



2018 Environmental Impact Report



HI USA

WE BELIEVE RESPONSIBLE TRAVEL IS THE ONLY WAY TO TRAVEL.



Hostelling International USA (HI USA) is a mission-driven nonprofit with a purpose to create a more tolerant world, as well as the nation's leading hostel brand. Our network includes more than 50 hostels nationwide, hosting more than 1 million overnights annually.

Within our collection, HI USA operates 35 properties. For these hostels, we are committed to infusing a triple pillar approach to sustainability into everything we do, from the overnight itself to community education programs. This report explores our measures to uphold the environmental pillar within these HI USA-managed locations.

Sustainability is in our DNA. Our hostels bring together travelers from more than 100 countries, who are immersed in authentic, local experiences the second they walk through the door, while also sharing spaces and resources with their fellow travelers. As community hubs, we offer impact-driven activities and educational programs for travelers and locals alike that harness the principles of sustainable tourism, building a new generation of environmental stewards.

This blend of social and environmental impact is a hallmark of the HI USA experience. In the mid-1990s, we began to take a more refined and strategic approach to prioritizing environmentally sustainable practices, and we have been leading innovation and best practices ever since. This report covers our current successes and future aspirations.

HI USA partners with UC Berkeley to launch the Sustainable Living Center

1993

HI USA incorporates environmental principles into its quality standards

1995

The Sustainable Living Center earns a Tourism for Tomorrow award from British Airways

Environmental standards become mandatory at all HI USA hostels

2009

The first HI USA hostels receive internationally-accredited sustainability certification

2012



HI USA's Board of Directors adopts Triple Bottom Line reporting

2015

Recognized with EPA's Green Power Leadership Club for purchasing 100% green electricity

2016

HI USA's Roadmap to Environmental Responsibility approved by the Board of Directors

HI USA recognized as a National Geographic Leader in Sustainable Tourism gold at the HSMAI Adrian Awards

2017

HI USA launches the Pack Your Impact campaign in support of the UN's International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development in 2017, our first consumer-focused campaign on a global scale

2018

Booking.com Cares Fund awards HI USA €200,000 to pursue a cutting edge sustainability project aimed at water reduction

OUR STRATEGIC APPROACH



For HI USA to meet our goals, we invite our guests and local communities to be part of our journey

To truly make an impact, our strategy must mobilize, engage, and empower our guests, communities, and staff – not just improve our hostel operations.

At the hostel and network level, we've established policies, metrics, programs, and certification systems to guide our actions and create accountability. Additionally, each hostel deploys custom initiatives to support their unique building, such as graywater, composting, and solar panel systems. For more details, please visit hiosa.org/sustainability.

We aim to educate and empower our guests and community of travelers to be environmental stewards in their own right. In 2017, we launched the award-winning Pack Your Impact campaign. This initiative uses gamification, events, and activities to show travelers how to maximize their social impact while minimizing their environmental impact on every journey. Tools and resources can be found at hiosa.org/packyourimpact.

To support the local communities, our hostels participate in local environmental events, host community groups, and lead our own education programs. National programs are designed to further these efforts, such as Great Hostel Give Back, which encourages community service by offering free accommodations in exchange for volunteerism. Learn more about this program and others at hiosa.org/programs.

This holistic approach to sustainability creates complementary pathways to support our triple bottom line while creating impactful experiences for our guests and protecting our local communities.

This report focuses on one pillar of our Triple Bottom Line by highlighting our commitment to environmental responsibility. If you have questions or recommendations for us, please email us at sustainability@hiosa.org.



Pack Your Impact uses games, events, and activities to help travelers minimize their environmental impact.

Why It Matters

According to the UN World Tourism Organization, 1.2 billion travelers explore the world each year; sustainable travel is key to helping cities and destinations handle such impact.

CONTROLLING OUR CARBON FOOTPRINT



Conservation is only a starting point for reducing greenhouse gas emissions. In order to reach international targets, we must embrace strategies to support renewable energy.

The two main sources of greenhouse gas emissions at HI USA are hostel energy consumption and business travel by staff. Our current focus is on calculating and reducing our energy consumption through an approach that combines conservation, procurement, and production.

Mandatory Hostel Standards

As part of our Mandatory Hostel Standards, all hostels have LED lights and Energy Star rated appliances. Additionally, hostels must have visible signage to communicate to guests their sustainable practices and encourage travelers to conserve.

Energy Audits

Within the past 10 years, our largest hostels have received professional energy audits. This effort has resulted in significant investments in energy conservation technology, including variable speed HVAC drives, occupancy-based controls, and other energy-efficient equipment.

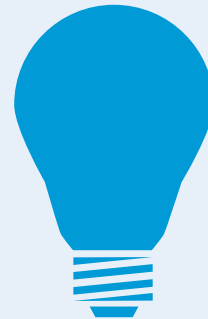
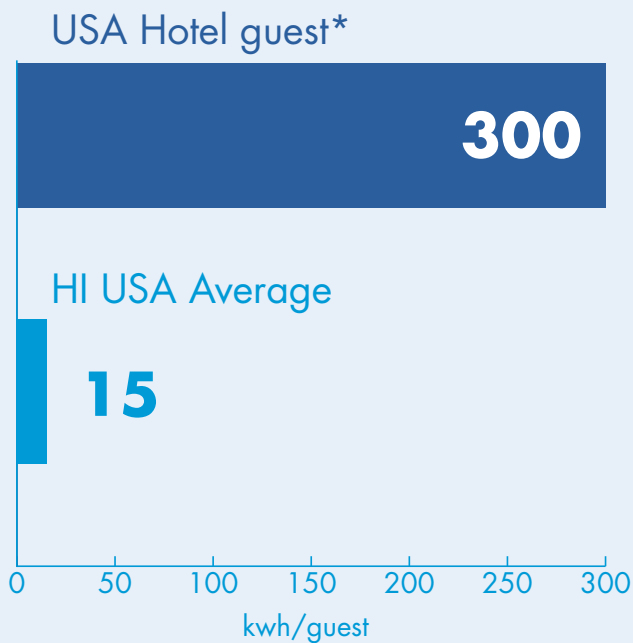
Renewable Energy

In 2015, HI USA began purchasing renewable energy credits equivalent to 100% of our electricity consumption, or 7,400,000 kwh annually. Because of this, our organization became a member of the US EPA's Green Power Leadership club.

However, producing our own renewable energy is just as important as buying it. Two HI USA hostels currently have solar panels on their roof: HI Point Reyes and HI San Francisco City Center.

Collectively, these systems generate 60,000 kWh of electricity per year. The system in San Francisco was installed in 2018 and will offset 33% of the hostels electricity. This reduces greenhouse gas emissions equivalent to driving over 69,000 miles in a car!

HI USA's 2017 Carbon Footprint Snapshot



The energy saved per day by a HI USA guest versus the average hotel guest is enough to power a 60w LED equivalent lightbulb for 4 years!

*according to Cornell's 2017 Hotel Sustainability Benchmarking Report and using 1.5 average guests per occupied room

The amount of CO₂ saved each day per HI USA guest over the average hotel guest is the same as driving 520 miles in a car



Why It Matters

Travel and tourism accounts for 10% of global greenhouse gas emissions annually according to the UN Environment Program.

USING WATER WISELY



Fresh water is a finite resource, impacting nearly every region in the world. With guests from more than 100 countries staying at HI USA hostels each year, attention to water conservation is as important to our global community of travelers as it is to our local communities.

While each American consumes an average of 90** gallons of water per day, American hotel guests consume an average of 236*. In contrast, only 34 gallons of water is consumed per guest per day at a HI USA hostel. However, that's still 33,500,000 gallons per year – a significant amount that needs to be managed wisely.

Our approach combines conservation and reuse techniques to ensure we minimize consumption and are thoughtful of our discharge.

Strategies include:

- Low-flow shower heads, faucets, and toilets
- Towel and linen conservation programs, requiring an active request for any replacement
- Unique, innovative conservation measures specific to hostel location to address consumption, reuse, and discharge

*According to the 2017 Hotel Sustainability Benchmarking Index and assuming an average of 1.5 guests per occupied hotel room.

**According to the US Geological Survey

Hostel Highlights

HI Monterey provides guests three tokens per day for the shower, which adds up to 10.5 minutes of shower time. Staff encourage guests to save and return one token per day, creating a challenge that promotes discussion on water conservation and environmental stewardship within the community.

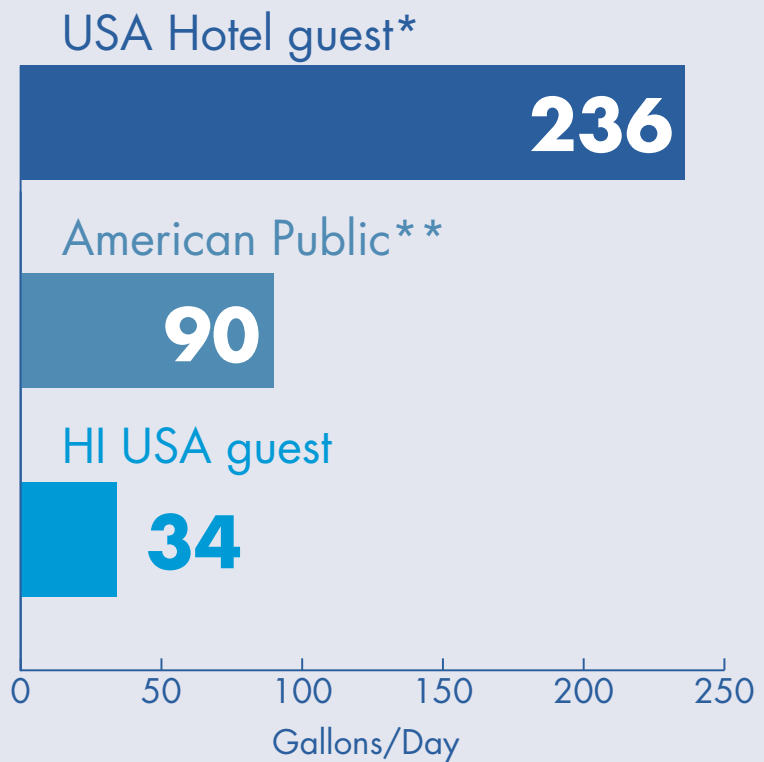
HI New York City (as well as several other large hostels) have ozone-assisted laundry washing systems that reduce consumption of water, energy, and chemicals. The hostel also has occupancy-based shower timers that help guests take responsible-length showers.

HI Portland Hawthorne received a grant in 2008 to construct a rainwater harvesting system that connects to its green roof. Two 4,000-gallon cisterns collect up to 80%, or 43,000 gallons, of the runoff rainwater annually, which is then filtered and used to flush the hostel's toilets.

HI San Diego Point Loma and **HI Point Montara Lighthouse** hostels have graywater recycling systems, which capture 100% of laundry machine wastewater and use it to irrigate the hostels' gardens. Combined with **HI Portland Hawthorne**, these hostels recycled 133,780 gallons of water in 2017.

Out of over 250 applicants, HI USA was one of just 5 organizations from around the world to receive one of Booking.com's first ever Booking Cares Fund grants in March 2018. The grant of 200,000 euros will be used to fund a game-changing water conservation project using Hydrao's SmartShower system that aims to reduce 1 million gallons of water at HI USA hostels annually.

Average Daily Water Consumption 2017



Why It Matters

One third of our hostels are located in California, which experienced a historic drought from 2014-2017.

MANAGING OUR WASTE



Managing waste includes not just what we throw away but also what we buy and how we use it.

Our waste strategy includes efforts to reuse and reduce waste within the hostel alongside efforts to recycle and purchase items with recycled content.

Purchasing

HI USA prioritizes sustainable products and responsible suppliers by establishing environmentally responsible criteria for hostels to follow when purchasing key items. All hostels purchase office and janitorial paper (copier paper, paper towels, toilet paper, and tissues) made of at least 30% recycled-content, and in most cases, 100%. Additionally, each hostel purchases eco-certified cleaners, soaps, detergents, and other eco-preferred supplies and materials.

In the kitchen, where most guests spend substantial time cooking their own meals or enjoying complimentary breakfast, we've eliminated the use of disposable dinnerware. In some of our smaller hostels, disposable napkins and towels have been

replaced with reusables. These best practices are employed in hostel-based staff kitchens as well.

Product Usage

How you use a product is just as important as what you buy. Paper has its place, but HI USA employs efficient alternatives whenever possible to ensure paper is only being used when absolutely necessary. Many of our hostels provide reusable sign-up sheets for their daily tours and activities, and all of our hostels offer paperless checkout.

Our hostels are also quite clever at repurposing materials. At HI Harper's Ferry, you'll find chairs and tables upcycled out of items that would otherwise be in the trash. At HI Point Reyes, they have door mats made of recycled plastic bags and picture frames constructed out of reclaimed wood. With the freedom to create, our hostels thrive at repurposing materials to reflect the unique vibe of their location.

Disposal

We believe recycling – let alone general disposal – is a last resort if we can't prevent waste or reuse material. When prevention and reuse are simply not possible, we employ the following national policies to minimize our impact:

- Recycle printer cartridges and batteries
- Donate linens that are not being repurposed on-site
- Customize a recycling program based on unique guidelines of the local community

Additionally, 40% of our hostels compost food waste by using their own tumblers, or through a haul-away service. In 2017, HI New York City earned second place in the HI Sustainability grant competition based on a proposal for a rapid in-vessel composter, which creates compost in a fraction of the time as traditional systems. This compost will be used to support the hostel's green space, with excess donated to the local community. The on-site tool will live at the most trafficked hostel in North America, and is an important step towards reaching HI USA's national goal of zero waste.

HI USA's Path to Zero Waste

The journey to zero waste is no easy task, yet it's necessary to ensure the viability of the tourism industry. The composting project at HI New York City is just the beginning of our journey. It will be supported by a special committee of staff across several hostels, who will use the project as a model for other properties to create their own waste diversion plans. And we're relying on innovation and creativity to address some big challenges ahead.



Waste audit at HI New York City

Local food safety laws are one of these challenges. The communal, self-serve kitchens found at each HI USA hostel are a sought-after amenity by our world travelers, and we are committed to finding solutions that best serve our guests and the planet. In some instances, we've had to switch to individually packaged breakfast goods, which create unwelcome, excessive waste. To address this challenge, new hostels are being designed to avoid such mandates, while existing hostels are upgrading kitchens when feasible. Where upgrades are not possible, we will be exploring ways to divert this influx of soft plastic packaging into a specialized recycling stream.

The first step in developing a successful waste diversion plan is to dive into your waste, literally. In the past, hostels have weighed their own trash to determine their recycling rates. Our HI New York City project started with a waste composition study, where each bag was opened to determine what opportunities we have in our existing waste streams. Our goal is to work with similar partners in other cities as a first step to developing future hostel plans across the country.

Why It Matters

According to the US Environmental Protection Agency, each American generates about 4 pounds of trash each day. Although 75% is recyclable, only 30% is recycled.

REINVENTING SPACES



From coastal lighthouses to historical mansions and everything in between, 9 out of 10 HI USA hostels operate out of reused buildings. We have adopted a policy of prioritizing adaptive reuse of buildings because of the rich, local history of each building, and the reduced environmental impact associated with preserving them.

Long a part of our ethic, environmental principles are incorporated into HI USA hostel design and construction. Since the late 1980s, our hostel development projects have been using innovative eco-conscious materials such as floor tiles made from recycled jet windshields and exterior decking made of recycled plastic. These reclaimed

materials are a unique, sustainable byproduct of adaptively reusing buildings that we have used in various interior design concepts. Additionally, we aim to include the most innovative, efficient, and feasible energy and water mechanical systems in new construction and renovation projects.

Recent Hostel Development Projects

HI Boston

In 2012, HI Boston became the first LEED certified hospitality accommodation in Boston. The 480-bed hostel is housed in the Dill Building, a six-story structure dating back to 1886 and listed on the National Register. As a LEED Silver property, the hostel features:

- LED lighting with daylight and occupancy sensors
- An efficient HVAC system that controls temperature loss when bringing fresh air into the hostel
- A white reflective roof
- Energy Star rated appliances
- A storm-water capture and water table recharge system
- An elevator that recycles brake energy

Additionally, 75% of the construction waste was recycled, and more than 50% of the new wood used in the building was Forest Stewardship Council certified. Many of the building materials and furnishings contain recycled content, including chairs, drywall, ceilings, concrete floors, carpeting, and fireplace tile. A favorite is the reclaimed building timbers used to create stair planks and table tops. In addition to being created as an environmentally conscious space, the building's interior is comprised of locally-representative art. Boston's unique history is infused into a contemporary design, which includes themed guest floors, murals, photography, and historical displays.

HI Richmond

In 2015, what was once an Otis elevator manufacturing building, followed by a low-security correctional facility for women, opened its doors as HI Richmond. This 58-bed hostel features original hardwood floors, energy efficient windows, and LED lighting with occupancy sensors, as well as an advanced heating and air conditioning unit that reduces thermal change by efficiently circulating refrigerant. On-demand water heaters reduce thermal loss associated with hot water storage and long-runs of piping. The eye-catching front desk is made entirely of wood reclaimed from demolition, enhancing the hostel's modern rustic vibe with innovative reuse.



Top: Elevators in the HI Boston hostel recycle their braking energy, saving up to 75% of the energy used in conventional elevators. **Above:** Original wood from renovations make up the HI Richmond front desk.

Why it Matters

According to the EPA, 534 million tons of construction and demolition debris were generated in the United States in 2014 — more than twice the amount of generated municipal solid waste.

ENGAGING COMMUNITIES IN ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP



Supporting – and reveling in – Mother Nature is a priority for all of our hostels in order to engage guests and the local community in our vision of a sustainable future.

San Francisco Bay Area: Outdoor Hostel Adventures

Outdoor Hostel Adventures (OHA) fosters an appreciation and stewardship of the natural world by introducing disadvantaged Bay Area youth to the great outdoors. For many participants, this is their first time seeing the ocean or a sky full of stars.

Since 1986, OHA has opened young eyes to a world they never knew existed, inspiring a curiosity to see and do more. Local hostels host participants for half or-day programs, which become organic classrooms unrivaled by the modern urban centers these young students are used to.

The success of this program is thanks to long-held partnerships with schools, non-profits, and local ecology experts, as well as donations to subsidize the pricing. Over the past decade, 10,000 children have gone on an outdoor adventure at a HI USA hostel.

HI Portland Hawthorne: Global Goals Fair

In recognition of World Environment Day and the UN year of Sustainable Tourism, HI Portland Hawthorne partnered with Greater Portland Sustainability Education Network (GPSEN) and United Nations Association of Portland (UNA Portland) to host the Global Goals Fair. Aiming to increase community awareness of the UN's Agenda 2030, the hostel partnered with local community organizations whose work embodied one of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals. As Portland's only community event in honor of World Environment Day in 2017, the fair drew over 125 attendees.



UNWTO's Sustainable Development Goals



Cooking as a Second Language program at HI Richmond.

HI Richmond: Earth Day

Working in partnership with local community organizations, HI Richmond attracted more than 80 attendees for its 2017 Earth Day celebration. From yoga to seed bomb making, to the hostel's signature program, Cooking as a Second Language, the event offered a variety of free activities to engage guests and the community in sustainable living. The celebration also gave a platform to the Sierra Club and Citizen's Climate Lobby to rally like-minded advocates in support of their respective causes. Additionally, a lobbying effort around addressing climate change was also organized.

Why it Matters

75% of Americans say they are concerned about helping the environment, but only 20% live in ways that help them protect the environment all the time according to Pew Research.

ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION FUND

In 2017, HI USA launched an Environmental Action Fund with a goal of raising \$250,000. These funds are exclusively reserved for sustainable improvements, spanning solar panels, waste water collection, composting, and more across more than 30 hostels. With more than 400,000 travelers staying with us a year, HI USA has a responsibility to control our carbon footprint, and this fund helps put high impact measures in place.

Projects currently on the docket include:

- **Native and Butterfly-Habitat Landscaping**
HI New York City's backyard is the largest private greenspace in Manhattan, but has largely been underutilized. These new plants will form a garden that will be enjoyed by guests, staff, and the local community.
- **Vertical Green Wall**
HI San Diego Point Loma is a true oasis. This new vertical green wall will add to an already inspiring landscape that promotes environmental respect and enhances the hostel experience.
- **Innovative Waste Solutions**
With guests from every corner of the world passing through our hostels, we need to find ways to effectively communicate our role and theirs in sustainability. We're thinking outside the box to identify universal communication tactics to engage a diverse audience in our journey to zero waste.



Environmental Action Fund Donors

\$5,000 or more:

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\$2,000-\$4,999:

John & Francille Firebaugh

\$1,000-1,999:

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Anita Gras-Bryant

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\$500-999:

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Myron Zeitz

AWARDS

Booking.com Cares Fund Grant, 2018

National Geographic Leader in Sustainable Tourism – Gold, 2017

British Airways Tourism for Tomorrow Award, 1995

CERTIFICATIONS



Top: HI Houston hostel. **Above:** Guests enjoy the patio at HI Sacramento.

Green Globe Certification

2017

HI Boston

HI Chicago

HI New York City

HI Portland Hawthorne

HI Sacramento

HI San Francisco City Center

HI San Francisco Downtown

HI Washington DC

2016

HI Austin

HI Houston

HI Monterey

HI Pigeon Point Lighthouse

HI Point Montara Lighthouse

HI Point Reyes

LEED Certification

Gold

HI Point Reyes (Annex Building)

Silver

HI Boston

Energy Star Certification

HI San Francisco City Center

California Green Business Certification

HI Marin Headlands

HI Pigeon Point Lighthouse

HI Point Montara Lighthouse

HI Point Reyes

Santa Monica Green Business Certification

HI Los Angeles Santa Monica

Virginia Green Certification

HI Richmond

Sustainability at Work

HI Portland Hawthorne



Top: HI Pigeon Point Lighthouse hostel. **Middle:** HI San Francisco City Center. **Above:** HI Los Angeles Santa Monica.

For questions about HI USA's environmental projects
and initiatives, please visit hiousa.org/sustainability,
or email us at sustainability@hiousa.org.



*As an Affiliate Member of the UN World Tourism Organization, HI USA
upholds their sustainable tourism guidelines to maintain essential
ecological processes and help to conserve natural heritage and biodiversity.*



2017
INTERNATIONAL YEAR
OF SUSTAINABLE TOURISM
FOR DEVELOPMENT



HOSTELLING INTERNATIONAL USA

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SILVER SPRING, MD 20910

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