



Forming a City Green Team



What is a Green Team?

A Green Team is comprised of voluntary participants from your office, meeting together to help organize initiatives and programs to decrease energy use, unnecessary waste, and spread awareness about sustainable practices in your office.



Why should we assemble a Green Team?

A greener office equals lower energy costs and less environmental impact. A green team helps to spread knowledge on the topic, which precedes any behavioral change. A Green Team also means meeting new or like-minded people and working with others towards a common goal.



What can be done once a Green Team is created?

A Green Team can spearhead change and implement ideas towards improving office habits and behaviors. Get ideas from or share ideas with other City Green Teams and hear about how others have made greening the office fun. After joining the Houston Green Office Challenge, your team can win awards and gain recognition from the Mayor's Office.



How does one go about putting together a Green Team?



- 1) Find an optimum number of volunteers to get behind a common goal.*
- 2) Talk to department leaders to get their support.*
- 3) Organize, meet, and assign leaders of the Houston Green Office Challenge categories: Energy, Outreach, Waste, Transportation, and the Bonus category. Appoint an overall leader of the Green Team who will take responsibility for planning topics for meetings and heading efforts.

**Steps 1 and 2 are interchangeable, based on your office*



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CASE STUDY: 1002 Washington, Houston Permitting Center



Top: Vegetated roofs surround the structure

Above: The City of Houston's first Green Team

Below: Sheila Blake and Steve Stelzer



The first City Green Team was formed at the Houston Permitting Center, in preparation for the 2011 Houston Green Office Challenge. Fifteen employees meet monthly and discuss initiatives, ideas, and behavior changes, as well as watch educational films.

*The Permitting Center had chairs and committees for each of the designated HGOC categories: Outreach, Waste, Energy and Transportation. **Sheila Blake** (Assistant Director of Houston's Department of Public Works and Engineering, Planning and Development Division, Code Enforcement Branch) assembled the team, and **Steve Stelzer** (Program Director of the Green Building Resource Center) helped to lead and guide the Green Team.*

The Permitting Center's Green Team has successfully:

- ❖ *Instituted a building-wide bike-share program*
- ❖ *Built an employee vegetable garden*
- ❖ *Conducted a lighting and waste audit*
- ❖ *Conducted a commuter survey*

The HGOC served as a great guide for change in the Permitting Center. Even after the challenge had ended and an award was secured, the challenge itself still served as a benchmark for what could be improved.

The Houston Permitting Center reached Tier level 2 (Gold) and received 3rd place in the "Most Improved Tenant" HGOC category.