



CITY OF HARRISONBURG PUBLIC WORKS

320 EAST MOSBY ROAD, HARRISONBURG, VA 22801
OFFICE (540) 434-5928 • FAX (540) 434-2695

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Contact: Brittany Clem-Hott, Outreach & Communications Specialist
540-434-5928 x2215
brittany.clem-hott@harrisonburgva.gov

Harrisonburg's food service industry invited to sustainability program EATS

HARRISONBURG, Va. – Harrisonburg Public Works is inviting members of the local food service industry to participate in Eateries Acting Towards Sustainability (EATS), a free Green Restaurant Certification Program.

The certification will acknowledge local businesses' sustainability efforts and encourage them to continue to pursue their environmental efforts. The primary goal is to recognize the hard work of these establishments, rather than impose stricter regulations on business owners. The program is voluntary and available to those in the food service industry who choose to participate, with three businesses already enrolled.

EATS aims to prioritize waste reduction and position the Harrisonburg restaurant industry and broader hospitality sector as pioneers in sustainable practices and environmental stewardship. This initiative not only benefits the environment by fostering a culture of practical sustainability but also enhances the overall quality of life for all residents in Harrisonburg. Public education on minimizing single-use waste and empowering restaurants to adopt cost-effective waste reduction measures will help participating businesses tackle waste-related challenges effectively.

This certification program has three tiers to highlight different levels of sustainability depending on the capabilities of participants. The first level, called the Sprout Level, is a low-barrier entry to reward people for making small but necessary steps toward sustainability. The second level, Bloom, pushes businesses to take an even bigger step to reduce their single-use plastic. The final level, Harvest, will show how businesses are putting sustainability at the forefront of their everyday operation. At the Harvest Level, businesses will hopefully be able to start reaping the rewards of their hard work and will be able to share their experience with others.

The points system is based on categories that align with the six focus areas of the City of Harrisonburg's Environmental Action Plan.



“This certification program is a great way to get people more involved in sustainability,” Harrisonburg Stormwater Compliance Specialist Shayna Carter explained. “EATS has the potential to show that even small efforts can make a big difference in our community.”

EATS is one of a number of programs designed by Harrisonburg Public Works to address a key goal of the Harrisonburg City Council 2043 Vision Plan. The plan, in part, calls for a focus on community resiliency and the natural environment, prioritizing “protection of these natural assets – air, streams, mountains, trees and open space – critical to maintaining our quality of life.”

More information about the program may be found online at www.harrisonburgva.gov/EATS. Any questions about becoming certified in the program may be submitted by emailing Shayna.Carter@harrisonburgva.gov or calling 540-434-5928.

*The **City of Harrisonburg** is centrally located in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia. It is home to approximately 55,990 people. More information about the City of Harrisonburg is available online at www.HarrisonburgVA.gov.*

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