



GREEN RECOVERY FOR ALL

Toolkit

Since President Obama signed the stimulus 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 depends on you.

A couple of things are certain:

1. This is the best chance to create green jobs for everyday people that we've ever seen.
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 Washington to City Hall.

Big business and political insiders are already making their case to your Mayor why they should get this federal money. These bigwigs want to do what they always do: pay the lowest wages with the fewest benefits while reserving the most profit for themselves.

We can do better this time. You know it — it's why our phones are ringing off the hook. The question is, how do we make sure that it IS better?

WHAT CAN I DO?

Take action!

How about, get some friends and neighbors together and go down to City Hall with a proposition:

“Hello. We’ve read about the federal Recovery Package and how it can help our community. We’re here to help. We’re ready to work. We’re ready for green jobs now. We’re interested in your plan for making this a green recovery that lifts all boats. What’s your plan for a green recovery for all? How can we be a part of this process?”

This is a real opportunity, but it will pass us by if we don’t seize it. Got your own ideas about how to do that? Go for it! Drop us a line and tell us how it goes.

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. Our communities need to take their place at the table.

IDEAS FOR ACTION

Looking for ideas about how to bring your community a Green Recovery for All? We racked our brains and came up with a few you can use. But what you do, and where, and when...that is all up to you.

ACTION IDEA #1: JUST GO!

Your local officials need to hear from you, so why not just go to City Hall? You don’t have to be an expert on the Recovery Package to know that there are billions of dollars for green investments and job training that can really help low-income people in your neighborhood. Show the city that you’re ready to work and ready to rebuild the local economy. Ask the questions you want them to answer. Remember: as public servants, they work for you.

Here are a few tips:

- Ask a few friends and neighbors to join you.
- Decide whom you want to meet with before you go.
 - Consider the Mayor, the City Council President, your City Councilperson, or a city manager or administrator you think might be interested in your cause.
 - It’s okay to go to multiple offices in one visit.
 - Look on the city or town’s website for the name and title of the person(s) you want to meet with. If you want to call beforehand, go for it.
- 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.
 - It could be a resolution, a pledge, or a set of principles you’d like them to consider when making investment decisions from the Recovery Package. Consider bringing photos and petitions from your Green Jobs Now rally last September, a brief description of your organization, or a simple letter from the group of you with your request(s).
 - Bring enough copies and business cards to leave at least one with each office you visit. If you don’t have a business card, remember to leave your contact information on the top of the document.

- See Action Idea #2 for more tips on this meeting.
- Be positive, respectful, and presentable.
 - This is an opportunity to take advantage of, not an injustice to protest (at least, not yet). So be positive and assume that you'll be listened to and respected until proven otherwise.
 - You don't have to wear a suit, but you're more likely to get to talk to the right person if you look together.
- Follow up!
 - Unless you had a meeting set, you'll probably speak to a staff person who works for who you want to meet with. Follow up with an email and a phone call promptly afterwards.
 - Thank them for talking with you and ask for a deadline by when they will get a response from their boss.
 - Be polite and persistent.
- **SHARE YOUR STORY!**
 - Share a "report back" from your action. Send in stories, photos and a few lessons learned from your meeting. Communities across the country are wrestling with these fresh questions about the Recovery Package, just like you are. If we all share our stories, we can learn a lot from each other.
 - *INSTRUCTIONS:* You can update your action information as needed by logging in to your profile (<http://org2.democracynaction.org/o/5379/profile/login.jsp>). Simply navigate to the "event" tab and find the action you are hosting to modify it. Once you are logged in, edit the description field of your action to add a report.

Consider bringing a "green equity pledge" to ask your elected officials to sign. The pledge could be as simple as, "I [Name of Elected Official] will work with the community to ensure that the Recovery dollars create green jobs and opportunities for low-income people and people of color." It could also be a longer pledge with principles 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

ACTION IDEA #2: SET UP A MEETING

Maybe you're not the spontaneous walk down to City Hall type. That's okay. Setting up a meeting with your elected officials is easier than you might think.

Decide Whom to Meet With

- Meet with your Mayor if you've got a group representing many different neighborhoods or your goals are citywide.
- Meet with your city councilperson if you're focused on your neighborhood.
- Meet with your Governor or state representative if you plan to influence decisions made at the state level.
- While local officials will be applying for federal money, the Department of Labor,

Department of Energy and other federal agencies will be the ones distributing that money. To influence their decisions, meet with a local representative of one of those agencies.

- During the week of April 13-18 your U.S. Representative and Senators will be back home in their district. Consider setting up a meeting with them at that point. You could also meet with their staff beforehand.
- If you or your friends have a personal or professional relationship with any particular official, meet with him or her and ask how they can help.

Request Your Meeting

- Make your request in writing. Follow up with a call to the appointment secretary/scheduler.
- Suggest a couple specific times and dates for your meeting.
- Let your elected officials know that you want to discuss the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (H.R. 1) and what it means for low-income people looking for green jobs.
- Make sure they know that you are a constituent (one of the people they represent).

Prepare for Your Meeting

- Research the Recovery. Read the *Green For All Guide to Using 2009 Recovery Act Funds* and take a look at www.Recovery.gov to learn what the Recovery Package includes and what opportunities to ask about.
- Decide whom to invite. This is about pathways out of poverty. Invite people who represent low-income neighborhoods and communities of color. Try to invite people that represent a variety of constituents. This might be a church leader, a union leader, a green employer, an educator, or another type of community leader. It's okay if you don't have everyone you would want. Keep the group under 10 people unless you know you will have enough space in the meeting and enough time from your representative to let everyone feel included.
- Agree on your talking points and questions. Before the meeting, make sure everyone is on the same page about what you want to ask and what you want to say.
- Plan out your meeting. Because time is limited and there will be a lot to talk about, plan who will start the conversation. Decide how you want the meeting to flow, step by step.

Additional Resources

- Green For All and PolicyLink have put together *Green For All Guide to Using 2009 Recovery Act Funds* (<http://www.greenforall.org/resources/recoveryusersguide/download>)
- This *v's Guide* 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. Part of your elected officials' job is to help you engage.

- Be clear about your goals. You'll know you succeeded if you get what you were asking for. This seems simple, but can get lost if you're not clear.

During the Meeting

- Be prompt. Legislators often run on a tight schedule and may be late or interrupted by other business. Show up on time and be patient.
- Stay on topic. Usually a staff person or elected official will give you no more than ten to twenty minutes to meet. Make the most of it.
- Establish a connection. Mention any political, professional, or personal connections you might have to the elected official.
- Use local examples. Give personal and local examples of how green jobs for low-income people can benefit the entire community.
- You don't have to know everything. Don't be afraid to admit that you don't know something. You don't have to be an expert. Making up answers will only hurt your credibility. You can always follow up later with good answers to the questions that you couldn't address during the meeting.
- Ask for commitments and set deadlines for a response. The elected official often won't make new decisions in the meeting. Ask when you should check back in to find out their response.

After the Meeting

- Compare notes. Make sure you write down everything you committed to do and everything the elected official committed to do.
- Send thanks. Each person who attended the meeting should send a letter thanking the official for the meeting.
- Follow up promptly. Follow up as soon as possible with any information or materials requested.
- 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

- Share a "report back" from your action. Send in stories, photos and a few lessons learned from your meeting. Communities across the country are wrestling with these fresh questions about the Recovery Package, just like you are. If we all share our stories, we can learn a lot from each other.
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ACTION IDEA #3: INVITE YOUR ELECTED OFFICIALS TO A TOWN HALL MEETING

If you already have a good relationship with your Mayor, Councilperson, or other elected official, you may be able to convince them to come to an event about the Green Recovery on your turf: a community town hall meeting. Or, if you are able to organize a large enough number of community members, you'll be able to convince the public official(s) that the

number of their constituents that will be at the meeting will make it an event they cannot afford to miss.

Prepare for the Event

- Invite your Elected Official(s). Use the best inside channels you can to request the attendance of your elected official. If they don't agree right away, ask other leaders and community members to request their attendance as well. No matter what, be prepared with a backup plan for the event in case they don't show up.
- Prepare your questions and demands. Do your research and set goals for the event. Read the *Green For All Guide to Using 2009 Recovery Act Funds* and take a look at Recovery.gov to learn what's in the bill and what opportunities to ask questions about. The people in charge of presenting your case should meet beforehand and be on the same page. Keep your message consistent throughout the event.
- Bring entertainment. If you can, find a local band, performer, poet, or a video about your issue to bring to the event. Spice it up!
- Set a place and time for the event. Book your space early on. Set a time that works for the organizations and people involved and your elected official.
- Recruit a large audience. Start with outreach to organizations based in low-income neighborhoods. Reach out to faith groups, unions, students, social justice groups, local businesses interesting in going green and others. Set a goal for how many people you want to attend — and get commitments from at least twice that many people. Try to fill the space you have completely. Standing-room-only makes a good impression.
- Recruit diverse speakers. Invite speakers that represent a broad cross-section of the community. Think about class, race, gender, geography, age, and employment/life background. Prepare all speakers well beforehand: make sure everybody is familiar with the message and knows how much time they have to speak.
- 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.

Sample Townhall 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

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 or other performance

Refreshments (optional)

During the Event

- Have sign-in sheets. Make sure to have a sign-in sheet to capture everybody who comes in the door so you can follow up with next steps.

- Assign roles. Make sure people know exactly what they are supposed to do during the event. At a minimum, you should have people ready to do the following things:
 - MC the event
 - greet people at the door
 - greet speakers and give them signals when their time is almost up
 - be a liaison with building maintenance
 - manage the audio, video and other technology for the event
 - set up and clean up
- Start and end the event on time. If people are still coming in as the event starts, close the doors and have someone outside to let people in. Respect everyone's time.

After the Event

- Give thanks. Even if your elected officials didn't give you everything you wanted, always thank them for coming and follow up respectfully to ensure your best chance to get what you want. Be sure to also thank any speakers, sponsors, performers, participants, and other supporters of the event.
- Follow up promptly. Follow up as soon as possible with any information or materials requested.
- 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.

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 *Green For All Guide to Using 2009 Recovery Act Funds*, 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.

SHARE YOUR STORY

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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. While you should never feel shy about going down to City Hall or scheduling a meeting with your local representatives, maybe you want to educate yourselves and

talk as a group first. A meetup is a good way for a group of concerned community members to learn about the Recovery Package, discuss what peoples' needs are, and strategize how best to hold local officials accountable. Here is one good way to host a house party:

Before the House Party

- Choose a date and time. Consider other peoples' schedules and possibly conflicting events. Set an ending time as well as a starting time. Ask people to RSVP.
- Invite your neighbors. Reach out to people and organizations from low-income neighborhoods. Try to reach beyond your inner circle.
- Ask everyone to bring snacks. Make it a free or very low cost event by asking for what you need from each person who comes.
- Send everyone the *Green For All Guide to Using 2009 Recovery Act Funds*. Let people know that there will be time for food, drinks, and socializing, but that everyone should come prepared to talk about bringing the green recovery home to our community.
- Print a Sign-in sheet. Bring pens, paper, butcher-block or flip chart paper, markers, and any other materials you'll need for your discussion.

Suggested House Party Timeline

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 the *Green For All Guide to Using 2009 Recovery Act Funds* 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 LTE guide on www.greenforall.org) 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 the *Green For All Guide to Using 2009 Recovery Act Funds* about what investments and job opportunities are relevant to our community and how to access them?
- What did you learn from Recovery.gov or other articles or information you've read about it?
- 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?

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 email.

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ENGAGING THE MEDIA

(Courtesy of STAND and ServiceNation)

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 write a letter to the editor of your local paper, and invite media to cover your event.

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 the week of Green Jobs Now. To maximize the likelihood that your letter will be printed, follow these guidelines:

- Short is Sweet: Resist the temptation to write a two-page screed – 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).

INVITING MEDIA TO YOUR EVENT

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. As STAND (the Student Anti-Genocide Coalition) put it, “think of a press release as a way to write the article for a reporter.” Press releases are usually written in Associated Press style, going from most to least important information. Look for an example of any AP news story for more guidance.

Both media alerts and press releases are usually less than a page, so don’t worry about making them longer.

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.

NEXT STEPS

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 your action, go back to the website to post your story, photos, and lessons learned. To do this, login to your profile here:

<http://org2.democracynaction.org/o/5379/profile/login.jsp>

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 in to your profile. Simply navigate to the "event" tab and find the event you are hosting to modify it.
- To Report back on your action, login into your profile and change the description field of your action to add a report.
- Login here - <http://org2.democracynaction.org/o/5379/profile/login.jsp>
- Questions about modifying your action and/or adding a report back? Email us at: recoveryactions@greenforall.org

Get More Information

- You can download this Green Recovery toolkit here:
<http://www.greenforall.org/resources/recoverytoolkit/download>
and our *Green For All Guide to Using 2009 Recovery Act Funds* 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/resources/recovery-package>