



Start & Strengthen a Green Team (or Hazon Seal team)

Twenty million people took to the streets on the first Earth Day in 1970. Three months later, the Environmental Protection Agency was created -- and a slew of new environmental and public health laws followed.

There is power in numbers. To make your institution healthier and more sustainable, you need allies and buy-in from different parts of your organization. No need for millions; even a few will do. Working in concert, you can make tangible progress on cutting your institution's carbon footprint, reducing waste, energizing Jewish programming, and bringing your operations in line with your values.

What is a green team?

A green team, or sustainability committee, is a group of people who promote sustainability at your institution. The green team helps translate an organization's desire to become healthier and more sustainable into concrete, achievable goals and clear projects. The green team crafts education, action, and advocacy projects and makes sure these projects become reality.

Who should be included?

Successful green teams bring together a **balanced and diverse** group of people from various departments. These teams usually include at least one representative from:

- Executive leadership (e.g., executive director, rabbi, associate director, COO, program director)
- Facilities staff
- Board of trustees
- Finance and/or purchasing staff
- Lay people

The total number of people will vary based on the size of your organization, from as few as 3 to as many as 20. Look for staff and volunteers who are passionate about environmental responsibility and can generate enthusiasm and buy-in throughout the community. Expertise in greening is a major plus, as are people who are good at getting things done, and working with others.

How often should a green team meet?

Effective green teams meet at least monthly (or every six weeks). Even less active teams should make sure to meet at least quarterly.

What makes a green team meeting successful?

Effective green team meetings require preparation:

- Several days before the meeting, send out an agenda -- and remind individuals to complete any work they committed to doing at the previous meeting.

- Bring delicious food/snacks -- preferably local and organic!
- Roles, and role clarity is important! Designate a note-taker and someone to lead a teaching about Jewish tradition and/or the environment

Great facilitators will make sure that everyone speaks, crystallize clear next steps, end the meeting on time, and ensure that all leave feeling energized. **Meetings should be places to make decisions - not receive updates.**

Sample Green Team Meeting Agenda

1. Opening Circle (10 minutes)
2. Learning (10 minutes) - *Watch the "Story of Stuff," a short movie about consumerism and waste*
3. Open questions and planning (35 minutes) - e.g., *Greening our Kiddush*
 - a. *Select a caterer*
 - b. *Make decision on composting hauler*
 - c. *Determine educational signage needs*
 - d. *Brainstorm an outside speaker*
4. Next Steps (10 minutes) - *Review and confirm who is responsible for next steps*
5. Closing Circle (5 minutes)

Key First Steps: A Checklist

1. Find a partner-in-crime who shares your enthusiasm for sustainability and creating a green team. Green teams with two leaders are stronger than those with only one.
2. Alert and seek buy-in from the organization's management / leadership.
3. Together with your partner, draft a diverse list of people you think should join the team.
4. Create a basic charter for the group, listing its goals, how often it will meet, etc. Get feedback on it at your first team meeting.
5. Announce that you're recruiting for the green team, and also reach out individually to the people on your list. Be honest about the time commitment and expectations...but be enthusiastic!
6. Schedule a first meeting, draft an agenda, and send it to your team with a request for feedback! Consider making it an open meeting for community members and interested potential team members to attend and get a feel for the work ahead.

How can we strengthen or revive our already existing Green Team?

- A. Set one modest goal that you can achieve easily, and publicize your success in order to build momentum and energize your team.
- B. Incorporate a small learning component into your meetings, by showing a sustainability video clip, learning a text, or hosting an outside expert.
- C. Buy food! Rotate ownership of who brings local, seasonal, delicious foods to meetings.
- D. Make a presentation to your board of directors about your progress and the importance of greening.
- E. Create a page about your green team's work on your organization's website to spread the word about your work! Recruit new members through your newsletter.
- F. Choose an upcoming holiday -- e.g., Earth Day, Sukkot, Tu B'shvat -- to hold a small green event.