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## 6 Green Employee Benefits Companies Can Offer to Reduce Their Carbon Footprint

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Concern over climate change continues to be a pressing issue—and since 2024 has had some of the [hottest days on record](https://climate.copernicus.eu/new-record-daily-global-average-temperature-reached-july-2024) (<https://climate.copernicus.eu/new-record-daily-global-average-temperature-reached-july-2024>), thus far, more employees are demanding that their workplaces take action. According to a 2023 survey, [73% of American workers](https://www.paulpolman.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/MC_Paul-Polman_Net-Positive-Employee-Barometer_Final_web.pdf) ([https://www.paulpolman.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/MC\\_Paul-Polman\\_Net-Positive-Employee-Barometer\\_Final\\_web.pdf](https://www.paulpolman.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/MC_Paul-Polman_Net-Positive-Employee-Barometer_Final_web.pdf)) are concerned about climate change, and 61% said they want to see their company “take a stronger stance on the environment.” Additionally, just over half of U.S. employees surveyed said they would even “consider resigning from their job if the values of the company did not align with their own values.”

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One way that companies can attract and appease more employees who are concerned with environmental issues is to offer green employee benefits, or climate change benefits, as part of their employee benefits package.

For many years, health and retirement were the crux of employee benefits packages. We've also seen more companies offer public transportation subsidies and support for bike-to-work programs. But there are also creative ways to enhance a benefits package that encourage employees to tackle climate change, while helping them and the company as a whole to lower their carbon footprint.

Here are six innovative green employee benefits that environmentally conscious companies can offer employees. If your company isn't offering them yet, contact your HR department and encourage them to take these into consideration.

## 1. Climate-friendly travel

Who doesn't love extra time off work? More companies are now offering additional paid leave for employees who choose climate-friendly vacation options, such as traveling by train or using electric vehicles instead of flying.

At MIRA Safety (<https://www.mirasafety.com/>), a company that provides personal safety equipment, "if an employee chooses to travel by rail instead of flying or [visits] an environmentally friendly destination, they will receive additional paid time off. This effort promotes sustainable travel practices and is consistent with our company's overall goal of decreasing its carbon footprint," says Roman Zrazhevskiy, founder and CEO of MIRA. "Employees appreciate the opportunity to explore green travel options without sacrificing their vacation time."

Sarah Howden manages the nonprofit program Climate Perks (<https://www.climateperks.com/>), which supports employers who want to offer paid leave benefits to their employees for climate-friendly travel. The organization helps more than 120 companies by providing policy and procedure templates, discounts on low-carbon travel and sustainability services, tailored carbon savings reporting, media and press opportunities and more.

"It's... like volunteering days," Howden explains. "It's the same principle, but specifically for low carbon travel. And what it covers is the difference between flights and low carbon equivalents. So if you took the train... instead of flying, you'd work out how long it would take by train, how long it would take by plane, and then the difference between those two times. And that difference is what you'd claim as annual leave. So, it's basically all about making sure people don't have to sacrifice their holiday time to make climate-friendly choices."



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## 2. Carbon savings accounts

One of the newest green employee benefits is the Carbon Savings Account® (CSA). Developed by Scope Zero (<https://scope-zero.com/>), the CSA is a financial wellness benefit that provides strong financial incentives for employees to invest in home technology and personal transportation upgrades while reducing their company's commute emissions.

Similar to a health savings account (<https://www.success.com/what-is-a-health-savings-account/>), both the employee and employer contribute funds to a CSA. Employees can then use their CSA funds for eligible home technology and personal transportation upgrades, such as low-flow shower heads, smart thermostats and electric vehicles, to reduce their utility bills, fuel costs and carbon footprint. According to Scope Zero, the average U.S. home can save more than \$5,000 per year with CSA upgrades.

Precision Watches (<https://precisionwatches.com/>) has a CSA “that lets employees bank unused carbon credits and cash them in for rewards,” says Sergey Taver, the company's director of marketing. “As an example, I biked to work for six months straight, earning enough credits to redeem a weekend eco-retreat. This approach converts sustainable behavior into measurable benefits, encouraging long-term commitment to green practices.”

MIRA Safety also introduced a CSA “in which the firm contributes to an account for employees to utilize exclusively for environmentally friendly purchases” like electric vehicles or solar panels for their homes, Zrazhevskiy says. “This initiative not only helps our team's individual sustainability efforts, but it also highlights our commitment to long-term impact on the environment.”

## 3. Sustainable food funds

Intertwining wellness and environmental benefits is becoming more popular as well. One green employee benefits example is rewarding employees for making healthier, more sustainable food choices.

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Fig Loans (<https://www.figloans.com/>), is leading the way by offering a sustainable food fund perk. “We pay up to 50% of employees’ grocery expenditures if they agree to buying locally sourced or organic produce,” explains CEO and co-founder Jeffrey Zhou. “It’s a tangible approach to connect our employees’ personal choices to broader environmental aims.”

This benefit not only supports sustainable farming practices but also promotes healthier eating habits. The company “track[s] the sustainable food fund through a straightforward reimbursement process. Employees submit receipts from local farms, farmers markets or organic shops, which [the company] verif[ies] before approving reimbursement,” Zhou adds. “This system is transparent and promotes trust, guaranteeing that the fund is used appropriately.”

Additional ways that companies can support employees include covering memberships to local organic farms and markets that offer community-supported agriculture food boxes, and encouraging employees to grow their own food at home by subsidizing gardening and composting supplies.

## 4. Energy-efficient home upgrades

More companies are supporting employees’ efforts to cut carbon at home, too. This includes home energy assessments and upgrades, such as solar panels, heat pumps, induction stoves, smart home technology (<https://www.success.com/high-tech-household-products-to-make-life-easier/>), and more, to improve efficiency.

Precision Watches offers “a home green tech grant [that provides] funds to implement eco-friendly home improvements,” which Taver tapped into. “I utilized this to set up a rainwater harvesting system, which considerably lowered my water expenses and environmental impact,” he says. “This perk empowers employees to make sustainable changes at home, creating a ripple effect of environmental consciousness.”

Reviewflowz (<https://www.reviewflowz.com/>), a SaaS company that enhances customer feedback management, “provide[s] a home upgrade package for remote workers. Employees can use these funds to make environmentally beneficial changes, such as installing energy-saving lighting or smart thermostats,” says Axel Lavergne, the company’s founder. “This bonus encourages our team to live more responsibly while working from home and reflects our company’s green values. For example, one employee installed solar panels on their home, resulting in significant savings on energy expenses and a lower carbon footprint.”

Rob Bayless, senior project manager at Elephant Energy.

(<https://c1ae0621.streaklinks.com/CErD79tGBinBX6brsA3n6aSD/https%3A%2F%2Felephantenergy.com%2F>) a home electrification company, recently took advantage of this type of green employee benefit by working with Elephant’s Home Comfort team to upgrade his home. “I... replaced our gas water heater with a heat pump water heater, and... also upgraded to a heat pump for

both heating and cooling,” he says. “I’m grateful that my company... enables and encourages us to walk the talk and bring sustainability into our own lives. Seeing the impact of these technologies firsthand, like lower power bills, has been a blessing. Plus, it was a nice way to show my family what I do every day.”

## 5. Digital declutter days

Most people don’t realize that our digital activities impact our carbon footprint. Internet usage, for example, accounts for 3.7% of global greenhouse emissions (<https://www.climateimpact.com/news-insights/insights/infographic-carbon-footprint-internet/>), which is on par with emissions from the airline industry. Our emails also add up: 361.6 billion emails (<https://www.oberlo.com/statistics/how-many-emails-are-sent-per-day>) are sent and received every day worldwide, and an estimated eight billion spam emails are sent daily in America, which release 240 metric tons of carbon dioxide emissions (<https://www.emailtooltester.com/en/blog/spam-statistics/#:~:text=The%208%20billion%20spam%20emails%20sent%20from%20the%20U.S.%20each%20d>). The more we use electronic devices, the more energy we’ll need to sustain our usage.

Fig Loans “introduced a Digital Declutter Day, where employees get an extra day off if they spend it reducing their digital carbon footprint,” Zhou says. “This includes tasks like clearing out old files, unsubscribing from unnecessary emails and optimizing cloud storage,” as well as organizing folders and emails (<https://www.success.com/email-clean-up-tips/>) and uninstalling unused apps and computer programs. “It’s a novel approach to sustainability that addresses the often-overlooked environmental impact of our digital lifestyles,” he adds.

In fact, Digital Cleanup Day (<https://www.digitalcleanupday.org/>) is an annual initiative that puts the spotlight on digital pollution with the goal of inspiring individuals and corporations to “declutter and restructure their online presence.” The organization says that since 2020, nearly “1.2 million people have deleted over 14.5 million GB of data, preventing the yearly production of around 3,625 tons of carbon dioxide.” Any company can introduce this event to their staff. The next Digital Cleanup Day is scheduled for March 15, 2025.

## 6. Sustainability sabbaticals

Many companies are now offering time off to engage in volunteer projects, but something a bit more unique that Precision Watches offers is the “sustainability sabbatical.” These are longer periods of paid time off in which employees can engage in environmental projects or volunteer work related to sustainability in the country or abroad.

Taver used his company's sustainability sabbatical by "[taking] a month off to volunteer for a reforestation project. The hands-on experience was immensely rewarding and reinforced my dedication to environmental stewardship," he says. "This bonus not only improves the environment but also enhances our personal and professional development."

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