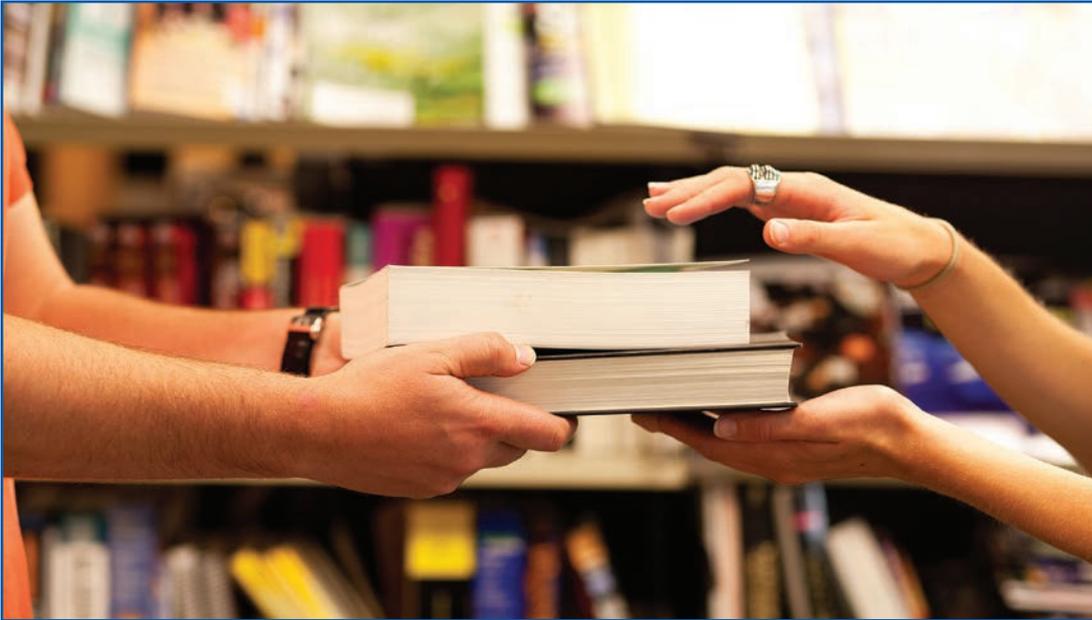


Zero-waste lifestyle



This section includes more advanced tips on creating a low-waste and environmentally friendly lifestyle that goes beyond the creation and management of solid waste. These lifestyle tips take into account the upstream impact of product manufacturing, energy use, and water consumption.

Hobbies and gifts

To reduce giving gifts that someone will never use, give gifts of experiences instead of things. Some examples include tickets to a play, movie, concert, or sports game. You could also buy someone a membership to a museum, or take them out for a special meal at their favorite restaurant.

Instead of buying a new book, check one out from a Hennepin County library. It will also save space on your bookshelf.

Focus your family time on activities instead of toys and electronics. Many activities can be free or inexpensive, and you'll spend more quality time together. Explore parks, play sports, cook a low-waste meal, or walk the dog. Check out local calendars for seasonal activities like music or movies in the parks.

Low-maintenance yards

The way we care for our yards makes a difference, and implementing sustainable landscaping techniques can save money and time, protect our health and benefit the environment. A healthy, vigorous lawn needs less watering and

less maintenance. Instead of grass, plant natives that benefit pollinators and beautify your yard. There are also ground covers and sedges that can be planted that require low or no mowing.

Start a garden and eat local



Growing your own produce is a great way to reduce packaging and ensure that your fruits and veggies are grown without pesticides. If you don't have a yard or an area big enough for a garden, you can get a plot at a community garden. Find a map of community gardens in the Twin Cities at gardeningmatters.org/find-garden. They also have tips on starting your own garden.

Another way to reduce the impact of your meals is to eat local foods that are in season. This reduces the carbon emissions generated by transporting foods across the globe. Here are some examples of cookbooks to help get you started:

- Eating Local by Sur La Table
- Edible: A Celebration of Local Foods by Tracey Ryder and Carole Topalian
- Mark Bittman's Kitchen Express – 404 inspired seasonal dishes you can make in 20 minutes or less by Mark Bittman

Start your kids off on the right foot by teaching them to cook and enjoy more foods. This can help you prevent food waste, avoid unhealthy packaged foods, and set a good example.

Join the sharing economy

The sharing economy is a growing movement for people to connect and share resources rather than everyone buying their own. The following are some ways to join the sharing economy.

Transportation

Reduce your vehicle usage by biking, taking mass transit, or participating in a car sharing program.

Some car and bike sharing programs in the Twin Cities include:

- Hourcar (hourcar.org) and Zipcar (zipcar.com): Think of Hourcar and Zipcar for your longer trips (such as going to an appointment, to dinner, or for errands). These car services are also great for your runs to local stores to buy larger items or trips out of the cities.
- Nice Ride (niceridemn.org): If you don't have your own bike, use the Nice Ride program when biking around Minneapolis and St. Paul.

Tools

Become a member of a tool library. The Minnesota Tool Library has a variety of tools available for its members to borrow. Learn more at mntoolibrary.org.

Toys



Getting your kids involved by participating in a toy borrowing or swapping program. The Minneapolis Toy Library is a lending program in which member families can borrow toys that are geared towards children from birth to 5 years old. Learn more at mplstoylibrary.org

Online

Get to know your neighbors through Nextdoor, neighborhood Facebook groups, and events like National Night Out. Use the people you know as resources for borrowing, lending, and selling things like home goods or clothing.

Conserve water and energy

Another great way to reduce your carbon footprint is to use water and energy more efficiently. The Center for Energy and Environment offers home energy audits in many communities in Hennepin County. Learn more at homeenergysquad.net.

Find water conservation tips from the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency at pca.state.mn.us/living-green/conserving-water.

Learn how to protect water and read stories of what others are doing cleanwatermn.org.

Create change in your community

By sharing your story, you can inspire others and bring changes to your workplace, place of worship, or kids' school.

Tell your family, friends and neighbors what you are doing. If people ask, explain the low-waste lifestyle change you are trying to make. Start a blog (see examples in additional resources), share on social media, or offer to speak to a community group.

Hennepin County has programs to help:

- Hennepin County Master Recycler/Composters are trained volunteers that advocate for the 3Rs in their community by setting up or improving waste diversion efforts and educating others. Learn more at hennepin.us/masterrecyclers.
- Business and school recycling grants are available to help you set up recycling and organics programs as well as other waste reduction efforts. Learn more at hennepin.us/businessrecycling or hennepin.us/schoolrecycling.
- Green Partners environmental education grants are available to organizations to educate, engage and empower residents to make positive environmental changes in their daily lives. Topics include waste reduction and recycling, energy conservation, protecting land and water, reducing and properly disposing of hazardous waste, and improving air and water quality. Learn more at hennepin.us/greenpartners.