



# **SUSTAINABILITY ACTION PLAN**

**AY2024 - AY2029**



**Idaho State  
University**

Environmental Health,  
Safety, and Sustainability





# OVERVIEW

Idaho State University's inaugural Sustainability Action Plan (Plan) represents a major step forward in shaping our vision for a sustainable campus and community. Developed by the Sustainability Office, this plan builds on insights gathered from a year of comprehensive data collection to establish clear goals with actionable steps for the next five years. This Plan focuses on key areas such as academics, operations, and engagement, and establishes a framework for ongoing progress that aligns and compliments broader campus initiatives including Campus Master Plan and Strategic Plan. This Plan sets a strong foundation for ongoing advancements and demonstrate ISU's commitment to environmental stewardship and social responsibility.

## STARS REPORT

Idaho State University submitted its first Sustainability Tracking, Assessment & Rating System (STARS) report to The Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE) at the start of the 2025 calendar year with the goal of receiving a Bronze rating. The STARS report is a voluntary self-reporting tool for institutions globally to measure their sustainability performance. Using the current report as a guide to identify areas of improvement, the Sustainability Office plans to re-submit an updated STARS report for a Silver Rating by the start of CY2028. The updated report will include all satellite campuses in addition to the main Pocatello campus.

## CARBON NEUTRALITY

Idaho State University has not yet set a carbon neutrality goal, but with data-driven insights and collaboration between campus leadership and the Sustainability Office, ISU is working toward establishing a net-zero emissions target that is best suited for our campus and community. We are dedicated to meaningful climate action.

# 2024 Sustainability Highlights

**48%** Reduction in energy usage of desktop computer stations

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**4** Solar-Powered Picnic Tables with Work Stations

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**2** Electric Vehicle Charging Stations on Campus

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**2.25** Million water bottles saved using bottle filling stations

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**2** Sustainability student Career Path Interns

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**1** Sustainability-focused academic course created

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**1** Sustainability Student Fund Grant developed

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**1** Green Workspaces program established

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# REPORT STRATEGY

The Sustainability Action Plan report strategy is centered on four key performance areas for the institution: operations, academics, engagement, and leadership. By leveraging data collected over the past year, this Plan includes targeted improvements and initiatives that address the specific needs of our campus. The plan outlines clear, actionable short-term goals (current to AY2027) alongside ambitious long-term objectives for campus (AY2027+), ensuring a balanced approach to driving sustainable progress. The Plan is reviewed on an annual basis and updated with tracked progress as it applies.

## OPERATIONS



## ACADEMICS



## ENGAGEMENT



## LEADERSHIP





### SHORT-TERM GOALS

AY24

AY27

- Conduct an energy audit of the Pocatello campus to gain a comprehensive understanding of campus energy usage and identify target areas for improvement. The audit will support informed decision-making for energy saving projects.
- Upgrade lighting fixture controls across campus to include dimming capabilities and motion sensor lighting to reduce energy consumption based on ambient light levels, time of day, and as-needed usage.
- Retrofit 100% of common area lighting across all campus buildings to energy-efficient lighting using only materials approved on Idaho Power's Standard Lighting Incentives energy efficient equipment list.
- Partner with Facilities Services to implement a system to track lighting upgrades in order to monitor progress, measure impacts, and apply for energy incentives.
- Implement central scheduling for academic computer labs and teaching rooms reducing the need for idle equipment and unnecessary energy consumption.
- In partnership with Information Technology Services and Facilities Services reduce the number of desktop computer stations on campus and repurpose spaces for virtual labs or academic purposes reducing unnecessary energy consumption.



**Sustainably Features**

**ISU - Pocatello Campus Map**

# OPERATIONS

## BUILDINGS



## LONG-TERM GOALS

AY27

AY34

- In collaboration with Facilities Services incorporate sustainability into the project management process and develop unique ISU green building design standards to follow for all retrofits, remodels, and material purchases.
- Prioritize the investment of ENERGY STAR® products.
- Design all large renovations and capital projects to achieve a minimum of LEED Silver certification.
- Explore partnerships with off-site solar energy providers to offset existing building energy usage and reduce the university's carbon footprint.
- Conduct feasibility studies to explore and evaluate the use of clean energy sources such as geothermal, wind, and nuclear to power campus operations.





# OPERATIONS

## WATER & GROUNDS

### SHORT-TERM GOALS

AY24

AY27

- Update irrigation systems controls to minimize leaks, and optimize watering schedules.
- Create design specifications for water efficient plumbing fixtures options encouraging the use of products in remodel and retrofit projects.
- Create design specifications and project management resources prioritizing the use of native landscaping, xeriscapes, and drought resistant plants. These resources will help promote choices that require less water and maintenance.
- Explore the installation of a rainwater harvesting system. Identify areas for rainwater capture to be reused for irrigation or other non-potable purposes.
- Develop a written Integrated Pest Management Plan that follows a four-tiered approach.
- Reduce the use of synthetic fertilizers, pesticides, fungicides and herbicides in landscaping practices.
- Launch a water conservation awareness campaign to educate campus on the importance of water conservation specific to our region and encourage good water-saving lifestyle choices.
- Update the Campus Map to identify green spaces, natural areas, and sustainable landscaping features.
- Reduce the amount of traditional grassy turf on the Pocatello campus by 10%.
- Pursue a Bee Campus Certification for Pocatello and Idaho Falls

### LONG-TERM GOALS

AY27

AY34

- Invest in advanced water sensor technologies capable of detecting leaks, floods, and changes in water pressure. These tools will help minimize water waste and allow for more effective maintenance of campus facilities.
- Replace 100% of outdated plumbing fixtures on campus with modern, high-efficiency alternatives, including low-flow toilets, water-saving faucets, performance showerheads, and ENERGY STAR® appliances. These upgrades will significantly reduce water consumption in campus buildings.
- Replace traditional landscaping with native and drought-resistant plants across campus. This initiative will create resilient, water-efficient landscapes that require minimal maintenance and support local ecosystems.
- Eliminate the use of synthetic fertilizers, pesticides, fungicides and herbicides in landscaping practices, prioritizing environmentally safe and sustainable methods for pest management.

# OPERATIONS

## WASTE

### SHORT-TERM GOALS

AY24

AY27

- Upgrade and install uniform recycling signage across all campuses to ensure clarity regarding acceptable materials to help reduce contamination and encourage recycling.
- Replace existing bins with new multiple waste flow recycling bins in highly populated student/community buildings: Student Union, Rendezvous, Reed Gym, ICUU Arena.
- Identify recycling bin locations on the Campus Map specifying what items can be accepted at each location to increase campus recycling participation.
- Continue to replace all water fountains with bottle-filling stations to promote the use of reusable bottles.
- Launch an educational recycling campaign to spread awareness on campus and in the community that includes educational presentations, workshops and outreach.
- Partner with Facilities Services to develop a system to track the weight of campus waste sent to the landfill to help develop deeper insights into campus waste operations.
- Evaluate existing contracts campus vendors to explore opportunities for reducing single-use plastics in campus operations.
- Perform a waste audit to better understand current waste streams and trends.
- Work with Housing to expand the Green Move-Out Program to increase the number of drop-off locations, days, and events.
- Collaborate with Facilities Services to establish an electronic waste program, including a centralized drop-off location for responsible disposal and recycling of electronics.

**224**



**Recycling Bins  
on Campus**

**2,255,164**

**Water  
Bottles  
Saved**



**2024 Metrics**



# OPERATIONS

## WASTE

### LONG-TERM GOALS

AY27

AY34

- Work with Facilities Services and Dining to establish a composting program for food waste to turn organic waste into compost for use in campus landscaping or local agricultural projects.
- Partner with Campus Dining to phase out single-use plastics in dining operations in favor of compostable or reusable alternatives in an effort to eventually eliminate single-use plastic on campus.
- Improve recycling facilities to support the investment of a plastics shredder to accept additional plastics materials for the purpose of being shipped off and repurposed into new plastic products advancing our plastics recycling on campus.
- Open a permanent location for a campus thrift store to provide affordable options for students and staff while promoting a circular economy on campus and eliminating waste sent to landfills.
- Replace recycling bins with modern, uniform, clearly labeled bins.
- Increase the number of recycling bins across all campuses to improve accessibility.



Idaho State  
University

### Know what you can recycle.



White & colored paper



Shredded paper  
(bagged separately)



Newspaper



Aluminum cans



Plastic bottles & cups



Tissues, paper towels,  
& toilet paper



Used pizza boxes



Crushed cans



Plastic shopping bags



Items made from several  
different materials

# OPERATIONS

## TRANSPORTATION

### SHORT-TERM GOALS

AY24

AY27

- Improve infrastructure near high-use campus buildings by installing additional storage options for micro-mobility devices (such as bike racks, etc.)
- Establish a no-idling policy across all campuses to reduce emissions from vehicles.
- Partner with Pocatello Regional Transit to enhance campus bus route and encourage sustainable commuting options such as biking and walking.
- Conduct a comprehensive commuting survey of students, faculty, and staff to understand current habits and identify barriers to adopting sustainable transportation options.
- Collaborate with Public Safety to create an incentive program for carpooling.



### LONG-TERM GOALS

AY27

AY34

- Pursue a Bike-Friendly Campus Certification for the Pocatello campus.
- Develop a detailed infrastructure plan to support low-emission vehicles for all campuses, including dedicated parking spots, charging stations and to support the transition of all internal campus operations to low-emission or electric fleet vehicles.
- Install Electric vehicle (EV) charging stations on all campuses and increase the number and location of charging stations on the Pocatello campus to support the growing adoption of EVs by students, faculty, and staff.
- Electrify 60% of its fleet vehicles by 2035 and responsibly recycle or dispose of existing fleet vehicles.
- Partner with Facilities Services to phase out all gas-powered equipment in favor of electric or battery-powered alternatives for grounds and landscaping operations.
- Partner with Human Resources to develop a healthy employee program that encourages walking or the use of micro mobility devices to navigate campus.



# ACADEMICS

## SHORT-TERM GOALS

AY24

AY27

- Offer workshops for faculty to incorporate sustainability concepts into their courses across all disciplines to encourage the integration of sustainability concepts into their curriculum.
- Increase the number of sustainability-focused courses across a greater number of academic departments and colleges, ensuring students in diverse fields of study engage with sustainability principles.
- Publish a section on the sustainability website listing all sustainability-related courses offered, making it easier for students to find and enroll in these opportunities.
- Expand sustainability-related research across campuses.
- The university will harness its own operations and facilities across all campuses to utilize them as a “living laboratory,” providing opportunities for students and faculty to engage in hands-on sustainability projects.
- Track sustainability metrics, such as the number of sustainability-related courses, research projects, and community partnerships to evaluate progress and impact



## LONG-TERM GOALS

AY27

AY34

- Conduct a comprehensive sustainability literacy assessment to evaluate the understanding and knowledge of sustainability concepts among students, faculty, and staff. The results will guide future curriculum enhancements and awareness initiatives.
- Offer a minor or certificate program at both undergraduate and graduate levels that is sustainability focused with the goal to work towards a sustainability-focused major and degree plan for all levels.
- Establish partnerships with local, national, and global organizations to provide students with internship and research opportunities in sustainability-focused fields.

# ENGAGEMENT

## SHORT-TERM GOALS

AY24

AY27

- Establish a Green Lab Certification Program.
- Continue to develop Sustainability communication platforms including website updates and upgrades, regular social media posts, and campus announcements to provide outreach for the campus community.
- Launch a signature sustainability event to coincide with Earth Day.
- Create regular sustainability-themed student programs, including workshops, discussions, and hands-on activities, to engage the student body in campus sustainability efforts.
- Re-engage the Sustainability Club to empower students to lead and participate in sustainability initiatives on and off campus.
- Incorporate campus sustainability into new student orientation providing incoming students with resources to learn about the university's sustainability goals and initiatives.
- Partner with the Counseling Center to launch a mental health outreach campaign that highlights the benefits natural green spaces to mental health.
- Partner with the Career Center to develop sustainability-focused professional development resources and workshops, preparing students for careers in green industries.



## LONG-TERM GOALS

AY27

AY34

- Offer a continuing education course that emphasizes sustainability principles and practices for community members and professionals seeking to expand their knowledge and skills.
- Create a student-led program where ambassadors promote sustainable practices, lead initiatives, and serve as peer educators across campuses.
- Create a student-managed enterprise on campus that is sustainability focused, such as a campus thrift store.
- Provide new employees with sustainability resources and materials during onboarding activities.
- Establish partnerships with local nonprofits to collaborate on sustainability initiatives and community engagement.
- Collaborate with the Alumni Association to keep alumni informed about campus sustainability efforts and offer opportunities for them to contribute through mentoring, donations, and campus event participation.
- Host a regional sustainability related conference or event.



# LEADERSHIP

## SHORT-TERM GOALS

AY24

AY27

- Create a Sustainability Council with diverse representation across students faculty, and staff to guide sustainability efforts, set priorities, and ensure accountability across all campuses.
- Provide sustainability training and resources for university operating departments and administrators.
- Develop a system to track and report progress on sustainability initiatives and re-submit a STARS report in 2027 for a higher rating.
- Grow staffing within the Sustainability Office to support the implementation of new programs and initiatives.



## LONG-TERM GOALS

AY27

AY34

- Create a university leadership position within the Sustainability Office.
- Develop a university-wide sustainable procurement policy.
- Pursue sustainability certifications and awards to highlight the institutions commitment to environmental stewardship and strengthen its standing as a forward-thinking university.



# FORWARD VISION

This Plan will serve as a comprehensive roadmap for enhancing existing initiatives and launching new ones, building momentum over the next five years and establishing a foundation for long-term advancement. The implementation of the plan will involve a structured approach through a combination of leadership and campus collaboration. The plan will be shared across all campus departments as a strategic guide to align operations with sustainability goals, ensuring consistency and accountability, and will be utilized by the Sustainability Council for sustainability directives. The plan will support the enhancement of current projects by providing clear benchmarks and objectives, and will foster a culture of continuous improvement. Simultaneously, it will serve as a framework for launching innovative programs, developing policies and encouraging departments to explore new sustainable practices and technologies. This holistic approach will ensure that sustainability becomes an intrinsic part of the university's culture and demonstrate its dedication to a sustainable future.



*We want to give a large thanks to everyone who helped contribute to the efforts that went in to developing this Plan and continue to support our Sustainability journey,*

## **Where to find us:**

Website: <https://www.isu.edu/sustainability/>

Instagram: @idahostatesustainability

On Campus: EHSS Department, Physical Sciences Complex, Room 105

Instagram

