Planet Blue Ambassadors
greenteam
Hand Book

Your comprehensive guide & workbook for participating in a green team at U-M
What is a Planet Blue Green Team?

The Planet Blue Green Team program is modeled after successful “eco-team” programs across the world that have been found to **create lasting sustainable behavior change**. The keys to success are:

- voluntary participation
- small, personal sustainable actions
- personal impact metrics
- social support

Planet Blue Green Teams are designed to be led by certified Planet Blue Ambassadors in their workplaces. This guide is tailored for workplace green teams, but can be easily adapted for student, neighborhood, and other groups.

Green Teams empower members to identify and carry out the most effective sustainability actions for themselves and their community. Green Team members also discover ways to translate home sustainability actions to their U-M environment, leading the effort to create a culture of sustainability at the University.

Who participates in the Green Team?

Each Green Team represents a small community of individuals working on personal sustainability actions together, sharing their ideas, questions, and experiences with one another. The team then collaborates to identify those actions that might be ideal for a larger group and setting; in this case, their workplace. Experience has shown that the best size for a team tends to be around 5-8 people. That being said, there are opportunities for success with any group of two or more.

How often do Green Teams meet?

The program consists of 6 one-hour long meetings to be held bi-weekly (running a total of three months, or a semester long) or monthly (for six months, or one school year).

What do Green Teams do?

As a member you will:

- Try out different sustainability actions.
- Measure personal impact metrics to give you measurable results of your sustainability efforts.
- Discuss successes and challenges with team members.
- Become a certified Planet Blue Ambassador through the online training program.
- Make recommendations for a more sustainable workplace.
F.A.Q.

What if everyone on our team is already certified as a Planet Blue Ambassador?

Congrats! You will all still certainly have lots to talk about as you make use of the training and share your experiences. In lieu of revisiting the training modules, for each meeting you can have everyone read a topical article or watch a relevant video on the issue for discussion. Additional resource options can be found at: http://www.sustainability.umich.edu/pba/dashboard/resources.

What if someone is unable to complete or already completed all of their available pledges?

Team members can always write in their own sustainability pledges on their Planet Blue Dashboard. Individuals will come to the Green Team at different levels of engagement and experience; some will prefer to begin with easier action steps and work their way up, while others will prefer more of a challenge. The pledges have intentionally been designed to provide opportunities for a wide range of preferences and skills.

Where should we meet?

Green Team meetings tend to work best when they are kept informal and discussion-based. Conference rooms, coffee shops, and meeting spaces in the libraries are all great options.

What about communicating between meetings?

Ask team members how and to what degree they would like to communicate between meetings. Suggested ways include creating a MCommunity email group (www.mcommunity.umich.edu) or creating a Facebook group. As a facilitator, let team members know the best way to contact you with questions or comments.

What if a team member is unable to track their impact?

Some team members may not have access to monthly utility bills. Encourage all team members to record observations of their behavior and possible changes in their environmental impact between meetings, even if they’re unable to obtain precise measurements.

How can we promote team-building in our Green Team?

Some Green Teams choose not to have one facilitator, but instead choose a different member to facilitate each meeting. Consider having food at meetings. Each member can be responsible for bringing a sustainable snack to one meeting. Meetings can also be conducted as a brown-bag luncheon.

What if a team member’s personal impact metrics don’t show a change or go up?

Don’t be discouraged. Sometimes despite conservation efforts, an individual’s impact measurements won’t reflect their efforts. The key here is identifying possible causes behind this. For example, did you keep your thermostat low, but still see an increase in your gas or electricity bill? Lower average outdoor temperatures could be responsible for the increase. Did you have guests over? That could explain the increase you saw in your water use or waste.
Meeting 1: Introductions

Agenda:

- Introductions
- Green Team Explanation (by facilitator)
- Team Goals
- Next Meeting

Home Sustainability Measurements:

*Note: Throughout the “Green Team”, update these home sustainability measurements before meetings (when possible) to track changes in your resource usage due to your sustainable actions.*

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Amount (Kwh/month)</th>
<th>Costs</th>
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What sustainable action are you the most proud of that you do already?

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Personal “Green Team” Goal(s)

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“Green Team” Goal(s) for the Workplace

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Additional Team Notes:

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More information about sustainability at U-M:
www.sustainability.umich.edu

*Note: Other possibly helpful measurements/tracking options can be found in the additional resources part of this guide.*
Next Month: Energy Conservation

- Complete the Energy training module at www.sustainability.umich.edu/pba/planet-blue-ambassadors. (If you already have this completed, you do not need to re-do it, but you can revisit content at www.sustainability.umich.edu/pba/resources, and click on the relevant module’s “training content” page)
- Pledge at www.sustainability.umich.edu/pba/dashboard in the “Energy” section.
- Work Observations (Before the next meeting, record your observations about energy use in the workplace in the appropriate space in the handbook under Meeting 2: Energy)
- Personal actions and tracking (If available, write down updated electricity, gas, and water use before the next meeting. Also make additional observations to qualitatively see if your environmental impact has changed over the course of implementing your sustainability pledges. For example, write down if you notice you are leaving fewer things plugged in, leaving your computer on less, or using “green transportation” options more)

**energy conservation pledges**

- I will set my heat to 68 or lower (if it is winter)
- I will bike, bus, or walk to and around campus for a day
- I will check my tire pressure and fill them up if needed this week
- I will set my computer’s default settings to energy saving options
- I will unplug electronics anytime I’m not using them for one week
- I will take the stairs instead of the elevator when possible for a week
- I will check out from the library, and try out, a Kill-a-Watt meter to see how my energy use adds up
- I will switch my light bulbs to energy efficient ones and switch them off when not in use
- I will seal up the cracks or leaks in my house or apartment that let air in
- I will not idle my car for more than 30 seconds
- I will turn off my computer when not in use and not use a screensaver
- I will have my house’s energy analyzed through an audit
- I will use natural light when possible
- I will


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<th>Next Meeting: energy conservation</th>
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<td>Location:</td>
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Meeting 2: energy consumption

Before Meeting:

☐ Complete “Energy” Planet Blue Ambassador Training Module
☐ Complete “Energy” actions chosen last month in online Dashboard
☐ Record your personal impact metrics
☐ Find out what you can about energy conservation measures in your U-M building

Personal Impact Metrics (see Tracking section at end of handbook for more)

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<th>% Bike or Walk</th>
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Energy Observations in Your Workplace (fill-in before meeting: motion sensing timers, computers or lights left on, heating/cooling, mini fridges, desk side printers, etc.):

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Personal Observations (fill-in before meeting):

• What is your energy highlight from this month (e.g. impact, action, fact learned, etc.)?

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• Did your energy impact lower this month (as shown by your metrics or observations)? Why or why not?

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• What barriers or difficulties did you run into? What questions do you still have?

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Check out U-M building consumption at http://webapp.plant.bf.umich.edu/upe/em/bldginfo/
Next Steps (fill-in during meeting):

At Home

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At U-M

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Next Month: Food Sourcing

☐ Complete the Food training module at www.sustainability.umich.edu/pba/planet-blue-ambassadors.
☐ Pledge at www.sustainability.umich.edu/pba/dashboard in the “Food section.”
☐ Work Observations
☐ Personal actions and tracking

**foodsourcing pledges**

☐ I will go meatless one day of every week
☐ I will be a vegetarian
☐ I will go to the Ann Arbor or U-M Farmers Market
☐ I will grow a food item at home
☐ I will talk to or research a local farmer
☐ I will buy one food item in the bulk goods section of my grocery store
☐ I will add more fruits and vegetables to my diet
☐ I will purchase at least one food item that is made in Michigan when I grocery shop
☐ I will focus my shopping along the periphery of my grocery store
☐ For my next coffee, I will chose a locally roasted or organic drink option
☐ I will buy at least one organic food item when I buy food
☐ I will learn to recognize different food labels and certifications
☐ I will look at food labels for less processed foods
☐ I will_________________________________________

☐ I will_________________________________________

Next Meeting: foodsourcing

Location:

Date:    Time:
Meeting 3: foodsourcing

Before Meeting:

- Complete “Food” Planet Blue Ambassador Training Module
- Complete “Food” actions chosen last month in online Dashboard
- Record your personal impact metrics
- Research sustainable food opportunities in/near your U-M building

Personal Impact Metrics (see Tracking section at end of handbook for more)

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Food Observations in Your Workplace (fill-in before meeting: catering for meetings/events, kitchenette supplies, lunch trends, coffee station, etc.):

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Personal Observations (fill-in before meeting):

- What is your food highlight from this month (e.g. impact, action, fact learned, etc.)?
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- Did your food consumption or purchases become more sustainable this month? Why or why not?
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- What barriers or difficulties did you run into?
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- What did you learn from the PBA training? What questions do you still have about food?
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Learn about the M Farmers Market at www.uunions.umich.edu/about/sustainability
Next Steps (fill-in during meeting):

At Home

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At U-M

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Next Month: Waste Reduction

☐ Complete the waste training module at www.sustainability.umich.edu/pba/planet-blue-amabassadors.
☐ Pledge actions at www.sustainability.umich.edu/pba/dashboard in the “Waste” section.
☐ Work Observations
☐ Personal actions and tracking

wastereduction pledges

☐ I will recycle everything I can through the campus recycling containers
☐ I will use my reusable water bottle daily
☐ I will eat a waste-free lunch 2 days next week
☐ I will participate in additional recycling programs on campus for any used batteries, Styrofoam, or electronics I have
☐ I will become informed about how to properly dispose of materials used in my home, lab, or office
☐ I will purchase alternatives with less packaging or recyclable packaging when available
☐ I will give waste-free gifts
☐ I will use reusable shopping bags instead of single-use
☐ I will buy my next outfit, small appliance, or piece of furniture at a second-hand store
☐ I will sign-up online to opt-out of junk mail
☐ I will reduce my paper towel and napkin waste
☐ I will reduce my printing and print double-sided with small font and margins
☐ I will sign up for electronic statements and bills
☐ I will

Next Meeting: wastereduction

Location:

Date: Time:
Meeting 4: waste reduction

Before Meeting:

- Complete “Waste” Planet Blue Ambassador Training Module
- Complete “Waste” actions chosen last month in online Dashboard
- Record your personal impact metrics
- Research waste reduction efforts in your U-M building

Personal Impact Metrics (see Tracking section at end of handbook for more)

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<tr>
<th>Waste</th>
<th>Recycling % Full (Size___)</th>
<th>Trash % Full (Size___)</th>
<th>Compost* % Full (Size___)</th>
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<td>Week 4</td>
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* Compost – use this measurement only if you have an active, weekly compost collection. If you compost in your yard or with vermicomposting, estimate amount added weekly.

Waste Reduction Observations in Your Workplace (fill-in before meeting):

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Personal Observations (fill-in before meeting):

- What is your waste highlight from this month (e.g. impact, action, fact learned, etc.)?
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- Did the amount of trash you send to the landfill lower? Why or why not?
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- What barriers or difficulties did you run into? What questions do you have?
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Check out U-M Recycling Options at www.recycle.umich.edu
Next Steps (fill-in during meeting):

At Home

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At U-M

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Next Month: Water Resources

☐ Complete the water training module at www.sustainability.umich.edu/pba/training.
☐ Pledge actions at www.sustainability.umich.edu/pba/dashboard in the “Water” section.
☐ Work Observations
☐ Personal actions and tracking

**waterresources pledges**

☐ I will put a water displacer in my toilet tank to save water when flushing or use a low-flow toilet
☐ I will only wash laundry in full loads
☐ I will use an environmentally-friendly laundry detergent and use the correct amount
☐ At least 3 times this week I will take a shower that is 5 minutes or shorter
☐ I will search for any leaks and fix or report them as soon as possible
☐ I will use a tuna can or rain gauge to measure how much water my lawn is getting
☐ I will properly dispose of my extra medications and not flush them
☐ I will put in low-flow aerators
☐ I will wash my vehicle on a permeable surface or at a carwash that reuses water
☐ I will limit my use of fertilizers and pesticides and apply them in a water-smart way
☐ I will water my lawn with reused water (such as rain water caught in a barrel, or dishwater) when possible
☐ I will opt for showers instead of baths and take fewer showers (within reason)
☐ I will always look for ways to shorten the length of time I run the tap
☐ I will___________________________________________________________________
                                                                                      ______________________________________________________________________

Next Meeting: waterresources

Location:

Date:  
Time:  
Meeting 5: water resources

Before Meeting:

☐ Complete “Water” Planet Blue Ambassador Training Module
☐ Complete “Water” actions chosen last month in online Dashboard
☐ Record your personal impact metrics
☐ Research water use and outdoor maintenance for your U-M building

Personal Impact Metrics (see Tracking section at end of handbook for more)

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<th></th>
<th>Amount</th>
<th>Costs</th>
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<td>Home Electricity</td>
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Water Resource Observations in Your Workplace (fill-in before meeting: maintained landscaping around building, leaks, faucets left running, etc.):

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Personal Observations (fill-in before meeting):

• What is your water highlight from this month (e.g. impact, action, fact learned, etc.)?
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• Did your water use lessen? Why or why not?
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________

• Did you reduce your use of land-management chemicals or other possible pollutants? Why or why not?
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• What barriers or difficulties did you run into? What questions do you have? What did you learn from the PBA training?
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Check out U-M building consumption at http://webapp.plant.bf.umich.edu/upe/em/bldginfo/
Next Steps (fill-in during meeting):

At Home

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At U-M

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Next Month: Community Engagement

☐ Complete the Community training module at www.sustainability.umich.edu/pba/training.
☐ Pledge at www.sustainability.umich.edu/pba/dashboard in the “Community” section.
☐ Work Observations
☐ Personal actions and tracking

**community engagement pledges**

☐ I will start a monthly lunch or coffee sustainability meeting with co-workers
☐ I will send an email or post a sign promoting a sustainable action in my workplace
☐ I will refer a friend to become a Planet Blue Ambassador
☐ I will submit an action idea to the Planet Blue Ambassador team
☐ I will attend a Planet Blue Ambassador outing or semi-annual meeting
☐ I will advocate for a sustainable policy
☐ I will attend a U-M sustainability related event
☐ I will attend a community sustainability related event
☐ I will__________________________________________________________
☐ I will__________________________________________________________
☐ I will__________________________________________________________
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Next Meeting: community engagement

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<td>Date:</td>
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Meeting 6: community engagement

Before Meeting:

☐ Complete “Community” Planet Blue Ambassador Training Module
☐ Complete “Community” actions chosen last month in online Dashboard
☐ Record your personal impact metrics
☐ Research community engagement opportunities for your U-M building

Personal Impact Metrics (see Tracking section at end of handbook for more)

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<th>Amount Kwh/month</th>
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<td>Home Electricity</td>
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Sustainability Community Engagement Observations in Your Workplace (fill-in before meeting: sustainability discussion, signage, encouragement, policies, response of supervisors & co-workers, etc.):

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Personal Observations (fill-in before meeting):

• What is your community highlight from this month (e.g. impact, action, fact learned, etc.)?

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• Did you feel more engaged in your community with sustainability? Why or why not?

____________________________________________________________________________

• What barriers or difficulties did you run into?

____________________________________________________________________________

• What did you learn from the PBA training? What questions do you still have?

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“Get involved” in sustainability at: www.sustainability.umich.edu
Next Steps: (fill-in during meeting):

At Home

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At U-M

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Final Steps (notes):

- How effective was your “Green Team”?
- Key recommendations
- Personal take-aways
- Future communication and/or meetings?

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Tracking

The next few pages provide tools to help you track the impact you are having overtime. The more you track, the more apparent and meaningful your progress will become.

Electricity (Sources [e.g. coal, wind]:___________________________________)

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<th>Amount Used</th>
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Gas (Sources:___________________________________)

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Appliance and Electronic Watt Usage

Use a Kill-a-Watt meter (available at U-M and AADL libraries) to measure how much electricity each of your appliances and electronics use.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item (e.g. cable box, toaster)</th>
<th>Watt Usage ON</th>
<th>Watt Usage OFF</th>
<th>Avg. hours ON per day</th>
<th>Always plugged in? Y/N</th>
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**Transportation** (rows should add up to 100%)

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<th>% Carpool</th>
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### Food

**Grocery Purchases**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date Purchased</th>
<th>Amount Spent</th>
<th>Organic or Local Items</th>
<th>% of Total organic or local</th>
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### Eating Out

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date Purchased</th>
<th>Amount Spent</th>
<th>Organic or Local Items</th>
<th>% of Total organic or local</th>
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</tbody>
</table>
**Waste**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dates (record weekly)</th>
<th>Recycling % Full (Cart Size:______)</th>
<th>Trash % Full (Cart Size:______)</th>
<th>Compost* % full (Cart Size:______)</th>
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</table>

* Compost – use this measurement only if you have an active, weekly compost collection. If you compost in your yard or with vermicomposting, estimate amount added weekly.

**Consumption Log**

For a period of time--usually the week before you start your “Waste” actions and the week after your “Waste” meeting, track all the purchases you make. Estimate how long you think you personally will use the good or service (expected lifespan), its impact on the environment during use, production, and disposal, as well as if it has any benefit locally.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purchase (goods and services)</th>
<th>Cost</th>
<th>Expected Lifespan</th>
<th>Impact to Environment (High/Low)</th>
<th>Support to local community/economy (High/Low)</th>
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</table>
### Water

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Amount Used</th>
<th>Costs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>Month 1</td>
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<td>Month 6</td>
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</table>

Also see: National Geographic Water Footprint Calculator

### Ecological Footprint Calculator

Measure your overall ecological footprint with this online calculator.

*How many planets does it take to support your current lifestyle?*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Number of Earths</th>
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