



Image via [Pexels](#)

Green Entrepreneurship Guide: How to Start a Sustainable Business

Do you have a brilliant green business idea and need help making it a reality? Farm-to-table food suppliers, zero-waste retailers, community compost services, and green consulting firms are just a few of the eco-conscious businesses that have risen in popularity over recent years. While some of these innovative entrepreneurs have a background in business, others are starting a business for the first time.

If you fall in the latter camp, how can you give your green business a shot at success? Here's how you can turn your great idea into a sustainable business.

Test Your Business Idea

There's never been a better time to launch a green business, but even the most in-demand businesses need a roadmap to success.

- Every great business starts with a business plan. This guide walks you through the [essential components](#) of a startup business plan.

- Before investing time and money into a business, set up a simple website to test your concept. Website tracking and Google Adwords are [quick and easy ways](#) to validate a business idea.
- Crowdfunding validates a business idea while raising startup capital at the same time. Successful crowdfunding requires [intensive self-promotion](#).

Establish a Business Entity

Once feeling confident in your business plan, follow these steps to make it official.

- [Incorporating your business](#) offers benefits like tax savings, liability protection, and a separate Tax ID, also known as an EIN number.
- What is an EIN number? The [IRS assigns EIN numbers](#) to identify a business as a separate tax entity. Without an EIN, a business owner's personal assets are exposed to greater risk.
- Business insurance is another important step to protect against risk. General liability and business owner's policies are the most [common types](#) of business insurance.
- Business license and permit requirements vary by [location and industry](#), but almost every business needs some type of license and/or permit.

Earn Green Business Credentials

Third-party credentials establish trust and assure consumers your brand isn't greenwashing. Which green business certifications pay off for businesses?

- B Corp Certified, GreenSeal, Rainforest Alliance Certified, and LEED are among the [most recognized](#) green business certifications.
- In Spokane county your business can become [EnviroCertified](#). Benefits include free technical assistance, website presence and media promotion.
- Avoid big claims that you can't back up. [Be transparent](#) about your environmental commitments and avoid vague terms like "natural" and "eco-friendly."
- Even credentialed green businesses aren't immune to wasteful practices. [Audit internal operations](#) from top to bottom to identify places where you can become more sustainable.
- After officially going green, [let customers know](#) by sharing your achievements on social media and building environmental policy into your messaging.

Green entrepreneurship is the future. Whether the environment is at the heart of your startup's mission or you're a business owner seeking more sustainable practices, take steps to protect our drinking water from hazardous materials. Learn about the free technical assistance available to businesses in the Spokane area at the [Spokane Aquifer Joint Board](#) and at [EnviroCertified](#).