounts on energy-efficient LED lights. EnergyStar® LEDs use about 70-90% less energy and last at least 15 times longer than traditional incandescent bulbs. Find discounts at xcelenergy.com/homelighting
- ii. Weatherizing your home
 1. Put plastic over windows in the winter and door strips along outside doors to prevent drafts.
 2. Take it a step further: Hire a contractor to get new attic or wall insulation and professional air sealing.
- iii. Completing an energy audit in the last 10 years
 1. Complete an energy audit within the last 10 years.
 2. Sign up for a home energy assessment with the Home Energy Squad. Visit xcelenergy.com/HomeEnergySquad to schedule or call 651-328-6220.
- iv. Using EnergyStar products
 1. Use EnergyStar products. Find energy efficient products here: energystar.gov/products
- v. Asking your landlord to consider taking these actions

• **Examples for businesses include:**

- i. Using LED light bulbs
 1. Xcel Energy offers discounts on energy-efficient LED lights. EnergyStar® LEDs use about 70-90% less energy and last at least 15 times longer than traditional incandescent bulbs. Find discounts at xcelenergy.com/homelighting
- ii. Weatherizing your home
 1. Put plastic over windows in the winter and door strips along outside doors to prevent drafts.
 2. Take it a step further: Hire a contractor to get new attic or wall insulation and professional air sealing.
- iii. Completing an energy audit in the last 10 years

1. Small Businesses: Sign up for a free business energy assessment with the MN Chamber of Commerce's Energy Smart program. Visit mnchamber.com/energysmart to schedule.
 2. Large Businesses: Sign up for a Business Energy Assessment to fit your size and type of business at xcelenergy.com/energyassessments.
- iv. Using EnergyStar products
 1. Find energy efficient products here: energystar.gov/products
 - v. Asking your property owner to consider taking these actions
- ❑ **Practice water conservation.**
 - Examples include: taking shorter showers, waiting until washing machine or dish washer are full before starting it, reporting water leaks to property manager, using WaterSense products, watering lawn before the heat of the day (typically 4 a.m.-10 a.m.), using a smart irrigation system, asking your landlord or HOA to consider taking these actions, etc.
 - ❑ **Recycle following community recycling requirements.**
 - Recycling at [home](#)
 - Recycling requirements for [businesses](#)
 - ❑ **Volunteer or donate to benefit the IGH community.**
 - Examples include: donating to food drives or a local organization, adopting a drain, or volunteering locally such as with a local school district, City, County, Neighbors Inc, place of worship, or other community organization.
 - ❑ **Support pollinators or plant native vegetation [Property Owners Only].**
 - Examples include planting a pollinator garden or rain garden, landscaping with native vegetation, planting pollinators-friendly plants in outdoor containers, requesting your HOA consider taking these actions, etc.

EXAMPLE ACTIONS FOR SILVER AND GOLD AWARDS:

Actions below provide examples of additional actions to take to earn a Silver or Gold award. These are just examples. Please share any sustainable actions you've taken in your application!

Energy Actions: Examples of additional actions that promote energy efficiency, renewable energy use, and/or improve air quality.

Residents:

- ❑ Implement actions recommended by your home energy audit.
- ❑ Use [LED bulbs](#) for all lighting.
- ❑ Use a programmable or [smart thermostat](#).
- ❑ Use an [EnergyStar](#) appliance or upgrade to more energy efficient appliances.
- ❑ Participate in home energy savings programs through [Xcel Energy](#) or [Dakota Electric programs](#).
- ❑ Take advantage of [Xcel Energy rebates](#) or [Dakota Electric rebates](#) when upgrading equipment or completing energy efficiency projects.
- ❑ Use energy efficient, [Dark-Sky compliant](#) new or replacement outdoor lighting fixtures.
- ❑ Power your property with on-site [solar panels](#).
- ❑ Condition your home with [geothermal](#) heating and cooling systems.
- ❑ Subscribe to [Xcel Energy's Renewable*Connect Flex](#) or [Dakota Electric's Wellspring Renewable Energy program](#) to support renewable energy.
- ❑ Subscribe to a [community solar garden](#).
- ❑ Drive an [electric vehicle](#). Install an [electric vehicle charging station](#).
- ❑ Bike, ride share, or take public transportation as primary source of transportation.

Businesses:

- ❑ Implement actions recommended by your building energy audit.
- ❑ Use [LED bulbs](#) for all lighting.
- ❑ Use a programmable or [smart thermostat](#).
- ❑ Use an [EnergyStar](#) appliance or upgrade to more energy efficient appliances.
- ❑ Participate in business energy programs through [Xcel Energy](#) or [Dakota Electric](#).
- ❑ Take advantage of [Xcel Energy rebates](#) or [Dakota Electric rebates](#) when upgrading equipment or completing energy efficiency projects.
- ❑ Own or rent a building certified by a building efficiency standard, such as [LEED](#) or [EnergyStar](#).
- ❑ Use energy efficient, [Dark-Sky compliant](#) new or replacement outdoor lighting fixtures.
- ❑ Power your property with renewable energy [solar panels](#) or [geothermal](#).
- ❑ Cool and heat your building with a [geothermal](#) system.
- ❑ Subscribe to [Xcel Energy's Renewable*Connect Flex](#) or [Dakota Electric's Wellspring Renewable Energy program](#) to support renewable energy.
- ❑ Subscribe to a [community solar garden](#).
- ❑ Drive an electric vehicle or purchase [fleet electric vehicles](#).
- ❑ Bike, ride share, or take public transportation as primary source of transportation.
- ❑ Install an [electric vehicle charging station](#).
- ❑ Use [energy benchmarking tools](#) to monitor building energy usage.

Landscaping & Water Actions: Examples of additional actions that promote providing habitat for native species, pollinators, and wildlife, and promote local foods, water conservation and good water quality.

- ❑ Plant a [low-maintenance turf lawn](#) with species such as fine fescues, buffalo grass, blue gramma, pussytoes, etc.
- ❑ Plant a [bee lawn](#), [pollinator-garden](#) or outdoor containers with pollinator-friendly species.
- ❑ Build a [rain garden](#) on your property per the City guidelines.
- ❑ Use a Landscaping for Clean Water grant from Dakota County Soil & Water Conservation District to complete a [Landscaping for Clean Water project](#), including rain gardens and more.
- ❑ Remove invasive vegetation and [diseased or infested trees](#) from your property.
- ❑ Plant or replace a native tree.
- ❑ If recommended by a certified arborist, treat trees to prevent or mitigate emerald ash borer infestations, oak wilt or other [tree diseases](#).
- ❑ Collect rainwater in a [rain barrel](#) or other grey water systems to water your plants and trees.
- ❑ Buy locally grown produce or grow [your own food](#).
- ❑ Use locally made compost in gardens or landscape.
- ❑ Take one or more [Landscaping for Clean Water classes](#).
- ❑ Install bird or bat houses on your property.
- ❑ [Leave grass 2 ½ - 3 ½ inches high during hot weather](#) to promote deep root growth and shade the growth crowns.
- ❑ Complete a [shoreline preservation project](#) per City guidelines.
- ❑ Follow the City's [Smart Salting guidelines](#) in winter.
- ❑ Replace older toilets with [WaterSense](#)-labeled, high-efficiency toilets.
- ❑ Replace faucets and showerheads with [WaterSense](#)-labeled, high-efficiency versions.
- ❑ Select an [Energy Star](#)-approved washing machine.
- ❑ Wait until the dishwasher or washing machine is fully loaded before running it.
- ❑ Utilize rebates on water-efficient products.
- ❑ Take shorter showers.
- ❑ Participate in [Adopt-a-Drain](#).
- ❑ Attend the City's annual Water Pollution Prevention Meeting held during [an annual Environmental Advisory Commission meeting](#).

- ❑ Participate in the [Minnesota Water Stewards](#), [Master Naturalist](#) or [Master Gardener](#) programs.
- ❑ Participate in the [aquatic invasive species detector](#) program.

Waste Reduction Actions: Examples of additional actions that promote waste reduction, reuse, composting, safe disposal, recycling and/or litter cleanup.

- ❑ Reduce [food waste](#) meal planning, storing food properly and more.
- ❑ Prevent [unwanted mail](#) by unsubscribing from mailing lists.
- ❑ Use [homemade green cleaners](#) or [Safer Choice](#) cleaning products.
- ❑ Take home free second-hand products from the [Reuse Zone](#), located at The Recycling Zone.
- ❑ Participate in a [Community Swap](#).
- ❑ Participate or volunteer at a [Dakota County Fix-It Clinic](#).
- ❑ [Rent equipment](#) such as tools, outdoor gear and event supplies instead of buying.
- ❑ Shop secondhand at [brick-and-mortar stores](#), garage sales or through online outlets such as Facebook, Nextdoor, Craigslist, and ThredUP.
- ❑ Sell gently used goods at a local donation center, garage sale or online outlets.
- ❑ Use reusable bags, mugs, and to-go containers, utensils and napkins.
- ❑ Compost organics via a residential [organics drop-off, at home](#) or [at your business](#).
- ❑ Use the City's online [Recycling Guide](#) to find out where to get rid of hundreds of unwanted items.
- ❑ Participate in a the [Dakota County Recycling Ambassador Program](#).
- ❑ Attend a [City residential special collections event](#) to recycle unwanted items such as Clean-Up Day or Paper Shredding Collection.
- ❑ [Join a tour](#) of local recycling facilities.
- ❑ Utilize [The Recycling Zone](#) to dispose of hazardous waste, small electronics, recyclables and more.
- ❑ Host or organize a cleanup event/day for ponds, parks, natural areas, wetlands, etc.
- ❑ Adopt an [Inver Grove Heights park](#).
- ❑ Incorporate sustainability into your business purchasing.
- ❑ Operate a waste reduction, recycling or composting business.
- ❑ Participate in a [Very Small Quantity Generator](#) (VSQG) business program, [Dakota County Multifamily Recycling Program](#), or [Dakota County Business Recycling Program](#).
- ❑ Offer public recycling opportunities for plastic bags, batteries, or other recyclable materials.
- ❑ Offer reusable bags, mugs, and to-go containers, utensils and napkins to customers.
- ❑ Purchase and donate second-hand equipment through [Minnesota Materials Exchange](#).

Community Actions: Examples of additional actions that promote a strong community and community wellbeing.

- ❑ Teach IGH residents or other businesses about your completed actions.
- ❑ Offer free or reduced-cost assistance to a neighbor(s) in need.
- ❑ Organize a local community group or complete a community project.
- ❑ Participate on a local community board.
- ❑ Donate produce from your garden to a local food shelf.
- ❑ Donate to, volunteer at, or run a local organization that offers free or low-cost community assistance services.
- ❑ Promote [workplace diversity](#) during the hiring process.
- ❑ Offer free or reduced-cost services to vulnerable populations (food, shelter/housing, transportation, education, healthcare, counseling, childcare, etc.)
- ❑ Offer free or reduced-cost services to employees (transportation, education, healthcare, counseling, childcare, etc.)
- ❑ Accept food stamps.
- ❑ Host employee appreciation events and/or activities.
- ❑ Have an [internal wellness committee](#) that coordinates wellbeing initiatives for employees.
- ❑ Have an [internal green team](#) that coordinates environmentally friendly business practices.

- ❑ Offer an employee volunteer service day, when employees are encouraged to donate their time.
- ❑ Subscribe to the [IGH Environmental E-News newsletter](#)

QUESTIONS?

Email Liz Kramer at ekkramer@ighmn.gov or call 651-604-8511.

Additional program information at ighmn.gov/SustainableIGH.

