



Sustainable PGH

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 11, 2023

Contact: Ginette Walker Vinski

gvinski@sustainablepittsburgh.org

412.258.6646

Sustainable Pittsburgh announces first ever Sustainable Pittsburgh Workplaces

- Tailored for southwestern Pennsylvania with global insights, the Sustainable PGH Workplace program benchmarks workplaces on sustainability best practices
- Workplaces earning formal designation have demonstrated commitment to environmental, social and governance performance
 - Three workplaces are the first to earn this formal recognition

(Pittsburgh, PA) - Today the nonprofit Sustainable Pittsburgh announced the first ever organizations to earn formal designation as Sustainable Pittsburgh Workplaces:

- University of Pittsburgh - Platinum level
- Allegheny County, Downtown Campus - Gold level
- Trademark Threads - Silver level

The newest of Sustainable Pittsburgh's formal recognition programs, Sustainable Pittsburgh Workplace recognizes any business, nonprofit, or other organization that has demonstrated a commitment to environmental, social and governance performance. Workplaces that prioritize sustainability contribute to more vibrant, equitable communities and support a healthy environment.

"We are thrilled to recognize these first three workplaces for their achievements in driving measurable progress in advancing socially just and environmentally sustainable operations," shared Joylette Portlock, Ph.D., Executive Director of Sustainable Pittsburgh. "These leaders are setting an example for their peers in southwestern PA by embedding sustainability as a core value to their operations, both internally and within the community."

The Sustainable Pittsburgh Workplace program offers a globally relevant framework for sustainability progress. It includes best practices to reduce organizational risk and expense, respond to stakeholder expectations, better attract and retain employees, tap new markets and innovations, support the local community, and stand out to customers, investors, and other constituents.

Sustainable Pittsburgh evaluates the workplace across a range of categories and actions including carbon reduction; diversity, equity, and inclusion; resource conservation; responsible sourcing; and product design. Workplaces are recognized with one of four levels of designation ranging from Bronze to Platinum.

Among the inaugural designees, the University of Pittsburgh is the first to earn Platinum, the highest level of achievement.

"The University of Pittsburgh defines sustainability as balancing equity, environment, and economics so current and future generations can thrive," said Aurora Sharrard, Ph.D., Executive Director of Sustainability. "Keeping this in focus, Pitt is actively involved in sustainability initiatives and practices across disciplines, domains, and scales — including a commitment to carbon neutrality by 2037. Pitt is earning a strong reputation for its culture of sustainability across the nation because of the university's business operations, research collaborations, fostering of vibrant student groups, and commitment to master planning. We encourage others to join and follow along as we continually challenge the status quo to create sustainable solutions, actions, strategies, and opportunities for students, faculty, staff, our campuses, and Western Pennsylvania."

Workplaces may choose to earn a designation for their organization as a whole or for a specific part of their business (department, division, franchise, etc.). Allegheny County is an example of an organization that opted to earn designation for a key segment of its operations. The county earned recognition as a Gold designated Sustainable Pittsburgh Workplace for its downtown campus. The campus includes the Health Department Administration Building, County Office Building, Family Law Court Building, and the County Courthouse.

"Since 2012, this administration has focused on addressing our carbon footprint and impact on our climate by assuring that we think about sustainable measures in each and every action we've taken as a county," said County Executive Rich Fitzgerald. "Reflecting that work, we've earned the top score for our category in the Sustainable Pittsburgh Challenge for several years. Our commitment to continuing to advance sustainability best practices across our entire footprint has elevated even more this year with the creation of the county's Department of Sustainability. We are excited by this Gold level achievement and look forward to continuing to raise the bar on our performance and to serve as an example for other governments about what they can accomplish when a focus on sustainability is in everything they do."

Trademark Threads, the first to earn designation as a Silver Sustainable Pittsburgh Workplace, is a small business exclusively serving the business to business market with e-commerce uniform programs of custom branded apparel, safety and advertising products produced in-house and shipped nationally.

Owner Michael Wentzel shared, "Trademark Threads is honored to be recognized for our commitment to sustainability. As a federally designated HUBzone business, Trademark Threads is poised for long term growth and economic sustainability in the re-emerging business community of New Kensington. Our practice of prioritizing human needs, diversity and social cohesion in our workforce improves families and the neighborhoods they call home.

Environmentally sustainable strategies impact every decision we make for ethically sourced supplies and conserving resources. The focus on sustainability required to achieve this designation profoundly influences our actions with trade partners, employees and our neighborhoods.”

The Sustainable Pittsburgh Workplace program is uniquely positioned in that it advances a comprehensive view of sustainability, where social equity, environmental stewardship, and economic prosperity are integrated simultaneously into decision-making. It complements global sustainability reporting mechanisms including B Corp Certification and Global Reporting Initiative Standards and local frameworks like Vibrant Pittsburgh’s Vibrant Index.

To achieve a given level of designation, organizations must both a) earn a percentage of points available in the program and b) complete a set of required actions specific to each level. To earn a Platinum designation, a workplace must fulfill all of the requirements for Bronze, Silver, Gold, and Platinum.

Other Sustainable Pittsburgh recognition programs include:

- Sustainable Pennsylvania - for municipalities throughout the Commonwealth; managed in partnership with Pennsylvania Municipal League
- Sustainable Pittsburgh Shop - open to retail/“mom and pop” businesses
- Sustainable Pittsburgh Restaurant - for brick & mortar establishments with a kitchen

More than 250 shops and restaurants have earned sustainable designation in southwestern Pennsylvania. Across the Commonwealth, over 120 municipalities have earned certification, including 69 in southwestern Pennsylvania. Certified sustainable municipalities are home to more than 3.4 million residents across the state.

Sustainable Pittsburgh believes that businesses, nonprofits, institutions, and local governments have the power to make this region a better place for all. Based on market-selected practices and peer-reviewed by knowledge experts, these voluntary recognition programs present a framework that can be used to drive measurable impact at organizations and in communities. Offering these tools, making connections, and elevating the good work of these organizations are integral to Sustainable Pittsburgh’s mission to empower decision-making that builds a fundamentally equitable, resilient, healthy, and prosperous region. More information is available at SustainablePittsburgh.org.

About Sustainable Pittsburgh

Sustainable PGH is committed to building the knowledge, perspective, and ability needed to create a better tomorrow for our region. We’re optimistic, having worked with nearly a thousand businesses, communities and organizations to take action using our customized frameworks to track progress and simultaneously advance social equity, environmental stewardship, and prosperity. The strategic networks we host leverage the collective expertise and diverse perspectives within our region to ensure our communities can meet our challenges today and thrive into the future. Together, we are co-creating a fundamentally equitable, resilient, healthy, and prosperous southwestern Pennsylvania.

###