

Climate and Sustainability

Action Guide for

California Libraries

Developed by the [Alliance for Library Impact](#)
Spring 2024



Contents

- Executive Summary 3
- Definitions 6
- Using the Guide 7
- Community Engagement 8
- Facility Improvement..... 11
- Operational Transformation 14

This publication is supported in whole or in part by the U.S. Institute of Museum and Library Services under the provisions of the Library Services and Technology Act, administered in California by the State Librarian.

The Climate and Sustainability Action Guide for California Libraries was developed by the Alliance for Library Impact, 2024.

Executive Summary

Regarding sustainability and climate action, libraries in California are making headway in their communities mainly through educational programming and climate-inspired collections. Seed exchanges, libraries of things, fix-it clinics, recycling and mending programs, and nature-inspired story times are some of the ways that libraries are providing climate-focused services and resources to their communities.

The state of California, and the global community, have lofty goals when it comes to climate change mitigation and adaptation. **For libraries to be a meaningful part of reaching stated sustainability goals, libraries must begin to think of themselves not only as a provider of services and resources, but as institutions themselves.** Institutions that use energy, produce waste, and contribute to carbon emissions. Libraries should also consider themselves institutions that are innately sustainable. The core purpose of libraries is to be the hub for shared community resources, and that foundational practice is sustainability in action.

By advocating for themselves as important players in climate action, providing communities with ways to engage in sustainability, and improving their facilities and operations, libraries can make a consequential environmental impact in their communities, and in the world.

Trends

The United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals are a holistic approach to climate change. They recognize that for climate actions to truly be sustainable, they must consider economic, social, and basic needs — the UN's goals “promote prosperity while protecting the planet.”¹ California leads the world with an ambitious plan to lower greenhouse gas emissions by 40 percent below 1990 levels by 2030.² Currently, California's leading emitters are the transportation and industrial sectors. California provides a variety of grants and resources to support climate initiatives across the state.

National library leaders are making sustainability a priority. In 2019, the American Library Association (ALA) made sustainability one of the core values of librarianship and are working closely with the Sustainable Libraries Initiative (SLI) to implement meaningful climate action in libraries across the country.

“When we see land as a community to which we belong, we may begin to use it with love and respect.”

– Aldo Leopold



¹ <https://www.un.org/en/climatechange/17-goals-to-transform-our-world>

² <https://calepa.ca.gov/climate-dashboard/>

Libraries' entry into climate action varies from institution to institution. Many libraries provide benefits to their communities through environmentally focused programming for patrons of all ages and the addition of climate-friendly collections. There are some libraries that are evaluating their energy usage and transportation practices, and that are integrating sustainability into their missions and strategic plans.

As extreme weather becomes the norm across the United States, libraries are also serving as warming and cooling centers for their communities and working as resiliency hubs in the face of disasters.

California Library Survey

The Pacific Library Partnership and California State Library conducted a SurveyMonkey survey to learn more about California libraries' experiences with Sustainable California Libraries grants and projects. A total of 75 individuals completed the survey, 74 respondents work for a public library and one an academic library.

In the survey, 72 percent of respondents indicated their library has engaged in at least one sustainability project or program in the past two years, and 66 percent of respondents whose library has not received a Sustainable California Libraries grant indicated their library has engaged in at least one climate or sustainability project or program in the past two years.

Respondents shared many sustainability projects in which their libraries have engaged. Composting, seed libraries, gardening, or food system activities were the most practiced programs (70 percent have engaged with this type of project). While sixty-six percent of respondents indicated engaging in public programs on citizen science, civic engagement, speakers, and film series. Other sustainability projects included mending workshops, bike repair clinics, tool libraries, serving as cooling/heating/resiliency centers, and pollinator and rain gardens, among many others.



Respondents shared many long-term impacts of their projects, including but not limited to: increased usage of Libraries of Things items; educating the public on sustainable facility remodels; staff is better informed about sustainability and is more committed to using sustainable practices in their work; partnerships with green agencies have grown.

Eighty-nine percent of respondents (n=46) reported that they are planning more climate or sustainability projects or programs in the next year. Sixty-one percent of respondents (n=51) indicated they are planning compost, garden, seed library, or food system programs or projects for next year.

Continued funding and dedicated staffing for sustainable projects were noted as necessary to keep projects going. Other suggested ways to help sustain projects included more marketing of initiatives, multi-year funding, access to a resource database of organizations who offer programs, and training and education for staff.

Site Visits and Listening Session

To complement survey results, the consulting group, Alliance for Library Impact (ALI), conducted a series of site visits — two in-person and one via Zoom — and a virtual listening session. The overall goal of these facilitated conversations was to dig deeper into the achievements, challenges, and aspirations for sustainability efforts at local library and community levels.

Participants discussed successes, opportunities, aspirations, and challenges surrounding sustainability in California libraries. Conversation also covered what needs to change for sustainability to take root, advice for libraries just getting started with sustainability initiatives, advice for libraries ready to take the next step in climate action, and what actions have made “sustainability stick” at libraries.

Depending on how long libraries have been engaged in sustainability practices, programming, and services, and depending on the size and budget of the library, responses to discussion prompts varied greatly. Despite the variety of experiences, common themes did emerge throughout the sessions.

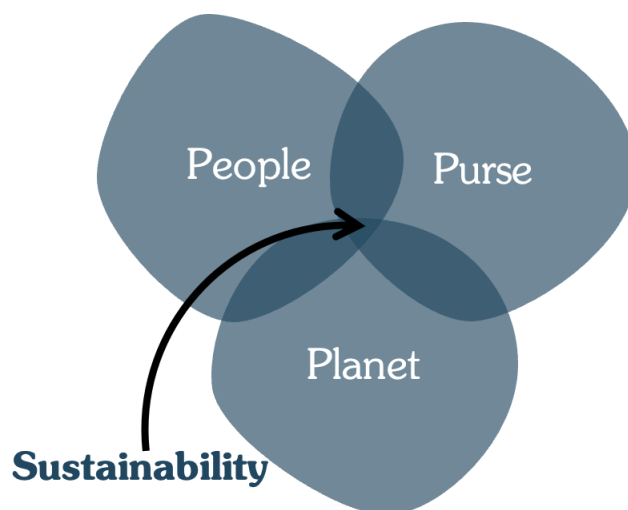
Successes mainly centered on new programming and new items for circulation, partnerships and inspiring community pride were also viewed as successes. Several notable opportunities were more partnerships, chances to engage in nationwide efforts, engaging staff more productively, and using project outcomes to track sustainability efforts. Participants aspired to engage staff more, provide strong disaster relief, update infrastructure, and implement more sustainable practices into their operations. Challenges that participants identified were bureaucratic red tape, time intensive grant processes, funding, and staffing.

Participants suggested engaging in partnerships with local nonprofits, sustainable initiatives, or local government offices, securing funding through Friends or Foundations, engaging staff through committees or working groups, and looking to other libraries for inspiration.

Definitions

The following terms are used throughout this guide. Many of these terms have multiple meanings — the explanations below provide their definitions in a climate context.

- **Sustainability:** The United Nations defines sustainability as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.
- **Climate Action:** Actions put into practice to reach climate mitigation and adaptation goals which will lead to sustainable lifestyles, environments, and institutions.
- **Adaptation:** Adaptation is the practice of adjusting behaviors, policies, and procedures to the changing environment — attempting to minimize the harm caused to communities by the changing climate. Examples of adaptation may be reducing consumption of water and energy, planting drought-tolerant landscapes, having a disaster-preparedness plan, and addressing food insecurities through community supported agriculture.
- **Mitigation:** Mitigation aims to reduce the amount of harmful greenhouse gases emitted into the atmosphere. Examples of mitigation may be replacing fossil-fuels with renewable energy, replacing internal-combustion vehicles with electric or self-powered transportation options, making buildings more energy efficient, and planting or retaining forests which absorb and store carbon dioxide.
- **Resilience:** The ability of a community to withstand and recover from climate disasters.
- **Triple Bottom Line or Three P's:** The American Library Association and the Sustainable Libraries Initiative have adopted a “triple bottom line” approach to sustainability.³ Asserting that decisions can only be sustainable when they are simultaneously environmentally sound, economically feasible, and socially equitable. This is a play on the Three-P's approach used across other industries which focuses on decisions that consider the planet, people, and profit in sustainable decision making. In this guide we refer to the Three P's as the planet, people, and purse (or budget) — respecting that profit is not a focus of libraries, but spending responsibly is exceptionally important.



³ <https://www.sustainablelibrariesinitiative.org/news/sli-joins-forces-ala-create-climate-action-strategy-libraries>

Using the Guide

The first step of this action guide — and arguably the most important step — is to begin considering the environment in every decision you make at your library. From the smallest decisions, like printing a document, to the biggest decisions, like your strategic plan, climate action and sustainability need to be a part of your decision-making process.

Remember, for libraries to be a meaningful part of reaching stated sustainability goals, libraries must begin to think of themselves not only as a provider of services and resources, but as institutions themselves.

This guide is organized into three categories — areas where libraries are uniquely positioned to have the biggest impact in their communities and on the climate:

Community Engagement

Facility Improvement

Operational Transformation

Each category has three levels of entry. Level one offers quick, low-cost wins. Level two requires an investment of resources and will provide more meaningful returns. Level three is for libraries ready to devote significant resources to climate action that will make transformational, long-term impacts. Additionally, each category includes success stories, ways to adapt in the face of challenges, and resources to learn more.

Every California community is unique, therefore every library's approach to climate action will be different. You may use each level as a steppingstone to the next, or you may be prepared to jump right to level three. Choose which level of investment is right for your institution.

The first step is to begin considering the environment in every decision you make at your library.



Community Engagement

Libraries are innately sustainable! Engaging with library collections and services will help your community meet their own personal sustainability goals — and maybe even your local government's goals. Action items in this category will help your library engage with your community in a more climate-conscious way through public education and public consumptive behavior. Here is where your library can also contribute to climate-adaptation efforts by building a more resilient community and providing a safe space during disasters.

The Community Engagement category focuses on adapting traditional library services to emphasize climate and sustainability. Through collection development, educational programs, and strategic partnerships, libraries can engage their communities in climate action. **When taking steps in community engagement, think holistically. How do new initiatives impact the people in your community, the planet, and your budget?**

Action Steps

1

- **Start talking about how libraries are innately sustainable!** If your patrons want to take steps to be more environmentally conscious in their own lives, they should start at the library. Borrowing items rather than purchasing them and sharing goods among neighbors keeps items out of the waste stream.
- **Plan an environmentally friendly program once a quarter.** Consider a how-to program about recycling or composting, or an informational program about solar power or pollinator gardens, or a craft time with recycled materials.
- **Do an environmental assessment of your programs and giveaways.** Use that information to adopt environmentally friendly guidelines for all programs and outreach that may include eliminating single-use plastic or plastic-based swag.
- **Does your library recycle?** Add recycling as an option for patrons and staff. See if you can be a battery or device recycling center for your municipality.
- **Identify a list of local groups or organizations who specialize in sustainability and climate action.** Stay apprised of what local organizations are doing in support of the environment.

2

- **Create a staff committee or working group** focused on identifying and implementing sustainability initiatives.
- **Reach out to local community groups and assess options for partnership.**
- **Add a new sustainability-minded collection like a seed exchange or a library of things.** When purchasing items to fill the collection, consider their source (can they be purchased locally?), materials (are they safe and recyclable?), and durability (can they be repaired?).
- **Host a large-scale event** like a fix-it clinic, farmer's market, or climate action expo.
- **Make every program sustainable!** Add environmental guidelines to your programming and outreach policies or procedures.
- **Register as a heating or cooling center in your community.** Be a reliable place for community members to gather during extreme temperature events.
- **Evaluate patron transportation behavior.** How are people arriving at your library? Are there ways you can make it easier for people to use public transportation, bike, or walk?
- **Apply for a Sustainable California Libraries grant.** Grants can help ambitious sustainability initiatives come to life!

- **Meet with your municipality’s sustainability office** or committee to identify ways that the library can help meet larger sustainability goals.
- **Add a community garden** on your library’s grounds or host a regular farmer’s market.
- **Add infrastructure or establish new partnerships to make sustainable transportation easier**, based on an evaluation of transportation behavior. Some options may be to add a public bus stop at the library, adding new bike racks, adding EV charging stations, or adding protected sidewalks or bike routes.
- **Create a bike-lending program.**
- **Apply to the California Strategic Growth Council’s Community Resilience Center grant program.** The program funds new construction and upgrades of neighborhood-level resilience centers to provide shelter and resources during climate and other emergencies.
- **Help 30x30 California reach their goals** by providing meeting space to local 30x30 participating organizations, hosting an educational session about native plants, participate in community science projects, and integrate Native American tribal history into collections and programs (in consultation and partnership with and, as approved by, California Native American tribes).

Success Stories

Santa Clara City Library partnered with Silicon Valley Power to create an [Energy Savings & Efficiency Tool Lending Collection](#) that can be borrowed from the Central Park Library. The most popular item is the kilowatt meter. Librarian Katie Carter says that this energy saving tool collection “is a good fit for our library and great for the community.”⁴

Through the assistance of a Sustainable California Libraries grant, **Burlingame Public Library** collaborated with local nonprofit groups and city agencies to help their community reach the goals laid out in the sustainability portion of their city’s General Plan. As part of [Sustainable Living with BPL](#), Burlingame set out to build a more resilient community through programming and resources to help community members become more resilient and informed in the areas of gardening and water use, reusing, reducing, and recycling, and electrification. Two of their recent programs included a spring plant swap and a repair café.

In 2023, the city of Sacramento partnered with the **Sacramento Public Library** to launch [an electric tricycle lending program](#). Patrons of the library can check out one of the five e-trikes available. According to Smart Cities Connect, “the project was funded by a portion of a \$1.8 million grant the city received from the California Energy Commission which is being used for funding electric-vehicle-charger installations, car- and bike-share programs, and public art that is inspired by electric vehicles, equity, air pollution and climate change.”⁵

⁴ Sustainable California Libraries, July 2022 Report

⁵ <https://smartcitiesconnect.org/sacramento-partners-with-public-library-to-launch-electric-tricycle-lending-program/>

Adapting to Challenges

Concern: We do not currently have the budget to create a new collection.

Possible solution: Apply for a Sustainable California Libraries grant program to defray the costs of a new collection. It might also be helpful to partner with a local farm or gardener group to start a seed exchange, or a local nonprofit or society for help with a library of things.

Concern: If we do not have giveaways, how can we attract people to our table at outreach events.

Possible solution: Have people enter a raffle at your table for one larger item or bring used books to sell or give away. Another option would be to have people sign up for a library card directly at your booth or bring seeds from your seed exchange. Be creative! Show people how using the library will help them be more environmentally friendly in their own life.

Concern: We want to do a nature-focused program but aren't sure where to start.

Possible solution: Explore creative programming ideas in the Learn More section below. Consider also partnering with a local nonprofit or government agency that is interested in doing more outreach in your community.

Learn More

For more programming and partnerships ideas:

- [Resources for Sustainable California Libraries Projects](#)
- [Resilient Communities: A Programming Guide for Libraries](#)
- [Blue Marble Library: Program Ideas](#)

To learn more about California projects and grants:

- [Sustainable California Libraries](#)
- [California 30x30](#)
- [California Strategic Growth Council](#), plus their [Community Resilience Center grant program](#)



Photo courtesy Chula Vista Public Library - Otay Ranch.

Facility Improvement

The state of California has identified transportation, industry, and electricity usage as the state's largest emitters of greenhouse gases.⁶ To ensure that libraries are lowering their carbon footprint — and helping to make progress toward state-wide and world-wide goals — it is essential that facilities adapt to support mitigation efforts.

Try to think about your facility not only as a building — assess it as a place where people work and gather, a place people travel to, and a place that uses energy to operate. As you consider upgrades, remember the Three P's. How will your upgrade help the planet, the people who use it and your community, and your library's purse (or budget)? Contemplating all three of these factors, will help you settle on a sustainable decision.



Think about your facility as more than a building.

Action Steps

1

- **Raise or lower your thermostat by one to two degrees.** Adjust heating and cooling settings during open hours. When the library is closed, can you adjust the heating and cooling temperatures by several more degrees to cut down on electrical usage?
- **Change public and staff computer settings** to power-saving modes and enabling automatic stand-by modes after several minutes of inactivity.
- **Create new opening and closing procedures** that include turning computers off at the end of the day.
- **Turn off lights in unused meeting rooms and offices.** Include checking lights as part of opening and closing procedures, or room opening procedures. The same goes for unused equipment — unplug it!
- **Evaluate after-hours cleaning procedures.** Are there other times your building can be cleaned that allows for lights to be turned off and temperatures to be raised or lowered?

⁶ <https://calepa.ca.gov/climate-dashboard/>

2

- **Get an accurate measurement of your facility's carbon footprint.** It's hard to know where to begin when you don't have a starting point. Once you have an assessment of your carbon footprint, it may become clear how and where you need to focus.
- **Conduct an energy audit.** Identify areas where you are potentially wasting electricity.
- **Assess staff's technology usage.** Is equipment duplicated at home and at the library? Can you lower the amount of technology equipment your staff uses?
- **Transition to LED bulbs throughout the library.**
- **Assess your facility's landscaping.** Are there ways to adapt your landscaping to be more drought tolerant or incorporate more native plants? Are there unused paved areas that could become greenspace?
- **Evaluate your cleaning and bathroom supplies.** Are your cleaning supplies safe for workers and the environment? Can you transition to safer products? Are your bathroom products safe and made of recycled materials? If you offer menstruation products, are they safe and made of sustainable materials?
- **Evaluate your server room.** Is it in the top floor of the library? If so, you may be spending significant funds on cooling. Consider moving it to a lower, cooler area of your building to utilize more passive cooling systems.
- **Assess your waste.** Do you recycle? Does most of your waste go into the trash? How do you dispose of your old technology equipment? Cast a critical eye over how your library adds to the waste cycle.

3

- **Mandate purchasing standards for new equipment and furniture.** From new sewing machines to new servers, ensure that new large-ticket items meet high energy and ethical standards.
- **Transition your outreach fleet to electric or hybrid vehicles.**
- **Create a drawdown plan to lower your carbon footprint by a stipulated deadline.**
- **Become LEED O+M certified.** New construction is resource and budget intensive, and most new buildings take up to 80 years to make up for the impacts of demolition and construction. The LEED Operations and Maintenance certification applies sustainability practices to existing buildings.
- **Upgrade your landscaping.** Making a low- or no-mow campus and transitioning to drought tolerant landscaping will improve your carbon footprint, help local bugs and animals, and in the long-term, lighten your landscaping budget.
- **Upgrade to renewable energy.** Assess your facility's ability to host solar panels on site or evaluate how you can transition to renewable energy sources.
- **Install low-flow toilets and an upgraded water system.**

Success Stories

The **Los Angeles Public Library** promotes its [Lake View Terrace branch](#) as an eco-friendly library and touts its [environmentally conscious design features on its website](#).

With the help of a Sustainable California Libraries grant, the **California State University East Bay University Libraries**, in partnership with the Muwekma Ohlone Tribe, created the [Sustainable Muwekma Ohlone Walkway](#) which features native flowers and plants. The walkway showcases the native plants and flowers and some of the tribe's traditional growing practices which emphasize respect for the land and sustainability. In addition to the walkway, the libraries also highlight items from their collection about the Muwekma Ohlone Tribe, native plants, and ecology.

Adapting to Challenges

Concern: Facility upgrades are out of our budget.

Potential solution: If some upgrades feel out of reach, consider asking your Friends group or Foundation to financially support mitigation efforts. There also may be municipal or state grants to which you can apply. Alternatively, if these upgrades will require a one-time payment and you do not have a Friends group or Foundation, consider a one-time donation drive.

Concern: We've been wanting to add a mobile library, should we not do that? We just added an outreach vehicle, what can we do to make a very necessary vehicle more sustainable?

Potential solution: Consider an electric vehicle or even a mobile library on a cargo bike if you're looking to start a mobile library or purchase an outreach vehicle. If you already have an outreach vehicle and are concerned about its environmental impact, think about walking, biking, or using public transportation to get to outreach events. Alternatively, if these vehicles are helping to bring library services to a group in your community, using one vehicle to provide services is better than multiple patrons driving cars to the library.

Concern: I'm not sure how our staff will feel about these new procedures or changes to their daily routines.

Potential solution: Every job is now a climate job and small changes that may appear inconvenient make a big difference. Explore ways that you can create buy-in from staff. Maybe conduct a trial period or trial day and assess staff concerns after the experience. Or engage interested staff members on a working group or committee to determine how best to roll out changes.

Concern: We're upgrading furniture or shelving; how do we keep our old items out of the waste stream?

Potential solution: If the furniture is in decent condition, consider selling your furniture at a yard sale or online marketplace, or donating it to smaller libraries, schools, or nonprofits around you. Alternatively, as you purchase new furniture, think about the end of its life. Are the items you are purchasing a long-term investment? Are they easily cleanable and repairable? Is it too trendy, will the style still look tasteful in five years? What kind of materials are they made of? Are the materials safe and ethically sourced? When your new furniture reaches the end of its life, how will it contribute to the waste stream?

Learn More

- For more about facility upgrades, visit [U.S. Green Building Council and LEED Certification](#).
- For an inspiring example of how a library director reexamined her library, read [Let "Green" Creep](#) from the Library Journal.

Operational Transformation

Project Drawdown reminds us that every job is now a climate job — and organizations need to start adapting their day-to-day practices with the climate in mind.⁷

Operational Transformation asks libraries to cast a critical eye on their institution’s working policies, procedures, and everyday tasks. We all know change can be hard at a place that specializes in providing patrons with top-notch services, but change cannot wait. Help your staff and leadership understand that change is good, not only for the environment, but for a healthy, thriving, and sustainable library.



Action Steps

1

- **Survey your staff.** Starting off with a clear understanding of how your staff gets to work, their commitment to climate action, and their suggestions for actionable changes will help clarify how and where to begin in your operational transformations.
- **Eliminate single-use plastic from staff areas and activities.** Are you still using a water cooler and plastic cups? Does your staff use a single-use coffee maker with disposable pods? Do staff events feature single-use plastic cutlery?
- **Review your mission, vision, and core values.** Are there places in your guiding directives where the climate can be added?
- **Make two-sided the default.** Set library-wide printer settings to be two-sided and black and white. While you’re at it, see if you can reuse one-sided scrap paper before recycling. Encourage staff to use digital copies where appropriate and start to think about printing as something to be used only when necessary.
- **Have your marketing or communications team talk about sustainability to the public.** Start talking to your community about sustainability and your library’s role in it. This will serve as a good jumping off point for future changes.
- **Develop a disaster-preparedness plan.** What will your staff do in the event of an emergency that directly impacts the library? What will your staff do in the event a disaster impacts your community and the library will need to serve as a resiliency hub?

⁷ <https://drawdown.org/programs/drawdown-labs/job-function-action-guides>

2

- **Integrate climate and sustainability into your staff documents.** Start talking about sustainability in your staff reviews, interviews, job descriptions, and key performance indicators.
- **Create a staff working group or committee focused on sustainability.** Encourage them to think broadly about operations at the library and how your institution can have a positive impact on the environment while considering the Three P's.
- **Review your policies and procedures.** These documents guide the work of the library. Are there ways you can solidify climate action for the future in your policies and procedures.
- **Evaluate your suppliers.** Have your collections department look at suppliers through a climate lens. How far are your items traveling? What is the packaging material? Do those vendors align with your climate goals?
- **Evaluate item repair.** Are you still repairing books to keep them in circulation? What kind of materials are you using to prepare items for circulation? Is there a bio-based option instead of plastic?
- **Evaluate your workplace.** Are you paying a living wage? Can your staff reliably get to work in a climate-conscious way? Does your staff have access to essential benefits? If staff ride or walk to work, is there a clean, safe place to change? Do you provide a lactation room?

3

- **Review your retirement plan's investments.** Evaluate whether retirement plans, 401Ks, and other portfolios are invested in fossil fuels. Can you offer or transition fully to a climate-friendly investment plan?
- **Create a staff position dedicated to sustainability.** To establish and accomplish ambitious climate action goals, it will help to have a person in charge, educated in best practices, and with the time and resources to see initiatives through.
- **Create an incentive program for staff.** Develop a system that rewards staff for good climate practices, like carpooling, taking public transportation, or walking or riding their bike to work. Reward staff for opting into virtual professional development rather than carbon-intensive travel.
- **Make climate action a core piece of your strategic plan.** Implement climate action goals directly into your strategic plan to stay focused on integrating sustainability throughout your library.
- **Become certified through the Sustainable Libraries Initiative.** SLI's mission is to empower library leaders to advance environmentally sound, socially equitable, and economically feasible practices to intentionally address climate change and co-create thriving communities.⁸

⁸ <https://www.sustainablelibrariesinitiative.org/about-us>

Success Stories

The **New Jersey State Library** commissioned the Librarian’s Disaster Planning and Community Resiliency Guidebook and Workbook to help libraries in New Jersey and across the country to be better prepared to, as they say, “accept the new mantle of responsibility being thrust on them as a safe haven in times of crises.”⁹

Sustainability holds an important place on the footer of the [San Diego County Library’s website](#). On their [sustainability webpage](#), the library talks about how sustainability permeates their facilities and practices — they promote sustainable initiatives and programs, as well as sustainable living. They also direct patrons to county-wide sustainability resources. In a 2023 blog post, the library writes, “starting in 2011, we have made sure to include some standard sustainable building features in all of our new construction. These include energy-efficient lighting, natural daylight utilization, water conservation, and efficient HVAC systems. These features help us reduce our carbon footprint and minimize energy consumption and have proven to be the foundation of our green initiatives.”¹⁰

Adapting to Challenges

Concern: We’re weeding our collection; how do we keep our weeded items out of the waste stream?

Potential solution: Consider sending low-circulation, but good- to fair-quality books to services like Better World Books for reuse. Or donate your books to your Friends of the Library book sales. If books are too worn for reuse, recycle them or shred them for composting. Maybe they can be good brown waste for a library composting program or local composting group?

Learn More

- For more about library-specific climate certifications, visit [Sustainable Libraries Initiative](#).
- For more about changes in human resources and many helpful examples and resources, visit [Project Drawdown](#).
- For more about changes to vendors and supply chains, visit [Project Drawdown’s guide on procurement](#).
- For more about using marketing and communications effectively as part of your climate action plan, visit [Project Drawdown](#).
- To learn more about becoming a climate resilience hub, visit [Communities Responding to Extreme Weather](#).
- For help developing a disaster-preparedness plan, visit the [New Jersey State Library](#).

⁹ https://www.njstatelib.org/services_for_libraries/resources/disaster_planning/

¹⁰ <https://www.sdcl.org/blogs/post/sustainable-libraries/>

The core purpose of libraries is to be the hub for shared community resources, and that foundational practice is sustainability in action.



This publication is supported in whole or in part by the U.S. Institute of Museum and Library Services under the provisions of the Library Services and Technology Act, administered in California by the State Librarian.

The Climate and Sustainability Action Guide for California Libraries was developed by the Alliance for Library Impact, 2024.