

National Green Business Engagement Programs Leadership Council
Purpose/Objectives and Structure
Draft of 7/30/13

Background:

On May 9-10, 2013, A Better City hosted the first ever National Summit for Green Business Engagement Programs, bringing together representatives from more than 25 programs from across the United States.¹ As part of this Summit, individuals were asked to prioritize next steps for the group. One of the top priorities was exploring the formation of a national association of Green Business Engagement Programs. Several individuals volunteered to work together over the summer to develop a plan for how to begin to coordinate across groups/programs. The goal is to develop a solid approach by early fall 2013 and begin implementing it shortly thereafter.

A small Planning Task Force² was established to coordinate the work of the Leadership Council and Consensus Building Institute has been contracted to facilitate. As part of this effort, the following document was prepared to solicit feedback from the broad community of people, organizations, businesses and agencies involved in such programs in order to help guide the work of the group. For more information on where this document came from, please contact Mihir Parikh at mparikh@abettercity.org.

A. Purpose

As a new and growing sector within the broader sustainability movement, great benefit can be realized when organizations and programs work together, support each other, and regularly convene. The networking, information sharing, and organizational strategizing that can be fostered through a coordinated effort can help strengthen the programs of all involved and support the development of new programs. The leadership council is intended as a way to provide a structure for that joint work and shared learning to take place while maintaining the individuality and uniqueness of each organization and program involved.

B. Broad Objectives

There are three key objectives we think we could work toward most effectively in coordination. These are:

- I. Building relationships across programs – This could include activities where individuals get to know each other, where a broad directory is maintained of related programs and current contact information, and where there are opportunities to build connections as desired by particular programs and people.

¹ Materials from the Summit including presentation slides can be found at:
http://www.abettercity.org/environment/event_National_Summit_Green_Business_Engagement_Programs.html

² Task Force Members (summer 2013): Cassandra Carroll, Michelle Castagnola, Josephine Fleming, Warren Gaskill, Brian Geller, Brian Holland, Lynne Kaye, Kirsten Liske, Lorenzo Macaluso, Mihir Parikh, Scott Pomeroy, Megan Ramey, Mike Steinhoff, David Straus, Mary Lynn Whilhere.

- II. Sharing information across programs – This would enable independent programs to learn from each other and could include a variety of activities such as creating online tools and data collection, organizing in person summits and workshops, and creating peer to peer learning opportunities and trainings. It would likely include some activities that don't require travel and could occur online or via phone and others that would require people to come together in person.
- III. Working at a national scale – This would include activities that independent programs could not accomplish on their own such as demonstrating collective impact, working on developing nationally agreed upon metrics or standards, and applying for shared funding across programs.

C. Proposed Structure

In order to start to work toward these three broad objectives, in recognition of limited resources of time and money and of the desire for a coordination mechanism to be independent, the following structure is proposed:

Leadership Council. Members of this group of approximately 10-15 people would be unpaid volunteers from a range of different programs. There would need to be a decision about a structure (elected board, ad hoc volunteers, etc.) and size for this council, as well as the method of participant selection (election, etc.). A Better City has dedicated funding to support the initial coordination of this group (facilitation, phone calls, meeting coordination, and communication) but long-term funding needs will need to be addressed. As a national group, members would primarily talk via phone. Different groups would provide what support they are able to this council in the form of funding or volunteer staff time.

Workgroups or Subcommittees. Workgroups would tackle particular activities. The Leadership Council would identify the need for a particular workgroup, the workgroup's general charge and timeline, and the workgroup coordinator(s). Workgroup members would include some leadership council members, but could also include other volunteers interested in being active on particular topics. Likely early topics of activity might include governance/membership, information sharing across programs (planning webinars, a next in person summit or other opportunities to come together), and national metrics (reviewing current performance metrics and terminology and identifying options for standardization).