

# Department of Education

## Waste Reduction in the Office Environment

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# Our Mission and Purpose

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The Department of Education's mission is to promote student achievement and preparation for global competitiveness by fostering educational excellence and ensuring equal access.

In President Obama's first address to Congress, he challenged America to meet an ambitious goal for education:

*By 2020 we will once again have the highest proportion of college graduates in the world.*

# The Sustainability Journey

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- Focusing on compliance
- Attention to basic environmental impact
- Learning how to “measure,” creating the baseline and monitoring
- Engaging those closest to the “levers” of change, creating smart work groups and over time engaging ED employees and citizens
- Integrating sustainability into ED’s core strategy and organizational culture

Goal – Broad Engagement...Change In Mindset

# Progress We've Made

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- ED's recycling program is well-established

Sponsorship of special recycling events to raise awareness – eyeglasses, cell phones and accessories

- Actively support flexiplace for employees
- Greening of the cafeteria
  - compostable tableware, installation of a composter, and installation of Energy Star-rated equipment
- Working with GSA in support of a LEED renovation of the Mary E. Switzer federal building
- Working with GSA to install energy-saving devices in the LBJ Federal Building
- Purchased 100% EPEAT Silver or above computer equipment
- Enabled Energy Star features on 100% of end-user hardware (computers and monitors)

# Challenges We've Faced

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- All of our buildings are leased from GSA
- Shared buildings with other tenants makes it difficult to understand ED's share
- Gap between those responsible for integrating sustainability into Agency mission and those who integrate sustainability into Agency infrastructure (e.g. buildings)

# Hosted Sustainability Education Summit - 9/2010

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- Disparate group of thinkers coming together to lay out elements of a national action-agenda for refining education to enable the transition to a green and sustainable economy.
- Need for coordinated thinking – interdependence of society recognized
- Educators' Objectives
  - Insure all graduates are eco-literate, ready as citizens to help face growing ecological challenges
  - Establish effective career pathways with sufficient continuity and coherence

## Citizenship and Pathways for a Green Economy

Elementary Education  
Secondary to Postsecondary Pathways  
How to meet the needs of business  
Business Involvement  
Support Structures & Intermediaries

# What We Need To Focus On Next

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- Reduce business travel (Scope 3 GHG emissions) and replace with video-teleconferencing
- Institute default double-sided copying and printing
- Evaluate shuttle bus service
- Develop guidance for green meetings
- Firmly establish a standing committee on ED environmental matters and involve those in our DC and regional offices
  - Relatedly, GSA needs to educate their employees re what their tenants responsibilities are under E.O. 13514.  
Gap between HQs
- Implement our environmental management system

# What We Need To Focus On Next - continued

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- **Engaging internal communications team AND grantmaking community**
  - Grantmaking process – largely paper, versus electronic -based
  - Grantmaking “requirement” idea, versus “assurance” The latter more likely.

# “Promising Practices” in Waste Reduction at ED

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## 1. The Cafeteria

- Opportunity to show employees by example how to reduce waste – i.e. utensils and cups
- ED represented on the Greening Cafeteria Workgroup led by the Office of the Federal Environmental Executive (OFEE)
- Electronic and other signage – visible and easy to refresh messaging

## 2. Encouraging Employee Feedback

- Strike a balance on “green” messaging – avoid too little or too much
- Get people thinking about how to be more sustainable

## 3. Integrating Sustainability Into Thinking When Staffing Up

- Opportunity to reduce the environmental footprint as one considers space and building locations

# Department of Education

## Waste Reduction in the Office Environment



Our Work Continues....  
Inside the Department and Beyond