

US EPA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT



Effective Practices for Implementing Local Climate and Energy Programs:

Green Teams

Lessons Learned *by* Communities *for* Communities

The views expressed in this document are those of the Climate Showcase Communities grant recipients. U.S. EPA does not endorse any products or commercial services mentioned.

WHAT IS IT?

Green teams are groups of people in an organization who volunteer to work together to achieve climate, energy, and other sustainability goals for their institutions. They may include employees, managers, students, or others.

WHY DO IT?

- Green teams can increase organization-wide engagement and drive commitment and participation.
- Teamwork can increase project involvement and ownership, and keep projects focused, which can improve the likelihood of success and the continuation of green activities.
- Green teams can bring in a variety of individuals with unique ideas.
- Teamwork can result in better action planning and implementation than ad hoc efforts.

WHAT WORKS?

- For institutional teams, have representation from all departments and all levels of management (including upper management) to ensure that the intended actions can be implemented.
- Create a mission or vision for the team.
- Ensure that team leaders are motivated and have the necessary resources.
- Establish regular meeting dates in advance and at regular intervals. Maintain the meetings to keep members focused but not overloaded.
- Create a list of action items at each meeting.
- For large teams, establish subcommittees. Large group meetings can often lead to the feeling that not much has been accomplished.
- Help channel the energies of participants by aligning tasks with skill sets.

WHAT SHOULD YOU WATCH OUT FOR?

- Interest can wane over time if people don't see results. Recognize successes (even small ones).
- Avoid "decision paralysis" by sticking to schedules and breaking down milestones into achievable tasks.
- Don't overwhelm participants. Balance team activities with regular job responsibilities.

WHAT RESOURCES HAVE PROJECTS FOUND TO BE USEFUL?

- *The Team Handbook* by Peter R. Scholtes, Barbara J. Streibel, and Brian L. Joiner
- Get Green Columbus: columbus.gov/getgreen



"Green teams pull diverse levels of management into the conversation for more effective problem solving."

Bridget, Sustainable Transportation for a Sustainable City, Salt Lake City, Utah

"Ensure that you have a balance of passionate members and key decision makers."

Annie, Mpower ChaMpions, Madison, Wisconsin