



California Occupational Guides

Guide for



Sustainability Program Coordinators in California

May also be called: Campus Sustainability Coordinators; Sustainability Directors; Sustainability Program Managers

What Would I Do?

Sustainability Program Coordinators, sometimes called Sustainability Managers, develop and lead the implementation of an organization's sustainability initiative and plan. Their main objective is to enhance the organization's goal of having zero negative impact on the environment, while at the same time supporting the organization's economic viability. To achieve this goal, they address issues such as energy and water use, greenhouse gas emissions, resource conservation, recycling, pollution reduction, waste elimination, transportation, education and behavior change, and building design. Most Sustainability Program Coordinators should be familiar with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), and the California Green Building Standards Code (CALGREEN).

A variety of other individuals, groups, and departments within an organization participate in a sustainability program and are supported by the Sustainability Program Coordinator. They include environmental practitioners, occupational health and safety workers, energy managers, food service managers, grounds and custodial service managers, development committees, and training coordinators.

Sustainability Program Coordinators bring together management, shareholders, customers, governmental agencies, staff, students, and other firms to address sustainability issues. They enact or oversee a corporate campaign or marketing sustainability strategy. They identify educational, training, or other development opportunities for sustainability employees or unpaid volunteers. They create and maintain schedules and budgets, in addition to writing and distributing financial or environmental impact reports. They develop education and incentive programs for employees and keep their firm up to date as to trends in the sustainability community. They may also coordinate with suppliers, employees, schools, media, government, and public interest groups to reach sustainability project or program goals.

Coordinators who work for private employers are often hired to assist in reaching sustainability objectives in goods production and services. Those working for educational or governmental institutions are involved more heavily in promoting an atmosphere of environmental awareness in the community as well as in reaching campus or local sustainability objectives.

Tools and Technology

Depending on the project, Sustainability Program Coordinators may use a combination of tools, including computers, smart phones, and videoconferencing systems. The technology they use typically requires various types of software, such as scheduling, database user interface and query, geographic information systems, presentation, office suite, and project management.

Important Tasks and Related Skills

A formal survey to determine specific tasks and skills requirements for Sustainability Program Coordinators has yet to be completed. The sample tasks shown below represent two closely related occupations to Sustainability Program Coordinators: Chief Sustainability Officers and Sustainability Specialists. Each task is matched to a sample skill required to carry out the task.

<i>Task</i>	<i>Skill Used in this Task</i>
Develop and maintain sustainability reports, presentations, or proposals for suppliers, employees, schools, media, government, and public interest groups.	Complex Problem Solving
Write grant applications, permit and rebate applications, or project proposals to secure funding for sustainability projects.	Writing
Develop, or oversee the development of, marketing or outreach media for sustainability projects or events.	Customer and Personal Service
Review sustainability program objectives, progress or status to ensure compliance with policies, standards, regulations, or laws.	Law and Government
Evaluate and approve proposals for sustainability projects, considering factors such as cost effectiveness, technical feasibility, and integration with other initiatives.	Management of Financial Resources
Identify and evaluate pilot projects or programs to enhance the sustainability research agenda.	Judgment and Decision Making
Monitor and evaluate effectiveness of sustainability programs.	Monitoring
Supervise employees or volunteers working on sustainability projects.	Management of Personnel Resources
Research environmental sustainability issues, concerns, or stakeholder interests.	Reading Comprehension

Sources: U.S. Department of Labor [Occupational Information Network \(O*NET\)](http://online.onetcenter.org) at online.onetcenter.org and The Conference Board Help Wanted OnLine™(HWOL) data series.

Working Conditions

Sustainability Program Coordinators work primarily indoors in an office setting. The occupation involves coordinating with other departments inside and outside an organization and may require the Coordinator to travel across a campus or large complex to observe sustainability plans in progress.

Most Sustainability Program Coordinators work a standard 40-hour work week, but can expect occasional extended hours to meet deadlines or program goals.

Unionization is typically not common for Sustainability Program Coordinators who work in the private sector. However, those who work for government entities or municipalities may belong to one of the following: California Faculty Association, Council of University of California Faculty Associations, California State University Employees Union, or University Professional and Technical Employees/Communication Workers of America.

Will This Job Fit Me?

Individuals interested in executing environmentally sustainable practices, policies, and regulations within an organization may enjoy this type of work. This occupation may be a good fit for those who would like to further the cause of environmental sustainability while using writing, management, and decision making skills. Those who are interested in the policy side of environmental issues are also likely to enjoy this occupation.

It is helpful for individuals considering this occupation to also enjoy leading people and making decisions. This job may appeal to those who enjoy analyzing complex problems, recommending solutions, and directing actions to solve them.

What Wages and Benefits Can I Expect?

Wages

A formal salary survey for Sustainability Program Coordinators is not available; however, references to annual salaries in California range from \$36,000 to \$100,000. All salaries depend on the employer, nature of the project, experience, education, and the skill of the individual. Generally, workers in large cities earn higher wages than those who work in small towns and rural areas.

Benefits

Benefits generally include medical, dental, life, and vision insurance as well as vacation, sick leave, and retirement plans. Those who work as consultants and are self-employed are responsible for purchasing their own insurance and retirement plans.

What is the Job Outlook?

In California, the occupation of Sustainability Program Coordinators is new and emerging. As environmentally sustainable practices expand within organizations, it is expected there may be increased opportunities for Sustainability Program Coordinators. However, as with many other occupations, employment is sensitive to the fluctuations of the economy.

How Do I Qualify?

Education, Training, and Other Requirements

The minimum education requirement for the Sustainability Program Coordinator/Manager occupation is typically a Bachelor of Arts or Bachelor of Science degree from an accredited institution in biology, environmental science, or a related field. Other degree programs considered relevant to the occupation are public policy and business administration. Some institutions prefer that candidates also possess a Master of Arts (MA) or Master of Science (MS) degree with an emphasis in biology, environmental science, environmental policy, business, or other related fields. A Master of Business Administration (MBA) degree is preferred for positions requiring financial, resource, or personnel management. Some schools offer MBA programs with an emphasis in sustainable or “green” business practices.

Specific educational requirements vary based on the sustainability goals of a particular institution. Individuals who have obtained an MA, MS, or MBA are considered to be the most desirable candidates and are more likely to advance to senior management positions. Advanced computer and public speaking skills are also essential to the position of Sustainability Program Coordinator/Manager.

Experience

In addition to degree requirements, many employers require that Sustainability Program Coordinators have three to five years of experience. Entry-level positions may require little to no previous experience, while senior- or management-level positions may require five to ten years of background. Positions which emphasize sustainable program development and implementation often require previous experience in environmental policy, research, or general knowledge of sustainable practices.

Positions requiring supervision of staff and oversight of financial resources often require more management-oriented or business background.

Early Career Planning

High school students interested in a career as a Sustainability Program Coordinator should take courses in biological and life sciences, computer sciences, English, mathematics, and government. Those who attend a community college program should complete the necessary prerequisites to transfer to a four-year institution. Students can also benefit from extracurricular activities which involve science, community service, or teamwork.

Work-Study Programs

Some colleges and universities help students find work-study programs or internships. These internships are an opportunity for the sponsoring organization to recruit future employees.

Continuing Education

While continuing education is not required for Sustainability Program Coordinators, they will need to keep current on issues and innovations in the field of environmental sustainability to properly do their jobs. Issues and innovations such as greenhouse-gas emissions reduction; transportation planning; green building and procurement; waste management; energy and water conservation; facility design; space planning; and office trends for the future including Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification. In addition, Sustainability Program Coordinators should be well-versed in local, State, and federal laws and regulations regarding sustainability.

Certification

Many Sustainability Program Coordinator positions require or prefer that candidates have LEED certification. LEED certification covers the basic elements of sustainable facilities management. In addition, Sustainability Program Coordinators may broaden their skills by completing a Supply Chain Management Certification Program.

For more information, go to the U.S. Department of Labor's Career InfoNet Web site at www.acinet.org and scroll down to "Career Tools." Click on "Certification Finder" at www.acinet.org/certifications_new/default.aspx and follow the instructions to locate certification programs.

Where Can I Find Training?

There are two ways to search for training information at www.labormarketinfo.edd.ca.gov/?Pageid=1013:

- [Search by Field of Study](#) to find what programs are available and what schools offer those programs. You may use keywords such as: Environment, Green, and Sustainability.
- [Search by Training Provider](#) to find schools by name, type of school, or location.

Contact the schools you are interested in to learn about the classes available, tuition and fees, and any prerequisite course work.

Where Would I Work?

According to results from the 2009 *California Green Economy Survey*, many Sustainability Program Coordinators work in consulting firms. They also work in Educational Services ranging from elementary schools to colleges, as well as Specialty Trade Contractors such as electrical and roofing contractors. Sustainability Program Coordinators also work for large retail stores and wholesale trade firms.

Finding a Job

Direct application to employers remains one of the most effective job search methods. Applicants can also find employment opportunities through placement offices at colleges and universities. Those working within the industry may recommend an interested candidate for jobs. Newspaper classified

ads and the Internet job boards provide additional sources for job listings. **Online job opening systems** include JobCentral at www.jobcentral.com and CalJOBSSM at www.caljobs.ca.gov.

To find your nearest One-Stop Career Center, go to [Service Locator](http://www.servicelocator.org) at www.servicelocator.org. View the [helpful job search tips](http://www.labormarketinfo.edd.ca.gov/occguides/JobSearchTips.pdf) at www.labormarketinfo.edd.ca.gov/occguides/JobSearchTips.pdf for more resources. (requires [Adobe Reader](http://www.adobe.com)).

Yellow Page Headings

You can focus your local job search by checking employers listed online or in your local telephone directory. Below are some suggested headings or keywords where you might find employers of Sustainability Program Coordinators.

- LEED
- Sustainable
- Sustainability

Find Possible Employers

To locate a list of employers in your area, use “Find Employers” on the LaborMarketInfo Web site at www.labormarketinfo.edd.ca.gov/aspdotnet/databrowsing/empMain.aspx?menuChoice=emp

- Select the search for employers by occupation.
- Select a geographic area.
- Search for an occupation by keyword, occupation, or category.
- Select one of the top industries that employ the occupation.
- This will give you a list of employers in that industry in your area.
- Click on “View Filter Selections” to limit your list to specific cities or employer size.
- Click on an employer for the street address, telephone number, size of business, Web site, etc.
- Contact the employer for possible employment.

Where Could This Job Lead?

Experience as a Sustainability Program Coordinator may lead to advancement to upper-level supervisory positions. Additional experience can lead to a career as a Chief Sustainability Officer. Sustainability Program Coordinators can also move laterally from one industry, such as State government, to a similar position in another industry, such as education. Individuals may further their education with more education and seek teaching positions. In addition to advancement opportunities within a firm, those with strong business skills may open their own consulting firm.

Related Occupations

Below is a list of occupations related to Sustainability Program Coordinators.

- Chief Sustainability Officers (SOC 11-1011.03)
- Sustainability Specialists (SOC 13-1199.05)
- Urban and Regional Planners (SOC 19-3051.00)

Other Sources

- Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education
www.aashe.org/about
- Bureau of Labor Statistics, Green Jobs Initiative
www.bls.gov/green
- California Faculty Association
www.calfac.org/home
- California State University Employees Union
www.csueu.org
- Council of University of California Faculty Associations

- <http://cucfa.org>
- U.S. Green Building Council, LEED Certification
www.usgbc.org/LEED
- University Professional and Technical Employees/Communication Workers of America
www.upte.org

These links are provided for your convenience and do not constitute an endorsement by EDD.

For the Career Professional

The following codes are provided to assist counselors, job placement workers, or other career professionals.

System	Code
SOC – Standard Occupational Classification at www.bls.gov/soc	N/A
O*NET – Occupational Information Network at online.onetcenter.org	N/A

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