

# NEW STAFF ORIENTATION



**VCU**

Sustainability



# SUSTAINABILITY AT VCU: THE BIG PICTURE

At VCU, sustainability matters – for our university, our community and our world. As mindful stewards of the diverse human and natural environments we call home, VCU Sustainability strives to build a better, more sustainable future through education, innovation, collaboration and engagement. Addressing the needs of our students, faculty, staff and community, our programs promote positive behavioral change, responsible campus practices, and forward-looking, university-wide policies.

## ONE VCU SUSTAINABILITY PLAN

VCU's role in developing sustainable solutions is vital and affects not only the natural environment but also human health, health equity, and economic vitality. Our first ONE VCU Sustainability Plan identifies a path forward for VCU and VCU Health to interconnect complex issues and create sustainable solutions in order to deliver on our mission, as well as support the well-being of future generations. Read more about the plan goals and strategies [here](#).

## SUSTAINABILITY REPORTING

VCU reports sustainability data and progress every three years using the Sustainability Tracking, Assessment & Rating System, also known as STARS, which measures sustainability achievements in academics, engagement, operations, planning and administration, and innovation and leadership. VCU submitted its first STARS report in 2012 and in 2021 received a STARS Gold Rating from the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education. You can read the publicly available report [here](#).





# SUSTAINABILITY RESOURCES FOR STAFF ON CAMPUS

Your everyday actions on campus can contribute to a more sustainable VCU! The university offers staff members a variety of opportunities to create a more sustainable commute, reduce the amount of waste that they create, and more.

## REDUCE THE IMPACT OF YOUR COMMUTE

There are benefits to using alternative transportation options to get to campus, like carpooling, riding the bus, biking, and walking. These commute options can have a smaller impact on the environment than driving, help you save money on fuel costs and parking fees, increase physical activity, and support sustainable urban development. Check out these helpful resources to plan your sustainable commute:

- GRTC and Pulse BRT bus services are FREE! Use the [GRTC Trip Planner](#) to find the route that works best for you.
- VCU RamBikes is your resource for biking safely and enjoyably around campus. Visit the RamBikes shop for free bike rentals and repairs, do-it-yourself bike repair classes, and other bike-friendly events and workshops. Visit the shop at 1106 W. Broad St. or check out RamBikes online at [bikes.vcu.edu](https://bikes.vcu.edu).
- VCU and VCU Health System employees can participate in carpool and vanpool programs. To connect with others who would like to form a carpool/vanpool and to register your pool, visit: <https://parking.vcu.edu/alternative-transportation/carpoolsvanpools/>.

Try one option or pair multiple modes together to create the most convenient, efficient, and cost-effective transportation approach for you. For additional assistance with planning your commute, email [commute@vcu.edu](mailto:commute@vcu.edu).

# REDUCING WASTE ON CAMPUS

## RECYCLING

### PAPER

NEWSPAPERS, NOTES  
MAGAZINES, POSTERS  
NO SOILED PAPER



### PLASTIC

PLASTICS #1-7, CUPS  
JUGS, BOTTLES, TUBS  
PLEASE RINSE



### GLASS

JARS, JUGS, CUPS  
BOTTLES, VASES  
PLEASE RINSE



### METAL

SODA/SOUP CANS  
ALUMINUM FOIL  
PLEASE RINSE



### CARDBOARD

PIZZA BOXES, CEREAL BOXES  
CARTONS, PAPER TOWEL ROLLS  
NO FOOD OR SOILED CARDBOARD



VCU offers multiple ways for staff to reduce their waste footprint on campus, including a recycling program, composting collection sites, a campus food pantry and a donation-based creative reuse program.

VCU utilizes a single stream recycling program meaning that all recyclable material can be placed in the same recycling bin. Recycling bins are located throughout campus and are marked with signage that indicates the types of materials that can be recycled. For a list of recyclable items or to request a recycling bin, please visit <https://sustainability.vcu.edu/campus/recycling-waste/>.

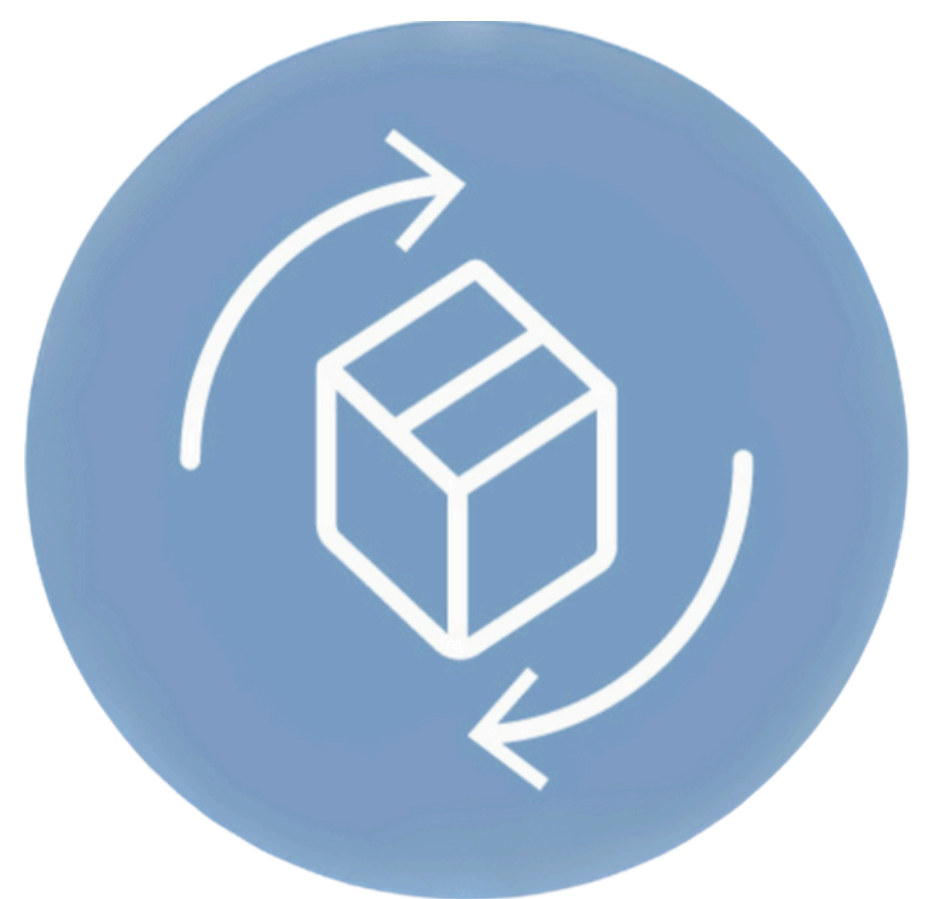
Both the Monroe Park and the MCV campus host compost collection sites as a part of the Richmond Compost Initiative, a city program that is stewarded by the Richmond Department of Parks, Recreation and Community Facilities. Compostable items include fruits and vegetables, coffee grounds and filters, eggshells and more. For a full list of items accepted at the compost collection sites, and a map of each campus site, please visit <https://www.richmondgrowsgardens.org/composting>.

## DONATING YOUR USABLE GOODS

### FREE STORE

VCU Sustainability also stewards a program that keeps usable goods out of the waste stream. The VCU Free Store is an on-campus resource for students, faculty and staff of VCU and VCU Health that promotes equitable access to everyday items such as school and art supplies, housewares, electronics, and more. For more information about how to donate your items or to utilize the Free Store service, please visit

<https://sustainability.vcu.edu/programs/free-store/>.





## RAM PANTRY

Many students and community members experience some level of food insecurity during their time at VCU. Staff members are encouraged to donate edible food items to the campus food pantry, Ram Pantry. Ram Pantry collaborates with university and community partners to research and implement innovative approaches to food security and community health while ensuring that every student has access to nutritious food. Staff can donate food to Ram Pantry during their open hours, and staff who are interested in keeping excess fresh food donations out of the landfill can sign up for the Surplus Program.



Visit <https://advocacy.vcu.edu/resources/ram-pantry/> to see the pantry's current open hours, learn more about ways to support the pantry, or to participate in the Surplus Program.

## FOLLOW US ON INSTAGRAM FOR SUSTAINABILITY TIPS!

We frequently feature sustainability tips on our Instagram account, [@vcusustainability](#), that VCU staff can incorporate into their daily routine. Topics include sustainability-oriented services and programs that are available to staff, volunteer activities in which staff can participate, ways to reduce your environmental impact through changes in daily habits, and more!





# GETTING INVOLVED IN SUSTAINABILITY WORK ON CAMPUS

Are you looking for hands-on sustainability opportunities on campus? VCU Sustainability stewards a [Gardens and Forestry Program](#) that provides VCU staff, faculty and students with opportunities to participate in educational volunteer experiences at garden and forestry sites on and near campus. The VCU Community Forestry Program partners with local community organizations in and around Richmond to plan and implement tree planting projects, provide tree maintenance, and estimate tree benefits. Community forestry volunteers learn about tree maintenance tasks, pollinator identification, and tree-related data collection. Our MPC educational garden provides fresh produce for the Ram Pantry, as well as volunteer activities related to garden planning, planting, weeding, harvesting and organic garden maintenance. VCU staff can utilize their [Enhanced Community Service Leave](#) hours to volunteer at these program sites!



Additionally, the community garden on the MCV Campus provides the VCU community with space to grow their own food and flowers. Garden members pay a modest fee to rent one of 35 raised bed plots and the fees are reinvested into the upkeep and maintenance of the garden. Reach out to [gardens@vcu.edu](mailto:gardens@vcu.edu) to volunteer, or to inquire about community garden plot availability.