

CIRCULAR ECONOMY ESSENTIALS

BEST PRACTICES FOR SMALL BUSINESSES

MATERIALS

- **Minimize Material Use:** Design products and packaging to use the least amount of material possible without compromising quality.
- **Use Recycled and Renewable Materials:** Incorporate recycled or renewable materials into your products and processes wherever feasible.
- **Design for Durability and Reuse:** Create products that last longer and can be easily repaired, reused, or repurposed.

ENERGY

- **Optimize Energy Use:** Use energy-efficient equipment and practices to reduce overall consumption.
- **Switch to Renewable Energy:** Invest in renewable energy sources like solar or wind, either on-site or through green energy providers.
- **Monitor Energy Usage:** Regularly track energy consumption and identify areas where you can reduce use.
- **Implement Smart Technologies:** Use smart meters and automated systems to optimize energy and reduce waste.

WATER

- **Reduce Water Usage:** Implement water-saving technologies and practices to minimize consumption.
- **Prevent Water Pollution:** Ensure that any water discharged from your operations is free of harmful pollutants.

WASTE

- **Reduce Waste Generation:** Design processes and products that minimize waste from the start.
- **Implement Zero Waste Strategies:** Aim for zero waste by reusing, recycling, or composting all materials.

FACILITIES

- **Optimize Space Usage:** Use space efficiently to reduce the environmental footprint of your facilities.
- **Use Sustainable Building Materials:** When building or renovating, use sustainable, low-impact materials.
- **Optimize Energy Efficiency:** Use insulation, energy-efficient windows and lighting to reduce energy consumption.

OPERATIONS

- **Implement Circular Supply Chains:** Work with suppliers who prioritize reuse, recycling, and resource efficiency.
- **Source Locally:** Reduce emissions and support the local economy by sourcing materials and products nearby.
- **Offer Products as a Service:** Rent or lease products so they can be returned for reuse or recycling.

RESOURCES FOR IMPLEMENTING CIRCULAR ECONOMY PRACTICES

- [Plant Chicago - Circular Economy for Small Business Toolkit](#)
- [How Smaller Companies Can Join the Circular Economy | Harvard Business Review](#)
- [Energy Star for Small Business](#)
- [Put Energy to Work - Small Businesses | NYSERDA](#)
- [14 training resources for designing circularity into business models and products](#)
- [Small Business Programs - National Grid](#)
- [Fundamentals of Circular Economy | Sustainable Earth Micro-Courses for Small Businesses](#)
- [Ellen MacArthur Foundation](#)