



CONTRA COSTA COUNTY



# G3 CHAMPIONS GUIDE

This guide serves as an introduction to the Green Government Group. It outlines the roles, responsibilities, and intended outcomes of the work of the G3 Champions.

Interdepartmental  
Climate Action Task  
Force

**SPRING 2022**



# G3 CHAMPIONS

**The mission** of the G3 Champions is to help County departments identify actions they can take that will urgently implement the County's Climate Action Plan. The G3 Champions will start by helping County departments adopt best practices from the County's Green Business Program. As volunteers, the G3 Champions will be on the cutting edge of sustainability progress in the County.

While this is a voluntary (unpaid) position, the benefits include:

- Cost savings** – reducing costs associated with waste, energy, transportation, and water.
- Attracting and retaining talent** – employee morale and satisfaction.
- County resident expectations** – strengthening vision and providing leadership by example.
- Regulatory compliance** – staying ahead of legislation.
- Aligning practices with values** – walking the walk!
- Networking** – work with like-minded individuals in your own department and across County government. Meet new colleagues while making a difference!
- Health** – Improve the quality of your workplace making it a healthier and safer environment for all.

Thanks for stepping up to make a difference in the County- we can't do it without you! The following document is to provide guidance as you start your role of G3 Champion. We have modeled this guide after the City of Portland, Oregon's 2019 Green Team Guide. While some language has been adopted, this document is specific for Contra Costa County and the Green Government Group Champions. Together, we can improve sustainability within the County!



## Look at the Big Picture!

The G3 Champions exist within each County department, but also within each County department site. Depending on how many sites each department houses, there could be multiple G3 Champions working on similar tasks. If you are part of a department who has 1 location, the actions you take are equally as important as if your department has 10 locations. Make a plan to check in with your fellow department Champions (not just your site-specific Champions) to coordinate efforts.

Recruit team members from all levels and departments within your department. Look for team members who: can regularly attend meetings, are able to take on project work responsibilities, are knowledgeable about the area of the organization they are representing, can serve as a resource for others in the organization, and are enthusiastic about the G3 Champions' mission.

# What's the Focus?

The County's roadmap to environmental sustainability involves many key components. Working towards reducing waste, creating healthier work environments, and curbing greenhouse gas emissions are the main pillars of County sustainability efforts. These pillars incorporate many courses of action through which the G3 Champions will work to establish more sustainable practices throughout the County. Each pillar ties into the larger goal of sustainability. Categories of action include the following:

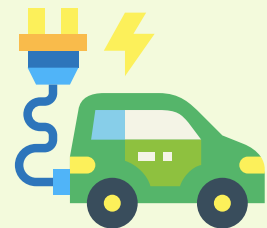


## Reduce Water Use:

Reducing water usage is a critical part of working towards Countywide sustainability. Take steps towards water reduction by implementing low-flow toilets, install drought tolerant landscaping, and use recycled water when possible. These actions can reduce overall water consumption and help mitigate the effects of drought.

## Conserve Energy:

Reduce energy usage by implementing strategies such as shutting off lights when not in use, powering down computers when leaving for the day, and installing LED efficient lights. Through small efforts as such, coupled with educating colleagues about energy consumption, County departments can take big steps to curb energy consumption.



## Improve Transportation/Commute:

Push to increase the number of electric vehicle (EV) charging stations available both to employees, as well as County fleet vehicles. Encourage employees to carpool, bike to work, or take public transit. These smaller steps can add up quickly to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from transportation!

## Prevent Pollution:

Work to reduce pollution by educating your department on the benefits of recycling batteries, reducing pesticides in landscaping, and utilizing green infrastructure. Through these actions, the reduction in pollution can lead to healthier, happier work environments as well as make strides towards combatting climate change.



## Promote Non-Toxic Cleaners:

Make an effort to switch out janitorial cleaning supplies with non-toxic substitutes. Ensure soaps and other products are eco-friendly. This can go a long way in promoting environmental quality, as well as human health.

## Avoid Waste:

Reduce the amount of waste generated by encouraging colleagues to use the printer only when absolutely necessary, bring lunch in reusable containers rather than heavy packaging, and opt for reusable water bottles and coffee cups. These actions are examples of small changes that can be made to improve overall sustainability across departments.



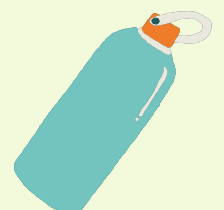
## Recycle Materials:

Through educating coworkers on types of items that can be recycled, increasing access to recycling bins, and coordinating with personnel who deal with e-waste and other items like ink and toner to ensure these items end up in the correct place, much can be done to further sustainability efforts around waste.



## Invest in Sustainable Products:

By advocating for your department to switch to purchasing items like recycled paper and water coolers for refilling reusable water bottles, and encouraging indoor office plants to improve air quality. These small steps can go a long way in promoting sustainability departmentwide.





While this may seem like a lot to tackle all at once, don't get overwhelmed! A benefit of being a G3 Champion is the organizational support that helps you and your department incorporate these pillars into everyday operations. How do the Champions decide what to work on? There will be an initiative of the quarter, where all efforts will be directed at one of these categories. The categories will rotate quarterly, giving G3 Champions more focused support to achieve their goals. The best way to coordinate these efforts is through implementing the Green Business Program's Best Practices. Here, each Practice is broken down into smaller, attainable actions that work towards meeting the larger goal. You can find these Best Practices [here](#).

## What's the Impact?

We are happy you're here! The first course of action is to organize within your Department, and coordinate with your site specific team. Begin by brainstorming with your site/departmentwide team along the lines of the following:

### Make a plan!

- Write a simple sustainability plan that incorporates focus areas, baseline information, goals and prioritized action items. The plan will act as a road map for your G3 Champion Team.
- Decide how the team will collect baseline information such as energy and water use, transportation use, garbage generated, etc. Refer to this [document](#) for more details on how to begin to inventory your site.



### Set goals for your site!

- The Interdepartmental Climate Task Force Steering Committee will help with this by outlining goals for the quarter. However, the G3 Champions have the opportunity to choose their own priorities!
- To develop an implementation plan, discuss with your group what your long- and short-term goals are. A good goal is specific, contains actions, and can be measured and accomplished in a reasonable timeframe. Choose goals that G3 Champion members, staff, and management can stand behind and be excited about!
- Prioritize actions within each focus area to help achieve your goals. Remember that members of your G3 Champion Group may have different priorities and opinions- remember to take into consideration everyone's perspective.

### Prioritize goals!

- The initiative of the quarter paints the big picture, but as a G3 Champion, you decide how your department is going to get there. Here are a few tips to stay on track and remain efficient.
- Pick the low hanging fruit first! For example, if the initiative of the quarter is "Reduce Waste" and your site Champions have already noticed that your department goes through many reams of paper, it's best to start with this!
- Consider the impact/effort ratio when deciding what measures to implement. Effort can mean financial costs, employee time, and/or organizational challenges. Impact can be in regard to the natural environment, the impact on your organization or external stakeholders, and/or human health. This method is used to identify action priorities, as low effort but high reward will in turn have the biggest payoff. Consider avoiding the measures that are high effort and low impact for your department, as your time is most likely best suited elsewhere!
- As a group, identify the focus areas and activities and discuss how they most appropriately should be categorized. This is a good way for you and your team to decide what is most effective to implement.



## How to Measure Success



With so many possible implementation practices, how will progress be tracked and success be measured? The Departments of Conservation and Development and Health have taken the lead on reporting mechanisms to track progress and has set up a system the G3 Champions can easily access. The Public Works Department will also be assisting with tracking metrics. This will allow you to monitor change over time, both at your site, and within your entire department. You can also view other Champions and their departments progress. This uniform way of collecting information from all Champions allows the County to track sustainability progress in big ways!

## Display Accomplishments

As a project of the Interdepartmental Climate Action Task Force, the G3 Champion Program to display accomplishments. Below are a few ways that you and your team can get the news out about what you've been working on!

- Progress and updates can be displayed on the intranet site. This site, created and maintained by DCD, is designed so Champions can upload information and input progress metrics. The intranet site also highlights the work of the G3 Champions, where their colleagues can see updates, best practices, and helpful tips.
- While intranet site is site is internal facing, semi-annual reports to the Board will allow County residents to be inspired by what their county government is doing to promote sustainability within.
- Mark your calendars for the annual Sustainability Event happening in April for Earth Day! Here you can showcase accomplishments, educate and inspire staff, as well as recruit new people to become G3 Champions.
- Bi-Monthly Meetings/Events over Zoom will take place to connect Champions with one another. This will also be a good time to ask questions about challenges you and your team may be facing. We hope to have in-person gatherings when circumstances allow.
- Lunch & Learn sessions will also take place to strengthen the G3 Champion network. Lunchtime gatherings are a great way to raise awareness and engage and educate employees on sustainability issues. Consider volunteering to organize a Lunch & Learn!



## Stay Motivated!

Consider implementing activities to keep staff energized! Events, challenges, and games can keep staff excited about sustainability efforts, and raise awareness about the Best Practices themselves. Below are examples of activities Portland, Oregon companies have used to educate and inspire their employees about their sustainability efforts.

- **Zero Landfill Lunch** – ADP, a document processing company, took waste reduction to the masses with their Pack it in, Pack it out campaign. Disposable coffee cups and plates in the lunchroom were replaced with durable plates and silverware. Each employee was given a travel mug and water bottle. Then for one month they challenged everyone to bring durable lunch containers. If staff forgot and generated trash at lunch they had to pack it home. They also had a screening of The Story of Stuff followed by a discussion to raise awareness about consumption and waste.
- **Paper Hogs** – Law firm Gevertz Menache tackled their paper use with a challenge and a demonstration. First, they calculated how much paper they used in the previous year (about 46 reams per person). Green team members then stacked 46 reams of paper into a pyramid to help staff visualize how much they were using. With this image in mind, every employee committed to the company's goal of reducing their paper use by 10 percent in the following year.
- **Recycle It!** – Marketing firm Wieden and Kennedy organized a game show to educate their employees about their recycling system at a staff meeting. The game featured three contestants, a host, judge and DJ. On stage were containers used in the company's recycling system which captured things out of the usual mix, like composting and plastic film. Contestants were shown real materials generated at work, and had to guess which bin they should go into. The host kept the game moving, and employees laughing, while the DJ made positive/negative noises based on the answer. The judge confirmed (thumbs up) or corrected (thumbs down) the answers given by the contestants.
- **Green Olympics** – Adidas got in the competitive spirit during the Olympics and organized their own Green Games at their headquarters office. Each day employees had a particular contest: getting as many people to work by alternative transit as possible; 'flipping your bin' and not producing any garbage for the day; and bringing in a potted plant or coffee mug to the office. Employees were divided into teams and the team with the most points earned a pizza party.
- **Duel to the Green** – Commercial Realty Advisors organized a Green Office Contest during the week of Earth Day. Staff was divided into four teams, and each team awarded points or penalties to the other teams throughout the week. For example, if they found some recycling in someone's trash they would deduct a point. If they saw someone using a reusable coffee mug or turning off the lights when they left the conference room, they awarded them a point.

## Who to Contact?

As you begin this process and begin planning with your team, you may have questions. No worries, we are here to provide support! Below is the contact info for the Department of Conservation and Development Sustainability Coordinator, as well as the Public Works Department liaison who can answer questions that may arise.

Jody London, Sustainability Coordinator:  
Jody.London@dcd.cccounty.us (925) 674-7871