

HI Richmond

Working towards a Triple Bottom Line with Energy and Water Reductions

Overview

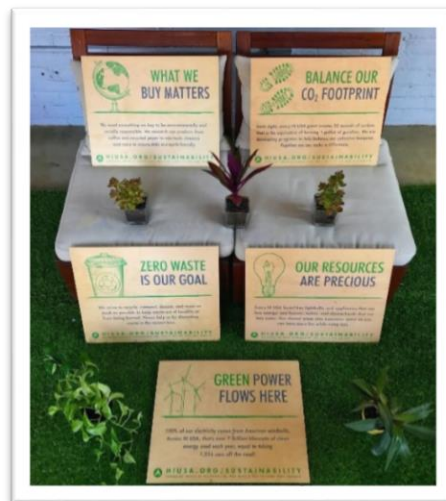
HI Richmond is part of HI USA, a nonprofit network of hostels founded on the power of travel to foster a deeper understanding of people, places and culture. HI Richmond is one of HI USA's top reviewed hostels and has one of the highest ratios of community activity participants to guest overnights.

How does HI's corporate sustainability policy influence HI Richmond's actions?

HI USA leverages its mission, operations and financial resources to improve the impact of the organization and achieve sustainable travel that is accessible to all while supporting local economies, preserving the environment and increasing the social and cultural capacity of people and host destinations. HI USA's Board of Directors measures annual performance by evaluating a Triple Bottom Line Report that sets environmental and social impacts alongside financial. HI USA has adopted policies and programs to reduce its carbon footprint, manage water use, increase waste diversion, purchase sustainable products, embrace green building and renovation practices and engage stakeholders in the process. Resources at the national level include a full-time Sustainability Lead to assist in environmental decision-making. Hosting is more environmentally friendly than staying in a hotel because of shared rooms and common spaces.

What energy reduction efforts have been most effective?

Using the [Cornell Hotel Sustainability Benchmarking Study](#) (CHSB) conducted in 2018, HI USA determined that hostel guests consume 5% of the average energy consumed by hotel guests. This savings is due to the way hostels are designed with a focus on shared spaces and accommodations. Unlike hotels, guests do not get their own set of appliances. As one of the newest properties, HI Richmond exceeds the HI USA's energy conservation policies. The hostel has 100% LED bulbs, ENERGY STAR appliances and energy saving windows. Occupancy sensors control lighting, and a full building HVAC system is managed from the front desk. To support the development of renewable energy, HI Richmond purchases Renewable Energy Credits from American wind turbines to match 100% of its electricity consumption and has done so since 2015.



Green Signage

What are some best practices for reducing water use?

Using data from the CHSB it was determined that HI USA hotel guests consume only 14% of the average water consumed by average hotel guests. HI Richmond exceeds all HI USA water conservation requirements, consuming 66.21 liters of water per square foot annually. Some water reduction is from not offering standard linen service and making it by request only. The hostel is also outfitted with low-flow showers, sinks and toilets. The hostel has an on-demand hot water heating system that reduces energy consumption in addition to conserving water. As part of HI USA's Million Gallon Challenge to get hostel guests to help them save 1 million gallons over the year using a \$250,000 grant from Booking.com, HI Richmond will be receiving Hydrao Smart Showers. These showers have built-in programmable LED lights that will be set to encourage guests to take a shower in less than 7 minutes.

What other ways have you reduced your environmental impact?

- HI Richmond only uses green cleaning products.
- Purchases are made in bulk and in recyclable containers whenever possible to reduce waste.
- All paint is low or no VOC.
- HI Richmond has switched to reusable batteries, which are recycled at the end of their usable life.
- Used light bulbs are taken to a local facility for recycling.
- No pesticides are used to maintain green spaces.
- A three-compartment sink is used in the kitchen to help control water consumed washing dishes.
- HI Richmond staff members are offered a pre-tax public transportation reimbursement.
- HI Richmond provides indoor hanging bike racks to encourage people to bike to the hostel.

What is the cost benefit to the environmental programs?

HI Richmond's commitment to sustainability improves its environmental, social and financial bottom lines both nationally and locally at the hostel. Effective green building design of the hostel, including efficient equipment, has resulted in reduced water and energy consumption compared to similar accommodations. HI Richmond uses 70% of the energy and 25% of the water per square foot versus the average Richmond hotel. Because of the efficiency built into the facility, HI Richmond saves approximately \$6,700 on energy and \$17,000 on water per year compared to an average Richmond hotel.



HI Richmond was awarded the 2019 Virginia Green Travel Star Award for Green Lodging Facility of the Year

How do guests participate in your environmental efforts?

The hostel has been Virginia Green certified from opening day in September 2015, most recently winning the 2019 Green Lodging Facility of the Year award from Virginia Green. The hostel was recognized by Hostelling International as the top rated hostel globally among its international network of 3,000 hostels. The hostel has also been Green Globe certified since May 2019. HI Richmond tailors its programming to specifically encourage and highlight its environmental efforts as well as those groups in the community with a similar dedication to bettering the environment. Signage is placed throughout the hostel about environmental commitments as well as its mission and purpose statements. The hostel only provides information about green transportation options to guests and highlights bus routes and schedules. Walking is always encouraged as a primary option and the hostel has ready-made self-guided walking tours available to guests as a recommended way to see the city.