



## IMPLEMENTATION GUIDE

### Introduction

The USGBC Green Veterans program was founded by the former USGBC South Florida Chapter in 2013 by a disabled combat veteran and a longstanding USGBC civilian volunteer. These leaders asked a simple question that led to others:

- How can USGBC empower veterans and help them reintegrate into society through our green building movement?
- How can we provide veterans with the credentials and experience needed to be successful in clean energy, sustainable construction, health, wellness and other industries?
- What can we do to make a tangible difference to the USA's 25,000 service facilities and 20 million dwelling units that house veterans?
- Are we not the natural community to raise awareness that high performing, healthy buildings will mitigate some of the triggers associated with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)?

The USGBC Green Veterans program focuses on empowering veterans to use their military acumen to help sustain the very nation for which they fought and which they defended. By collaborating with civilian and veteran groups on green building initiatives, the Green Veterans Sustainability Training Program provides practical green education programs that veterans can tap to gain experience and confidence that will be valuable to prospective employers.

Green Veterans are growing our USGBC Chapters' volunteer ranks and strengthening our community outreach efforts. Together, we are examining trauma resolution through green building by looking at evidence-based design and the WELL rating system to incorporate design solutions that reduce PTSD triggers through stress reduction, alleviating depression, and greater focus on comfort, security, health and access to nature.

## Mission

Green Veterans are dedicated to helping our nation's heroes learn about sustainable building and green living, while helping ease the hardship of military-to-civilian transition.

By empowering veterans to become volunteer leaders in their communities, we nurture opportunities for continuing education, networking, employment, corporate engagement and green entrepreneurship.

## Vision

Through collaboration, innovation and mutual respect, the USGBC Green Veterans program fosters rapid deployment of sustainability initiatives with a strong emphasis on creating personal and professional opportunities for veterans and civilians.

## The four pillars

The Green Veterans strategy is based on a four-pillar platform: **reintegration, sustainability training, veteran-oriented service projects** and **trauma resolution through green buildings**.

		HOW	WHERE	WITH WHOM
<b>1</b>	<b>Reintegration</b>	Outreach	VFW posts AmVets posts Veteran facilities	USGBC Chapters Mission United Rebuilding Together Habitat for Humanity
<b>2</b>	<b>Sustainability training</b>	Educate	Local USGBC Chapters Higher education institutions	Veterans of Foreign Wars
<b>3</b>	<b>Veteran-oriented service projects</b>	Assemble	Rebuilding Together projects Emerging Professionals events	Colleges and universities Workforce/Career Source
<b>4</b>	<b>Trauma resolution through green buildings</b>	Support	Local housing, community service and resource centers	Team Rubicon and Mission Continues

## Green Veteran roles and responsibilities

Pivotal to a successful Green Veterans program are the dynamics of the team and the execution of the key roles as outlined in this document. The team must be committed, goal-oriented, data driven, passionate and look at their roles through the lens of the Green Veterans' mission and vision.

For maximum productivity of the Green Veterans program within USGBC Chapters, the team must be strategic in networking and establishing quality partnerships. Team functions include:

- Identify **private universities and colleges** in every U.S. state that provide sustainable degree programs
- Identify **national, reputable nonprofit community programs** for and/or by veterans
- Identify **resourceful funding channels** for veteran employment and entrepreneurship

By identifying private universities and colleges that offer sustainability degree programs located near participating USGBC Chapters, the Green Veterans team has an opportunity to develop relationships and engage veterans who are students. Depending on the higher education institution program, Green Veterans may have the option to implement a Green Veteran Sustainability Training curriculum designed specifically for that geographical location.

Partnerships with for-profit and nonprofit veteran organizations should be established at the regional level. Regionally based organizations tend to have greater reach and more presence in their local communities. For example, organizations such as Disabled American Veterans, Rebuilding Together, and Habitat for Humanity are spread across North America with regional and local offices. The Green Veteran core team must advocate the USGBC principles and Green Veterans' mission to these organizations. The purpose is to establish **veteran-oriented service projects**: veterans helping to achieve green building and living for other veterans and their families and the community.

Efforts should be made to identify veteran employment and entrepreneurial funding resources at the state and local level or wherever permitted lawfully by the participating USGBC Chapter. These efforts can appear in the form of grants, joint missions through MOUs, sponsorships, and USGBC Chapter donations intended specifically for the Green Veterans program.

ROLE	RESPONSIBILITY
Long-standing USGBC member	Liaison between Chapter and Green Veterans ensures all proposed initiatives presented comply with local USGBC Chapter bylaws.
Outreach and education	Identifies private universities and colleges that offer sustainable degree programs. Recruits and engages veterans for service projects.
Communications and fundraising	Performs marketing communication and financial development support for local Green Veteran chapters.
Community development	Identifies local and regional nonprofit organizations that have successful impact in their community. Follows up and establishes relationships with institutions, the community, private and nonprofit sectors.
Networking and engagement	Former military service member networks and shares Green Veterans' vision to foster rapid deployment of sustainability initiatives.

## Implementation

Our approach to advocacy, education, long-term integration and mission support provides actionable steps to accomplish Green Veterans' long-term goals. To affect rapid change in communities, our advocacy needs to evolve beyond evangelistic-like messaging and recommended direction to proof of concept.

Each community driven by a Green Veterans group is commissioned to make improvements based on specific needs. The flexibility to customize a community-specific action plan based on the four pillars will provide the rapid expansion of sustainability initiatives. The following steps provide a practical approach to establishing a Green Veterans program in each USGBC Chapter.

## Step-by-step planning tool

### 1. Identify veteran champion and long-standing USGBC LEED'R

To form Green Veterans at the local USGBC Chapter level, assemble a team of volunteers—starting with a military service veteran volunteer—to establish contact with legitimate veteran agencies. *Without question, veterans are most open to discussion with other veterans.*

- Assemble a team of volunteers
- Recruit and integrate a veteran LEED'R of USGBC mission
- Establish contact with legitimate veteran agencies.
- EVENT: Meet-and-Greet

### 2. Connect with veteran nonprofit organizations

Connect with veteran-oriented organizations and schedule a presentation to showcase Green Veterans leadership and market potential. At the presentation, conclude by summarizing green education and training, followed by an overview of veteran-oriented service projects to benefit the local community with potential employment objectives.

- Reach out to veteran organizations
- Schedule a Green Veterans presentation meeting
- Summarize Green Veterans market and leadership potential
- Highlight potential veteran-oriented service projects
- EVENT: GREENworking

### 3. Identify green industry-ready higher education institutions

- Identify local colleges and universities that provide green industry degrees, programs and trainings
- Introduce Green Veterans sustainability training program
- Target interested veterans for enrollment through student clubs and groups
- EVENT: Green Business Forum

### 4. Partner with organizations

Establish partnerships with for-profit and nonprofit organizations to raise awareness and collaborate on Green Veteran on-the-job veteran training opportunities and sponsorship.

- Develop MOUs with organizations
- Identify on-the-job training opportunities for veterans helping veterans
- Promote and raise awareness for sponsorship
- EVENT: VA Benefits Workshop

## **5. Engage members of the veteran community**

Energize and excite members of the community by executing veteran service-oriented projects that have direct impact on the local environment. Recruit new volunteers. Service projects provide an opportunity for veterans to put their leadership skills to work in the community.

- Venture into local community to identify veterans in need
- Identify project scope and plan
- Collaborate with stakeholders and coalitions to procure resources for completing project
- Document and capture successes and lessons learned
- EVENT: Trauma Resolution through Green Building

Green Veterans have identified **five key community events** to repeat annually.

EVENT	HOST	PURPOSE	VENUE	BUDGET
The Green Veterans Intro: Meet-and-Greet	USGBC Chapter	This is held to introduce Green Veterans in the local USGBC Chapter.  <i>Invite veterans and members of the community, NGO, nonprofits, veteran organizations to learn more about Green Veterans.</i>	VFW lounge/veteran facility	\$250-\$300 for food & beverage (20-50 people)
Green Business Forum	USGBC Chapter and Green Veterans	This forum is comprised of green industry professionals who share employment and entrepreneurial advice through panel discussion.  <i>Recruit/invite 4 green industry panelists to discuss green opportunities.</i>	Sponsored green facility	\$250 for food & beverage (40-50 people)
GREENworking BBQ	Green Veterans	The Green Working BBQ is an opportunity for community organizations to engage with veterans and share information regarding services.  <i>Invite veteran organizations and those in the community who provide services/products to veterans.</i>	Veteran facility/intimate social	\$300-\$400 for food & beverage (40-60 people)
Trauma Resolution through Green Buildings	Green Veterans	This event focuses on PTSD and traumatic brain injury relief through WELL Building Standard and designs.  <i>Invite healthcare/clinical professionals to discuss trauma challenges and resolution.</i>	USGBC or external facility	\$250 for food & beverage (40-50 people)
Green Veterans VA Benefits Workshop	Green Veterans	This workshop is an opportunity for veterans to learn about home loans and benefits available specifically for veterans.  <i>Presented by a veteran familiar with VA Benefits and processes.</i>	Veteran or nonprofit location	\$250-\$300 for food & beverage (20-50 people)