Planet Blue Ambassadors

greenteam

Facilitator’s Guide

Your comprehensive guide to implementing

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.
Facilitator’s Guide

If you are interested in facilitating a Green Team, but would like additional training from Planet Blue staff, please sign-up for one of our “Leadership Training” sessions, or contact pba-information@umich.edu to set-up a meeting.

Sample Email Invitation

[Name of Invitee],

Want to join a team of like-minded co-workers in taking action on sustainability and being a role model for our workplace? If so, I invite you to join our Planet Blue Green Team!

Green Team members will try out sustainability actions, share our experiences, discuss sustainability options, and identify opportunities to improve our workplace environment. The team will meet for a series of six [monthly/bi-weekly] meetings.

If you are interested, please sign up through this form.

[Workplace] Green Team

Name: ________________________

Email: ________________________

Best time for you to meet:

☐ Early Morning
☐ Lunch
☐ Evenings

You can create an easy to use form through your Google Drive (drive.google.com). Go to Create → Form.

Regards,

[Your Name]

[Signature Line]

Planet Blue Ambassador
Introductory Meeting Guide (1 hour)

- Welcoming Remarks. (5 minutes)
  - If you have specific workplace goals for this Green Team, outline them here.

- Personal Introductions (15-20 minutes)
  - Invite everyone to share a little bit of information about themselves here. Some good starters include:
    - Name
    - Position
    - Reason for participating, and what they want to get out of this experience
    - What current personal sustainability action are they most proud of?

- Introduction to Green Teams (10 minutes)
  - How it works
    - 6 one-hour long [monthly/bi-weekly] meetings
    - PBA training modules and pledges
    - Personal tracking on environmental impact

- Questions (10 minutes)
  - If you find there are questions that are unanswered by this guide, or you would like to deviate from the recommendations contained herein, discuss these issues now.

- Discussion: Connecting to the Workplace (10 minutes)
  - Importance of personal sustainability actions
    - By taking personal sustainability actions, Green Team members will not only lower their own environmental impact, they will also be prepared to explain and recommend various actions to others, as well as identify and overcome barriers to those actions. Furthermore, taking these actions oneself demonstrates one’s commitment to leading by example.
  - What are we currently doing around the workplace that we are proud of?
  - Do we want to set up specific goals for our workplace?
    - Consider community-building goals as well as operational goals

- Looking Ahead and Concluding Remarks (5 minutes)
  - Time and Place
  - Picking out pledges (any we all want to do?)
  - To-Do
    - PBA Training Module (does everyone know how to access?)
    - Tracking of personal impact metrics
    - Before the next meeting, answer prompts in that section of your workbook
    - Workplace observations of energy conservation and use practices
  - Optional: If rotating meeting facilitators, choose facilitator for next meeting.
  - Optional: Ask someone to bring a sustainable snack for next meeting (rotate who at each meeting)
Sample Meeting Discussion Guide (Meetings 2-6)

- Opening Remarks and/or Icebreaker (5 minutes)
- Monthly Highlight (5 minutes)
  - Invite everyone to share their sustainability highlight of the month
- Discussion Questions (35 minutes)
  - In response to the training
    - What did you like most from this PBA training module?
    - Did anything surprise you?
    - What else would you like to see at U-M?
    - What questions about the issue do you still have?
  - Personal
    - In addition to your highlight, what other positive experiences did you have since we last met?
    - Did you notice any change in your environmental impact?
    - Do you think you will keep doing this month’s sustainability actions? Why or why not?
    - What barriers did you encounter this month? Were you able to overcome them? Why or why not? How could you and others overcome similar barriers in the future?
  - Workplace
    - What sustainable practices have you noticed around the workplace?
    - Would any of your personal sustainability actions work well in the workplace?
    - What barriers to sustainability do people face in our workplace? What can we do to help overcome them?
- Planning and Goal-Setting (10 minutes)
  - At home, what will your next steps in this area be? (Invite everyone to share and record their goals in their workbook.)
  - At work, what steps should we pursue in this area? (Discuss, and everyone records the agreed upon goals in their workbook.)
- Looking Ahead and Concluding Remarks (5 minutes)
  - Picking out pledges (any we all want to do?)
  - To-Do
    - PBA Training Module
    - Tracking of personal impact metrics
    - Before the next meeting, answer prompts in that section of your workbook
    - Workplace observations
Beyond Meeting 6

- Workplace Recommendations
  - Compile and review all workplace recommendations
  - Who do we approach about implementing these recommendations?
- Sharing your experiences and lessons learned
  - Let other PBAs know by sharing with pba-info@umich.edu
  - Email your office with summary and highlights
- Future meetings?
  - Do we want to keep meeting?
  - If so, what should we focus on next meeting?
    - (e.g., transportation, environmental justice, green purchasing, sustainable economy, etc.)
  - Shall we keep in contact for future sustainability questions and updates?

Contacts

If at any point you have questions, you may feel free to direct them to the relevant contact:

- Planet Blue Ambassador/Green Team: pba-information@umich.edu
- Building Energy: energyconservation@umich.edu
- Waste Reduction & Recycling: recycle@umich.edu
- Other Facilities/Operations: ocs_contact@umich.edu
- U-M Health System: (fill out form here)
  [http://www.med.umich.edu/envsteward/contact.htm](http://www.med.umich.edu/envsteward/contact.htm)

Icebreaker Ideas

- What is your hidden talent?
- Fact or Fiction (list three things about yourself – two true and one false – and have the others try to figure out the false one)
- Describe yourself with 3 adjectives
- What is your favorite thing to do in the summer?
- If you were an animal, what would you be and why?
- What’s the weirdest thing you’ve ever eaten?
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](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](http://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.