



# 'Green Recovery For All' Toolkit

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# I. Introduction

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Since President Obama signed the economic recovery package on February 17, our phones at Green For All have been ringing off the hook. Thousands of people want to know how their communities can access the billions of dollars the federal government is about to invest in green jobs and job training.

The short answer is: it's up to you. We know which agencies will get which resources to invest. We know roughly when those agencies will decide what to invest in. But how they make those decisions is not written in stone. There is no law saying this money will get to our communities, our programs, our people. There is no law saying it won't. **It is up to you to take your place at the table, through "I'm ready" rallies, community roundtables, meetings with local leaders and other tactics. Your actions will determine if this is truly a green recovery for all.**

A couple of things are certain:

1. President Obama's recovery package is the best chance we've ever seen to create green jobs for everyday people.
2. If we want this to be a green recovery, not just for a few but for all, we cannot leave it up to local politics and business as usual.

We have to get organized and head to City Hall, ready to work and ready to serve our communities.

It's not like you haven't done this before. After all, it's how you earned this opportunity. Tens of thousands of you organized rallies, made phone calls, sent emails, and some even lobbied on Capitol Hill. On February 17, Washington responded with a nearly \$800 billion bill, which promises more than \$50 billion for green jobs and \$500 million for green job training.

Now the battle moves from Capitol Hill to City Hall.

Big business and political insiders are already making their case to your Mayor why they should get this federal money. But we are all in this together. We all need this green recovery to work. Our communities are ready to work, ready to serve, and ready to help implement a local green recovery plan that doesn't leave anyone behind.

We can do it. You know it — it's why our phones are ringing off the hook. The questions are: How do we get a seat at the table? How do we ensure a green recovery for all?

We designed this toolkit to answer those questions.

## II. The Commitment: A Green Recovery for All

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We all have a stake in a successful green recovery. By connecting the people who most need work to the work that most needs to be done, we can fight pollution and poverty at the same time.

Low-income communities and communities of color across the country stand ready to help. We are ready to work and ready to serve. We want a plan for a local green recovery that includes our communities and benefits our communities. We want a seat at the table so we can bring our knowledge and expertise to the recovery effort.

We are committed to implementing a successful local recovery that creates jobs and improves the environment. We want our local officials and government leaders to join us in this Commitment to a Green Recovery for All.

**Suggestion for Action:** Prepare a 'Green Recovery for All' commitment statement and ask your elected officials to sign it.

The commitment could be as simple as:

*I [Official's Name] will work with the community to ensure that the Recovery dollars create green jobs and opportunities for low-income people and people of color.*

You could also add specific bullet point in the commitment, like:

*I [Official's Name] commit to:*

- 1. Showing the public a plan by [insert date] for how local recovery dollars will benefit low income communities and communities of color;*
- 2. Creating seats at the table for members of community organizations to help develop and implement the local green recovery plan; and*
- 3. Working with leaders from low-income communities and communities of color to develop and regularly update metrics that will measure our progress toward a green recovery for all in real numbers over time.*

Your commitment statement could also be a longer and include principles about the substance of the local green recovery, such as:

- Create quality jobs with family-supporting wages and benefits;*
- Commit adequate resources for career training and support pathways out of poverty into self-sufficiency;*
- Maximize job training and supportive services for people of color and women;*
- Use a community-based planning process with accountability measures.*

Your local version of a "Commitment to a Green Recovery for All" can take many forms. The most important thing is that you use it to get your voices and your contributions into the local recovery planning.

Share your commitment statement with thousands in the Green For All Network using the 'Get Local' tool at <http://www.greenforall.org/recovery>.

# III. Three Key Recovery Programs

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There are billions of dollars in the recovery package flowing to communities across the country for green jobs and training programs. For in-depth information and strategy tips see our new report, *Bringing Home the Green Recovery: A User's Guide to the 2009 American Recovery and Reinvestment Act* (available at <http://www.greenforall.org/recovery>).

Here are three green recovery programs that we think are important to get involved in locally.

## 1. WEATHERIZATION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

There is 6 billion dollars in the recovery package to weatherize homes to make them leak less energy, which lowers utility bills, cuts carbon emissions, and requires lots of people working on lots of homes.

The money is going mostly to the Community Action Agencies that have been responsible for implementing this program for decades. But this year is different. Local weatherization budgets will now be as much as 25 times what they were in the past. That means 25 times more homes to fix up; 25 times more people to employ and train.

How is weatherization money being spent in your area? How are these recovery dollars providing job and training opportunities to low-income people? How are they supporting existing community efforts around job training, youth development, or energy efficiency?

Find out who administers the federal weatherization program in your area and ask these questions. Offer your assistance. Ask for their commitment to a green recovery for all.

## 2. ENERGY EFFICIENCY AND CONSERVATION BLOCK GRANTS

Under a new program in the recovery package every city, county, state, and tribe in the country will receive some portion of over \$3 Billion to spend on projects that reduce energy use or conserve resources.

What is your city's plan for spending this money? Will their projects create good paying jobs? Will those jobs be available to low-income people and people of color? Will your city use these block grants to support job training program for people in poverty, including the formerly incarcerated or others with barriers to employment?

Ask your mayor, city council members and county commissioners these types of questions. Offer your assistance. Ask for their commitment to a green recovery for all.

## 3. GREEN JOBS TRAINING GRANTS

The federal recovery package allocated \$500 million to be given out in competitive grants for green job training programs across the country. There will be grants available for advanced skills training and for pathways out of poverty programs.

How are local leaders planning to prepare a winning application to the Department of Labor? Who is convening all the necessary stakeholders from government, business, community, labor, and education? How can community groups get involved to be sure that they are

helping design and implement training programs that move people out of poverty and into good green jobs and careers?

Ask you local leaders these questions. Offer your assistance. Ask for their commitment to a green recovery for all.

For more detail on these and other green program in the recovery package see *Bringing Home the Green Recovery: A User's Guide to the 2009 American Recovery and Reinvestment Act* (available at <http://www.greenforall.org/recovery>).

# IV. Action Ideas

## ACTION IDEA #1: GO MEET WITH LOCAL OFFICIALS

Your local officials need to hear from you, so why not go to City Hall and talk to them? You can set up a meeting ahead of time, or just go on down there.

You don't have to be an expert. You just have to show the city that you're ready to work and ready to rebuild an equitable, green, local economy. Ask the questions you want them to answer. Remember: as public servants, they work for you.

Here are a few tips:

- ▶ Find some people who will join you.
- ▶ Decide whom you want to meet with before you go.  
  
IDEAS: The Mayor, the City Council President, your City Councilperson, and/or a city manager or administrator you think might be interested in your cause.
- ▶ When you get to City Hall, ask for the office of the person(s) you want to meet with.
- ▶ Bring a document to leave behind during your visit. Use your own version of the Commitment to a Green Recovery For All, described in Chapter 2.
- ▶ Be positive, respectful, and presentable.
- ▶ Bring the media (see Chapter 5).
- ▶ Follow up! Thank them for meeting with you. Then make sure they do what they promised. Be polite and persistent.
- ▶ **SHARE YOUR STORY!** It's easy — just go to .

## ACTION IDEA #2: ORGANIZE AN "I'M READY" MARCH, RALLY, OR PRESS CONFERENCE

### REQUESTING A MEETING

- ▶ Make your request in writing. Follow up on the phone.
- ▶ Suggest a couple different times.
- ▶ Let them know what you want to talk about: the Recovery Package and what it means for your hometown.
- ▶ Make sure they know you're one of the people they represent!

### GETTING READY

- ▶ Learn more about the recovery! Check out the "Additional Resources" on page 6.
- ▶ Decide whom to invite. Try to bring leaders from your communities. Keep the group under ten people.
- ▶ Decide what you want to say. Make sure everyone is on the same page by agreeing on your talking points and questions beforehand.
- ▶ Plan it out! Time is limited, so decide how you want each step of the meeting to go.

### DURING THE MEETING

- ▶ Use local examples. Make it relevant for them.
- ▶ Establish a connection. Mention any personal, professional or political connection you might have to the official.
- ▶ You don't have to be an expert. It's OK to say you don't know. You can always follow up later.
- ▶ Get commitments and set deadlines. If they need more time, find out when you can check back for their response.

Send a signal to your local officials. Show them that we are ready to work and ready to serve. We want the local green recovery to be successful. And we want to be sure that local recovery dollars benefit low-income people and people of color.

Organize a “I’m Ready” rally, march, or massive press conference. Invite local officials to join you.

Your march or rally doesn’t have to be a protest. You can have a happy event that demonstrates that your community is ready to help save the economy and the planet. The point of this event is to make sure that your community is on the radar of local officials and other leaders. You want to be in the conversation as your city plans to spend these green recovery dollars.

Here are some tips for your action:

- ▶ Nail down the logistics. First thing’s first: get the date, time, and location so you can spread the word and draw a crowd.
- ▶ Decide who will speak. Make sure everyone knows how much time they get, and what the message of the action is.
- ▶ Engage the media. Reach out to news media before and during the action. Check out Chapter 5 for details on how to do that.
- ▶ Make it happen! Execute a vocal, positive, “I’m Ready” action. Go to <http://www.greenforall.org/icon> to make customized signs and banners. Make your own handouts and chant sheets for people who come.
- ▶ **SHARE YOUR STORY!** It’s easy — just go to <http://events.greenforall.org/recoveryactions/reports/new/>.

#### **TIP: ACT NOW!**

Whatever you choose to do, don’t wait until you “have all the answers”. This is a short-term stimulus. Many of the most important decisions will be made in the next 30 to 90 days. Below are some ideas about how to start the conversation in your community.

Got your own ideas about how to ensure a green recovery for all? Go for it!

Let us know all about it. Share videos, pictures and stories by going to <http://www.greenforall.org/recovery> and clicking on the “Get Local” tool.

## **ACTION IDEA #3: INVITE YOUR ELECTED OFFICIALS TO A TOWN HALL MEETING**

#### **ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

- ▶ Green For All and PolicyLink have put together *Bringing Home the Green Recovery: A User’s Guide to the 2009 American Recovery and Reinvestment Act* (<http://greenforall.org/resources/recoveryusersguide/download>)
- ▶ *Bringing Home the Green Recovery* is meant to give you some specific pressure points and advocacy hooks to help you influence how the Recovery is implemented in your community.
- ▶ The President has set up a Recovery.gov website for accountability, which will post all of the grants and show how the money is flowing.
- ▶ Remember, don’t wait until “you have all the answers” to get started. It’s your elected officials’ job is to represent your interests in the process and help you engage.

A town hall meeting can be a great way to bring your elected officials to you. If you have a good relationship with your mayor or another official — or if you have so many members she won't want to miss your meeting — you can get them to come to you to discuss the Recovery.

#### *Getting Ready*

- ▶ Invite your elected official(s).
- ▶ Prepare your questions and demands (see Chapter 2).
- ▶ Bring entertainment — music, poetry, video or something else.
- ▶ Set a place and time for the event.
- ▶ Recruit a large, diverse audience.
- ▶ Recruit diverse speakers.
- ▶ Invite service providers like food banks, job fairs, unemployment services or Earned Income Tax Credit assistance.
- ▶ Engage the media (see Chapter 5).
- ▶ Plan out an agenda. Because time is limited and there will be a lot to talk about, plan who will start the conversation and lay out the meeting beforehand.

#### *During the Event*

- ▶ Have sign-in sheets. That way, you can follow up with next steps.
- ▶ Assign roles. Make sure people know exactly what they are supposed to do before, during and after the event.
- ▶ Start and end the event on time. Respect everyone's time.

#### *After the Event*

- ▶ Thank everyone! Thank people for coming, thank everyone who helped, thank elected officials — even if they didn't give you everything you wanted.
- ▶ Follow up promptly.
- ▶ Compare notes. Make sure you write down everything you committed to do and everything your elected officials committed to do.
- ▶ Track your deadlines. If the elected official or staff member doesn't meet a deadline you set in the meeting ask him or her to set another one. Be persistent and flexible.
- ▶ **SHARE YOUR STORY!** It's easy — just go to <http://events.greenforall.org/recoveryactions/reports/new/>.

#### **SAMPLE TOWN HALL MEETING AGENDA**

- 5 mins: Welcome everyone and state the purpose of the town hall meeting.
- 10 mins: Testimony from the floor about worthy people, programs, and the need for green jobs for low-income folks
- 5 mins: Short music, poetry, or video performance
- 10 mins: A small panel presents the perspectives of the group along with the question about how the Elected Official will ensure green investments flow to low-income folks and if he/she will sign the Commitment pledge.
- 10 mins: Elected Official gives his/her remarks
- 10 mins: Questions from the audience
- 5 mins: Summary and Next Steps from the emcee
- 5 mins: Closing music/performance
- Refreshments (optional)

## **ACTION IDEA #4: HOST A HOUSE PARTY OR OTHER MEETUP**

Hosting a house party is an easy way to meet other people in your community who are interested in green jobs. You and other concerned community members can learn about the Recovery Package, discuss what peoples' needs are, and strategize how best to hold local officials accountable.

### *Getting Ready*

- ▶ Choose a date and time.
- ▶ Invite your neighbors. Try to reach beyond your inner circle, and ask people to RSVP..
- ▶ Ask everyone to bring snacks.
- ▶ Send everyone a few short things to read beforehand. See our “Additional Resources” on page 6 for ideas.
- ▶ Print a Sign-in sheet.

### *At the House Party*

Here's one way to plan your house party:

1. Arrival: Mingling, food, drinks.
2. Getting Started: Gather people in a circle for discussion. Start by giving some context for why you chose to host this and what you hope to get out of it. Then go around asking each person to say who they are and why they came. Then talk about *Bringing Home the Green Recovery: A User's Guide to the 2009 American Recovery and Reinvestment Act* and how the group can leverage the Recovery Package into green jobs for low-income folks.
3. Taking Action: Each person could write a letter to the editor (see Chapter 5) or a letter to their elected official.
4. Next Steps: Talk about next steps including delivering your message to City Hall.
5. Closing: Mingling, food, drinks, sharing stories.

### *List of Potential Discussion Questions*

- ▶ Who are you and why are you here?
- ▶ Who are we and who do we represent?
- ▶ What are the neighborhoods, groups, people and programs that most need work?
- ▶ What did you learn from *Bringing Home the Green Recovery: A User's Guide to the 2009 American Recovery and Reinvestment Act* about what investments and job opportunities are relevant to our community and how to access them?
- ▶ What did you learn from the Toolkit sections, <http://www.recovery.gov> or other articles or information you've read about it?

#### **TIP: COME UP WITH SOMETHING BETTER!**

These are just some of our ideas. If you have your own ideas about how to ensure a green recovery for all, GO FOR IT!

We'd love to hear all about it. Let us know about your plans and progress! Take pictures and video. Use our website to share your work with thousands of other people around the country in the Green For All network. Go to <http://www.greenforall.org/recovery> and click on the “Get Local” tool to tell us about your work or to find local events near you.

- ▶ Which agencies will be receiving money from the Recovery Package?
- ▶ Who is the local person responsible for managing that money?
- ▶ When will they receive the funds?
- ▶ Who in the group knows anybody connected to those people, that agency, the mayor, or other local government entities?
- ▶ Who would know details about Recovery money coming down and how it'll be distributed?
- ▶ What principles or values do we want to impress on the local government in this process?
- ▶ How do we want to bring our message to City Hall?
- ▶ Who can take on what roles to make this happen?
- ▶ Moving forward, how and when will the people here communicate with each other?

#### ENGAGE YOUR STATE

The Recovery Package is big. There are many federal, state, and local agencies involved. We wrote this, assuming you'll want to get involved locally first. But, as you will see in the *Bringing Home the Green Recovery: A User's Guide to the 2009 American Recovery and Reinvestment Act*, there are many ways to engage at the state level as well.

Feel free to take our suggestions for actions at City Hall and apply them to meeting with your Governor or relevant State agencies and representatives.

#### *After the Event*

- ▶ Follow up promptly. Follow up with a thank you to everyone who attended the house party and some next steps for the group. If you've decided on a date to go to City Hall or another specific action step, include that near the top of the e-mail.
- ▶ **SHARE YOUR STORY!** It's easy — just go to <http://events.greenforall.org/recoveryactions/reports/new/>.

# V. Engaging the Media

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Media publicity is a great way to spread the word about your event, both before and after it happens. Two easy things to do are invite media to cover your event, and write a letter to the editor of your local paper.

## INVITING MEDIA TO YOUR EVENT

*(Courtesy of STAND and ServiceNation)*

When first contacting the press, write up a media alert or a press release and send it out to as many news outlets as possible. Remember to focus on the core message of your event.

### *Media Alert vs. Press Release*

A media alert is the basic facts of an event, the who, what, where, when and why. It publicizes an event to the press and invites them to come.

A press release is more detailed. It is essentially a one page article about your event, written from your perspective. It can include quotes from event organizers and attendees, and a much greater level of detail. Both media alerts and press releases are usually less than a page, so don't worry about making them longer.

### **TIP: USE NEW MEDIA**

Traditional media are just one way to get the word out about your event. Use everything at your disposal: blog, twitter, Facebook, etc. Get creative!

Visit <http://www.greenforall.org/recovery> for a sample media advisory and press release.

### *Sending Out the Alerts*

Send information about your event to as many press outlets as you can think of. Prioritize local outlets first, since they are more likely to send a reporter to your event. Community and local newspapers are key, as are nearby college and university newspapers. Try local radio stations, too. If you're planning a larger event, contact local television news channels, or even the local affiliates of major networks like CBS, CNN, NBC and Fox. Contact information for local affiliates of these channels can be found on their websites.

It's important to grab reporters' and editors' attention quickly. If you are sending an e-mail, make sure the subject line is catchy. If you are sending a press release, make sure the headline is clear and grabs your attention.

And when you are dealing with the press, the most important thing is always to have a clear message. Know what you want to say and stick to it.

### *Media Outreach Timeline*

- ▶ 1-2 Weeks Before You Event: Contact as many media outlets as possible with your press release or media alert.
- ▶ 3 Days Before: Call and e-mail all of your press contacts and remind them about the event individually.

- ▶ **1 Day Before:** Call and e-mail all press who responded to your alert or press release and try to get a list of who will come. Make sure to give any more information they might need.
- ▶ **The Big Day:** Make sure there are participants to speak to the press. Remind your speakers (if you have some) to take questions after their presentations.

## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Letters to the Editor (LTEs) are a simple and excellent way to communicate key messages about your event or organization. Policymakers often consider the LTE section as the “voice of the community,” so they are particularly attuned to the viewpoints expressed here.

Take a few minutes to write and submit a LTE to your local newspaper. To maximize the likelihood that your letter will be printed, follow these guidelines:

- ▶ **Short is Sweet:** Resist the temptation to write a thesis on the state of the world. Your LTE has to be short, punchy and to the point. Focus on keeping your letter to 100-150 words.
- ▶ **Short Sentences. Short Paragraphs:** If you write like a journalist – short sentences and short paragraphs – editors will be more likely to choose your letter.
- ▶ **Communicate Key Messages:** Use every sentence to communicate your message – don’t risk the chance that your key message will be left on the editing room floor!
- ▶ **Make It Personal:** People make decisions based on emotions and values, and the best way to communicate values and emotions is by telling a (short) personal story. To this end you can use your LTE to talk about your event!
- ▶ **Include Your Full Name, City, Phone Number:** Your LTE should always end with your complete name, city of residence and telephone number. Your number will not be published, of course, but many papers will call to verify that you actually wrote the letter.

If you are writing a letter on behalf of your organization, list your organizational title, organization name and the city that the organization is located in (rather than your personal city of residence).

# VI. Next Steps

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First, tell us about how your action went!

None of us has seen an \$800 billion Recovery Package before. We need to learn from each other as we go. Help us out!

1. If you haven't already, register to Organize An Action online so others can join you:

<http://www.greenforall.org/recoveryactions>

2. After the action, go back to the website to post your story, photos, and lessons learned. Visit this page and select your event :

<http://events.greenforall.org/recoveryactions/reports/new/>

Many of the decisions will be made about green recovery investments within 90 days. We need to push hard locally until our people are in those jobs. But that's just the first step — and we won't be slowing down when it's complete.

Stick with Green For All and with your community throughout 2009 as we engage in new ways to help people hurting right now and we work for long-term solutions from Congress and our new President.

## INFORMATION FOR MANAGING YOUR ACTION ONLINE

Modify or report back on your Action

- ▶ You can update your action information as needed by logging into the event tool <http://events.greenforall.org/profile/events>. On this page you can also upload photos and updates about the event, as well as send email messages and download contact information about people who have RSVPed.
- ▶ To report back on your action visit our reports page- <http://events.greenforall.org/recoveryactions/reports/new/>. Make sure report back immediately following your event to share photos, video, stories and other important details.
- ▶ To manage everything about your event and report backs login here - <http://events.greenforall.org/profile/events>
- ▶ Questions about modifying your action and/or adding a report back? E-mail us at: [recoveryactions@greenforall.org](mailto:recoveryactions@greenforall.org)

Get More Information

- ▶ You can download this Green Recovery toolkit here:  
<http://www.greenforall.org/resources/recoverytoolkit/download>  
and our *Bringing Home the Green Recovery: A User's Guide to the 2009 American Recovery and Reinvestment Act* here:  
<http://www.greenforall.org/resources/recoveryusersguide/download>
- ▶ Visit the Green Recovery page on our website for up-to-date news and resources - <http://www.greenforall.org/recovery>