

Sustainability Report

Sustainability Statement

At UniFirst Corporation, we believe in protecting the environment. That's why we continually focus on sustainability and always strive to become a "greener," more environmentally-friendly company in all aspects of our operations.

Whether it's the precise uniform processing procedures we follow to ensure resource conservation and environmental protection, the thoughtful energy-saving practices we use at our 220-plus facilities, the careful fleet maintenance and driving procedures we have firmly in place, the manner in which our ancillary services and products are designed and manufactured, or the work uniform and facility services options we provide our customers to help them meet their sustainability goals...all we do consistently takes environmental sustainability into consideration.

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UniFirst is a proud member of the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC), the Canada Green Building Council (CaGBC), and Laundry Environmental Stewardship Program (LaundryESP®). UniFirst is also an Energy Star® and Green Lights Business Partner, and offers Green Seal™ and EcoLogo® certified products.

Company Profile

UniFirst is one of the industry's largest providers of image-boosting uniform, workwear, and facility service programs for businesses of all sizes in virtually all industries. Serving more than 250,000 businesses throughout the United States and Canada from more than 220 UniFirst locations, we offer managed work apparel programs ranging from traditional uniforms and "corporate casual" wear to highly specialized protective apparel and executive garments. We also provide ancillary products and services that include floor mats, mops, restroom items, wiping towels, and more.

Our ISO certified manufacturing plants produce branded, proprietary products, such as UniWeave® shirts, SofTwill® pants, Armorex FR® safety apparel, and Great Impressions® floor mats. And our ISO certified centralized distribution facility, designed for efficient 24-hour order fulfillment, provides warehousing, inventory processing, and apparel personalization for the more than 1.5 million uniform wearers that we outfit each workday throughout the year.

Our Specialty Garments division maintains two subsidiary operations: UniTech, the recognized industry leader in the nuclear garment decontamination industry, with operations spread throughout the United States, Canada, and Europe; and UniClean, also an industry leader, which provides managed uniform programs and services specifically for cleanroom businesses in the healthcare, high-tech, and food industries. Our Company also provides First Aid and Safety products and services to U.S. businesses through our Green Guard and Medique operations.

Our Values

From modest beginnings in an eight-stall garage in Boston, MA in 1936, UniFirst has grown to become a “billion dollar” industry leader in the Uniform and Textile Services business. In part, our modern day success story is a result of following the three Core Business Values established by our founder Aldo Croatti. These values, which continue to act as the foundation for our corporate culture, are:

1. CUSTOMER FOCUS—Customer Satisfaction is the best measure of how well we deliver quality. It’s our overriding goal and is at the center of our “Customers for Life” business philosophy.
2. RESPECT FOR OTHERS—We consistently treat those in our personal and business lives with the same consideration and understanding we wish for ourselves.
3. COMMITMENT TO QUALITY—This is evidenced by our constant focus on “doing it right the first time” and our commitment to ISO certifying each of our service operations to ensure quality.

To help fulfill our overriding goal of Total Customer Satisfaction, all UniFirst staff annually pledge to uphold our “Essentials of Service.”

1. PRINCIPLES – We will consistently follow the UniFirst Mission, Core Values, and Guiding Principles.
2. EXCELLENCE – We will strive to always exceed Customer expectations in all that we do.
3. RESPONSIVENESS – We will handle any and all Customer concerns quickly, no matter our job.
4. ACCOUNTABILITY – We are all responsible to quickly address any flaws in our products or systems.
5. COMMUNICATION – We will acknowledge and correct any mistakes, and rapidly communicate remedies to build Customer loyalty.
6. RESOLVE – We understand there is no dishonor in not having the right answer, only in not acting swiftly to seek it out.
7. TEAMWORK – We are each counted on as part of a team, and will count on others for any issues we cannot resolve alone.
8. PROFESSIONALISM – We will always act professionally and speak positively as ambassadors of the Company.
9. PRIDE – We will take pride and care in our personal appearance to project a professional image.
10. IMAGE – We are each responsible to uphold the standards of the UniFirst image and Company brand.

Environmental Stewardship

UniFirst was one of the first in the Uniform and Textile Services industry to re-engineer all of its operations to become a “greener” and more environmentally friendly company. We were also one of the first members of the EPA’s Green Lights and Energy Star® Building programs, which combine business strategies with environmental protection and energy conservation at all Corporate facilities. And every single UniFirst laundry production facility uses computerized processing equipment to maximize fuel and energy efficiencies, while minimizing waste.

In 1999, UniFirst joined the Laundry Environmental Stewardship Program (LaundryESP®), an industry-wide initiative with a singular focus to protect the environment. As a result of re-engineering all routine operational practices, UniFirst (and our industry) achieved and continues to maintain considerable reductions in water and energy usage.*

1. Water use: 33% reduction
2. Energy use: 27% reduction
3. CO2 emissions: 24% reduction

* All data verified by LaundryESP and Collier Shannon Scott, Environomics of Bethesda, Maryland and Georgetown Economics (D.C.).

From the moment a piece of clothing or other textile product enters one of our processing facilities, it is carefully sorted and placed into specially designed slings that are marked with garment type and soil level. They are then weighed and sent to designated washers that have been pre-programmed—based on the laundering requirements of the load—to use *exacting* amounts of cleaning agents, water, and precise temperatures to maximize processing efficiencies and to prevent waste.

All UniFirst laundry detergents are “green” and environmentally friendly; they’re biodegradable and made from renewable resources that are free of phosphates and other chemicals that could be harmful to the environment. Our detergents are also specially formulated for maximum soil removal with minimal abrasiveness to avoid fiber deterioration that could lead to premature fabric waste. We also utilize peroxide bleach for our wash formulas, as chlorine bleach, when combined with other chemicals, can create non-biodegradable by-products.



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We also take extraordinary care with all the by-products produced by our laundry operations. Our ongoing investments in water and air treatment technologies help assure that everything we return back to the environment is clean, safe, and non-polluting.

Renting Uniforms, Work Apparel & Textiles

Compared to purchasing, renting uniforms/workwear, shop towels/wipers, and the like saves energy and decreases natural resource consumption. Our rental products are made to last longer than store bought alternatives, and our service programs maintain customer clothing and textiles to maximize useful life. Rental items are “reused” far more often and longer than purchased items...thereby reducing overall raw textile usage and resulting in less waste added to landfills and incinerators.

When we refurbish and transform pre-worn customer apparel into “like new” offerings for garment replacements, we are, in effect, “recycling.” And when wear and tear finally take their toll and the professional image of our customers could become compromised, we look to donate appropriate clothing items to needy organizations in the U.S. and abroad—in effect, giving them a “second life.”

Our company manufacturers about three-quarters of the shirts and pants we use in our rental service programs. And when partnering with product suppliers, whether it ultimately involves the manufacture of our apparel or any of our other products, we continually seek to identify and purchase environmentally preferable materials. Every aspect of construction within our rental apparel line also keeps “longevity” in mind. For instance, our shirt and pant designs use reinforced triangular tacking at the corners of pockets to prevent ripping and tearing that could be caused by repeated contact. Similarly, our fabrics are carefully selected for weight/hand (feel) to withstand constant abrasion, as well as the industrial laundry process. And, although we use more stitches per fabric inch to produce higher quality construction, this additional thread use is more than offset by the extended garment life we achieve. We’ve also computerized our textile cutting systems to assure minimal waste of fabric at all times, with “modular” assembly construction processes that maximize efficiencies and the overall use of resources. And when unavoidable



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fabric scraps result from our manufacturing operations, waste is compacted, baled, and sent to textile recycling companies for reuse.

Virtually all of our millions of rental uniforms in service are delivered to customers on recycled wire hangers. And to prevent hangers from being tossed into waste bins, UniFirst maintains hanger recycling programs at customer sites. We also recycle such items as wood pallets, paper products, fluorescent light bulbs, industrial equipment, and steel lockers.

Finally, all our uniform manufacturing and distribution operations, as well as most of our laundering service facilities, have earned ISO certifications. And we're currently on schedule to have all our service facilities certified in the near term. By being ISO certified, we ensure consistent quality for our customers, and make certain all our processes are operating as efficiently as possible for effective resource conservation.

Ancillary Products

UniFirst offers a wide variety of environmentally friendly Floorcare and Restroom/Hygiene Services programs. The products at the core of these programs have been designed with environmental sustainability in mind. And when they're included as part of a fully managed service program, they can help our customers earn LEED* points that qualify them for environmental certification by the U.S. Green Building Council.

** Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design, a national benchmark for the design, construction and operation of high performance green buildings.*

Floor Mats

Our floor mats are 100% PVC free and are specially constructed to capture and hold dirt and moisture from the soles of shoes and to prevent track-off and unnecessary soiling and cleaning of customer facilities. By literally trapping pounds of contaminants, UniFirst mat systems help protect expensive flooring surfaces, ventilation systems, and sensitive electronic equipment—all of which translates into less cleaning and chemical use.

We manufacture all our floor mats to last for at least five years and recycle our scrap by-products. By comparison, mats purchased at most retail outlets will typically last just one year, thereby adding more vinyl and rubber components to the waste stream.

Microfiber Mop and Wiper Technology

Our reusable microfiber mops and wipers are ultra-light and designed to clean hard surfaces without chemicals or water. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) notes that such products can reduce chemical usage by 95%. For more soiled surfaces requiring water and cleaning agents, we offer microfiber wet mops and towels that feature super absorbent natural fibers that result in faster, more efficient cleanings. Use of these reusable UniFirst products instead of disposables reduces solid waste by up to 210% and water usage by as much as 12,590% (according to EPA life cycle assessments).

Paper Hand Towels and Sanitary Tissue

Our towel and tissue products are Green Seal™ and EcoLogo® certified, and are manufactured from base paper that is 100% recycled. And our portion-control (one-at-a-time) paper dispensing systems are available with both mechanical and electronic touch-free options to further reduce waste. Studies have shown that these dispensers reduce paper usage by 25-35%, resulting in less landfill dumping and incineration.

Soaps and Hand Care

Our soap and hand care products are provided by vendor-partner GOJO®, a manufacturer of a wide range of “green” and biodegradable hand cleaning/disinfecting products. GOJO’s Green Seal™ and EcoLogo® designated products are specially formulated for use in the types of work environments our Company serves and are available in a variety of touch and non-touch, portion-controlled dispensing options that minimize waste.

Odor Control Systems

We offer environmentally-conscious odor control program solutions. Our most popular system, called TCell, contributes to clean and fresh air in a 100% environmentally-friendly way, and without the need for batteries or electricity. All our air freshener delivery systems are EPA compliant and our refill components are recyclable.

Delivery Efficiency

The UniFirst fleet of customer delivery and support vehicles follows proper maintenance schedules and all our drivers follow best practices to conserve fuel consumption. Beginning in 2008, we also launched our “Route Optimization Initiative” that uses GPS technologies to define the shortest and most efficient travel routes to service our customers. By driving significantly fewer miles, we *drastically* reduce our carbon footprint. This is an ongoing initiative being followed by our delivery vehicles throughout the United States and Canada. The bottom line? We’re driving fewer miles each day, while delivering the same levels of excellence in service to our customers. And with fuel conservation and environmental sustainability in mind, we’ve also incorporated the use of all electric-powered vans that produce “zero emissions” into our customer delivery fleet. These “green” delivery vehicles are currently being used in some of our more densely populated servicing areas in order to make the greatest impact on carbon and emission reductions.

In the Office

Our Information Technologies Department maintains an ongoing project to reduce the number and size of our servers and personal computers. And by adopting the latest, most energy efficient I.T. technologies, we reduce overall electricity consumption and lower the amount of cooling required from air-conditioning units. The project also extends the life of our computers, keeping unwanted waste materials out of recycling bins and landfills. In addition, paper and bottle recycling bins are located throughout our corporate offices, manufacturing plants, and laundering locations.

To reduce paper usage, all 200-plus UniFirst facilities are networked by more than 3,000 PCs, and we consistently add new technologies that allow for more digital recordkeeping—both internally and with our customers and suppliers.



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Social Responsibility

Employee Initiatives and Diversity

UniFirst prides itself on our inclusive family culture. We refer to our employees as “Team Partners” and empower them to help us achieve our Corporate goals.

Overall, we offer our Team Partners more than 50 benefits. Recognizing that the job responsibilities of Team Partners are interwoven with their personal lives, we also offer Partners and their families a free Employee Assistance Program. The program helps Team Partners and their family members with any work-life balance issues or other personal problems.

Our Company is 100% committed to practicing Affirmative Action in the hiring, promotion, transfer, and training of all Team Partners. We maintain online Affirmative Action training courses for all line managers, which help to provide a clear understanding of the Company’s Affirmative Action policies. Diversity seminars are included as part of the UniFirst Management Institute (UMI) training program.

Community Outreach

Through our U-Give program, UniFirst and its Team Partners all over North America donate time and money to support a wide range of humanitarian efforts, such as Habitat for Humanity, Toys for Tots, the American Red Cross, and more.

Using U-Give as an organizational umbrella, our Team Partners on both local and company-wide levels also identify their own area philanthropic programs in need of financial support throughout the year. Partners in the corporate office, for example, participate in an annual fund drive for the Jimmy Fund, an organization that fights cancer in children and adults in conjunction with Boston’s Dana-Farber Cancer Institute. Our staff also regularly step up to support those victimized by natural and other disasters.



Our Company continues to be honored for our environmental efforts.

Other examples of our Team Partner-inspired philanthropy include:

1. The “Thanks From Home” program, where UniFirst Team Partners company-wide donate, package, and raise funds for much needed and hard-to-get personal supplies for military personnel serving overseas.
2. The Salvation Army Adopt-A-Family program, where Team Partners “adopt” children from low income families and provide them with gifts during the holidays.
3. The Local Heroes program, where collection boxes are set up at UniFirst facilities to provide donated items to families and people in need anywhere in the world.
4. The Thanksgiving Food Raffle program, where Team Partners donate non-perishable food items for area food pantries.
5. The Books-R-Fun program, where UniFirst facilities hold workplace book fairs with a portion of the proceeds being donated to charities of their choice.
6. The American Red Cross Blood Drive program, where Team Partners do their part to help with the medical communities constant need for healthy and reliable blood supplies.

Environmental Recognition

Our Company continues to be honored by communities throughout North America for our environmental efforts. Utilities in Missouri and Texas, for example, presented UniFirst with “gold” awards for water safety and environmental-friendly treatment processes; other sanitation districts from Virginia to Kansas have also presented UniFirst with “Green” awards for the care we take in protecting local environmental resources.

We have even been recognized for our environmental efforts within the specialized field of laundering and decontaminating apparel for the nuclear power industry. Exelon Corporation, one of the nation’s largest nuclear power providers, presented our company with its Environmental Leadership Award, citing our “lengthy record of (processes and) services that are environmentally responsible, safe, and of superior quality.”

These are but a few of the many types of environmental awards and recognitions UniFirst receives every year.



At UniFirst, “being green”
goes well beyond the color of our logo.



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