

# The County Sustainability Team



**County Administrators & Sustainability Officers**  
Coordinates Sustainability Efforts Across Departments



**Elected Officials**  
Engages Community on Sustainability



**Economic Development Directors**  
Attracts Green Businesses



**Waste Management Directors**  
Recycles, composts, and implements waste to energy



**Public Works Directors**  
Delivers safe, clean water and manages wastewater



**Parks & Natural Resources**  
Builds green infrastructure and maintains parks



**Urban Planners & Building Inspectors**  
Plans sustainable development and transportation patterns



**Purchasing Directors**  
Buys green products



**Facilities & Fleets Directors**  
Improves sustainability of county buildings and fleets

## County Sustainability Team

Every elected official and staff person inside county government has the opportunity to make their county more sustainable. Many staff people, motivated by pride and respect for their communities, are teaching themselves to deliver the same services to their communities more efficiently and with less negative impacts on the environment.

It is not necessary for counties to hire new staff to implement sustainability, although it can help accelerate implementation. All counties pursuing sustainability should be harnessing the expertise and experience of existing staff.

This info-graphic provides an overview of the types of sustainability activities that county staff typically undertake. The document is by no means comprehensive, but rather is designed as an introduction.

### Elected Officials

Counties Sustainability Initiatives that include participation and support from elected officials are the most successful.

- Serves as leadership and champions from the top down
- Enacts sustainability policies and resolutions
- Helps prioritize strategies based on communities' needs
- Engages citizenry in sustainability programs
- Budgets and allocates funding to sustainability programs

### County Administrator

Many sustainability programs grow from individual departments, but bold sustainability programs require the kind of cross-departmental coordination and leadership that only county administrators can provide.

- Coordinates between departments
- Leads interdepartmental green teams
- Allocates existing staff time to sustainability programs and creates new positions
- Engages citizenry in sustainability programs

### Sustainability Officer

By hiring specific staff people specifically tasked with implementing sustainability programs, counties are accelerating the adoption of their programs. Sustainability Officers are typically housed in the County Administrator/Executive offices. They perform similar tasks associated with County Administrators, but they also serve as a technical expert for staff throughout the government.

- Engages in the same activities as County Administrator
- Provides technical expertise
- Implements strategic projects

### Economic Development Director

Economic Development Agencies are breaking down the old barriers between economic growth and environmental protection, pursuing strategies that generate community wealth and protect precious resources.

- Helps local businesses become more green (e.g., solar panel installation incentives and free energy audits)
- Helps green businesses already located in the community grow
- Attracts new businesses with sustainability missions (e.g., solar panel and wind turbine manufacturers)

## Government Operations

Many counties believe that by improving the efficiency of government operations, they are better managers of taxpayer dollars and community resources. This set of activities is unique to county operations.

### Facilities Manager

Besides human resources, operating government buildings is the single greatest expense and negative environmental impact most counties expend.

- Implements energy efficiency and renewable energy generation retrofits
- Builds new buildings using green building standards
- Tunes up and coordinates building systems

### Fleets Manager

Improving county fleets represents an opportunity to save fuel, reduce the cost of running county government and harmful emissions, and improve air quality.

- Implements fleet retrofit programs
- Utilizes more sustainable products in maintenance garages
- Replaces outdated vehicles with new, better-performing vehicles

### Purchasing Director

Considering the size of county budgets, purchasing sustainable products is one of the most effective ways to implement sustainability. Government purchasing behavior significantly influences the private market.

- Coordinates purchasing across departments
- Develops green purchasing plan
- Provides cost effective, more environmentally-friendly product alternatives to staff

## Community Services

Many counties find value in engaging their community in sustainability goals. These counties view sustainability as a new service to their residents.

### Waste Management/Public Works Director

Improving waste management is one of the most significant ways that county governments can improve sustainability in their communities.

- Implements recycling, composting, and other waste diversion programs, including waste to energy
- Improves the efficiency of clean water delivery and waste water treatment facilities

### Parks/Natural Resources Director

Parks departments often implement the sustainability activities that are the most visible to the local citizenry.

- Manages and improves public parks
- Protects open space, ecosystems, and biodiversity
- Installs green infrastructure projects to better manage stormwater runoff

### Urban/Environmental Planners

Urban, Environmental and Transportation Planners influence how communities are organized and how they interact with their natural environment. Their decisions often have implications that span decades, even centuries. For this reason, they are often viewed by the public as the primary local government sustainability implementers.

- Incorporates sustainability into comprehensive planning, zoning, and development reviews
- Implements smart growth and transit-oriented development programs
- Improves public transportation

### Building Officials

Local building officials serve as the grass-roots developers and implementers of codes that guide the building maintenance programs.

- Makes building green more cost effective and simpler
- Incorporates sustainability principles into local construction codes and permitting

## About the NACo Green Government Initiative

NACo's Green Government Initiative provides comprehensive resources for local governments on all things green—including energy, air quality, transportation, water quality, land use, purchasing and recycling. GGI serves as a catalyst between local governments and the private sector to facilitate green government best practices, products and policies that result in financial and environmental savings.

Through the initiative, NACo:

- Develops strategies to save counties money while going green
- Educates counties on techniques for implementing green strategies
- Provides tools for counties to educate their communities on all things green
- Promotes environmentally-preferable purchasing
- Facilitates an open exchange with the private sector

For more information, visit [www.naco.org/greencounties](http://www.naco.org/greencounties)