



The Virginia Green program strives to **educate** the tourism industry about sustainable practices and innovative products that can significantly reduce the environmental impacts of their operations. Furthermore, Virginia Green strives to **engage** our partners and consumers in a meaningful dialogue that is mutually beneficial. Together, we strive to promote the Virginia Green partners and achieve environmental **results**.

Virginia Green Certification

Over the past 12 years, 1800+ tourism businesses have voluntarily certified their environmental commitments and practices and been recognized as certified Virginia Green Partners. The program is administered by the non-profit Virginia Green Travel Alliance (VGTA) and works in partnership with the Virginia Tourism Corporation, the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality, the Virginia Restaurant, Lodging & Travel Association and Virginia State Parks.

2 Levels of Virginia Green Certification

The VGTA currently provides for 2 levels of certification and recognition.

1. **Virginia Green Commitment Level** only requires that the tourism business certify that they have made categorical commitments to implement sustainable practices and are working to make progress. (To learn more about the commitment level or to apply,
2. **Fully-Certified Virginia Green Travel Partners** have fully implemented a required number of sustainable practices in various categories such as recycling & waste reduction, water & energy conservation, and green event management. Certified Partners undergo a full application review that may require the submittal of photographs and other documentation.



Fully-Certified Application

To achieve full accreditation as a FULLY-CERTIFIED Virginia Green Partner, you must fill out the full Virginia Green Application / Checklist of Green Practices that is available at www.VirginiaGreen.net. Similar to the Commitment-Level application, you must address all of the program's "core commitments". However, for Full-Certification, you are required to demonstrate that a number of green practices have already been implemented in each of these core areas.

How To Apply & How Does the Program Work?

- ✓ Fill out the full checklist application & submit to VirginiaGreen@Virginia.org.
- ✓ If you have provided all of the necessary information, the application will be approved; and you will be notified by email. An *Application Processing Fee* will be due at that time (see details next page).
- ✓ You will then receive a certificate, window stickers, and a membership placard to display. You will also be emailed official program logos for use on your website, marketing materials, etc.
- ✓ Virginia Green will announce you as a Virginia Green Partner via social media and in our newsletter.
- ✓ The Virginia Green logo will be placed next to your listing on the Virginia Tourism website (www.Virginia.org), and on your local Virginia Green Travel Chapter website (if applicable).
- ✓ You will receive announcements about regional educational offerings including our annual Virginia Green Travel Conference & Awards.
- ✓ You will be eligible to apply for our awards which annually recognize 30+ Virginia Green partners.
- ✓ Every 2 years, all Virginia Green Partners are required to renew & update their commitments and practices.

BASIC CORE REQUIREMENT AREAS for FULLY-CERTIFIED VIRGINIA GREEN PARTNERS

These are the core areas for your reference. You must submit the full application which is available at www.VirginiaGreen.net.

- Leadership / Planning / Green Team.** Our business is actively committed to tracking wastes and recycling, water and energy use and setting goals to reduce environmental impacts over time. We have engaged and trained our staff on our environmental efforts.
 - Recycling.** Our business is actively recycling materials that are readily recyclable in our community; and we are providing our customers with opportunities to recycle.
 - Polystyrene Disposables.** Our business has eliminated the use of polystyrene (commonly referred to as “styrofoam”) take-out containers and cups.
 - NEW! Pollution from Single-Use Plastics.** Our business recognizes the potential environmental impacts of single-use plastics and we are committed to reducing or eliminating these materials when possible. Specifically, we are committing to:
 - Only provide straws upon request or provide non-plastic alternatives. See [SKIP THE STRAW CAMPAIGN — Virginia Green](#)
 - Prohibit the practice of balloon releases at any outdoor event. [§ 29.1-556.1. Release of certain balloons prohibited; civil penalty \(virginia.gov\) \(REQUIRED\)](#)
 - Energy Conservation & Efficiency.** Our business is actively working to reduce the use of electricity and other energy sources through general conservation and replacement/use of energy efficient appliances, lighting, equipment, and practices.
 - Water Conservation & Efficiency.** Our business is actively working to reduce water use through general conservation and replacement/use of water-efficient fixtures, appliances, and practices.
 - Green Meetings & Events.** Our business pledges to provide for recycling, reuse of meeting materials, electronic handouts, and to reduce wastes to the greatest extent possible when hosting meetings and events.
 - Consumer Engagement.** Our business pledges to share its environmental efforts with its customers and promote that it is a Virginia Green Partner on its website, in its business, and in promotional materials.
- *For full certification, you will be required to submit photos of recycling containers and other green practices in place.

Full Virginia Green Application is available at www.VirginiaGreen.net

Virginia Green Application Processing Fees

	Commitment Level	Fully-Certified
• Restaurants, B&Bs, Wineries, Breweries, & “Smaller” Attractions	\$50	\$75
• “Larger” Attractions	\$95	\$175
• Hotels	\$125	\$195*
• Conference Centers	NA**	\$175*
• Convention Centers	NA**	\$250
• Conferences, Festivals & Events	NA**	\$75
• Supporting Organizations, Visitor Centers, etc	\$50	\$75
• Suppliers of Green Products & Services	NA	\$125

*Conference Centers & Hotels can be certified together for \$300 total.

**NA: there is no “commitment level” for Conference & Convention Centers, Events or Suppliers.

Fees can be waived for events and other partners that sponsor a fundraising event benefiting the VGTA.

Supporting organizations & local-government facilities/events can be waived or addressed on a case-by-case basis.

Ownership groups and other organizations may be eligible for group rates.

Recertification is required every 2 years.

For more information or questions, VirginiaGreenTA@gmail.com or 804.986.9119