

# ORGANIZATIONAL SUSTAINABILITY INITIATIVES IN NEBRASKA



This fact sheet outlines two case studies on organizational sustainability initiatives representing private and public organizations. These case studies provide examples of the process of designing and implementing an organizational sustainability plan, stakeholder engagement, the challenges, and benefits.

## UNION BANK & TRUST

### Summary:

UBT has prioritized sustainable initiatives in the construction and design of their new facilities, by recycling building materials and designing facilities with energy- and water-efficient features. Beginning in the Fall of 2019, UBT expanded its sustainability initiatives into a formal “green team” of motivated personnel and community stakeholders. The Green Team focused on three initiatives: training and supporting staff, including providing reusable personal items, such as reusable plates and cups; the implementation of a compost program; and a strategy for the placement and installation of recycling systems that allow staff to better manage recycling and landfill waste.

### Funding and Costs:

UBT experienced cost savings with the compost program and by minimizing waste created by disposable food and beverage containers and cutlery. As waste continues to be minimized, individual bins are being phased out in favor of office-wide community bins. Contracted custodial staff will soon stop servicing individual bins, creating further cost savings. Further savings will be quantified as energy and water efficiencies are calculated.

### Stakeholder Outreach, Participation, and Engagement

The initial Green Team meeting in February 2020 brought together staff from several bank divisions, marketing, and building services. After developing goals, the Team experienced push back from division managers, requiring more buy-in and engagement from UBT leadership for improved participation and training. Employee training has exclusively been newsletter articles, emails, and signage.

### Challenges and Benefits:

Finding the right method and frequency of communication was an unanticipated challenge as well as incorporating feedback from team managers for initial buy-in. Ultimately staff have embraced the changes and feedback has been largely positive.

*“To reach the Bank’s goals, the Green Team consulted with the Nebraska Recycling Council. NRC advised us of the benefits of Community Bins. Community bins replaced individual bins at the Pine Ridge, Calvert, Facilities, and Image Services locations.”*

# LINCOLN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

## Summary:

Beginning as a recycling pilot in the late 1990s, LPS sustainability initiatives have grown to include composting, environmentally preferred purchasing, and district wide energy efficient remodeling. Looking ahead, the district is incorporating sustainability in its curriculum as well as ensuring sustainability in current active construction sites.

## History and Goals

<b>1990s</b>	Recycling started as a pilot program	<b>2019</b>	District wide composting began. Sustainability masterplan created.
<b>2002</b>	District wide recycling established		
<b>2014</b>	Composting pilot began	<b>2021</b>	NDEE grant secured for projects. second position created.
<b>2016</b>	Full time sustainability position created.		

## Funding:

In 2019, the LPS school board passed a district wide sustainability master plan, securing a budget for sustainability initiatives. A grant from the Nebraska Department of Environment and Energy provided funding for a part-time position focused on compost initiatives and construction as well as education curriculum and energy efficient replacements for lighting and water fixtures. Recycling rebates for certain materials helped offset costs. Compost from the district food program is being returned for use in garden beds in certain locations.

## Stakeholder Outreach, Participation, and Engagement

Fostering relationships has been the most significant step in advancing the program. Team structure is based on location. Administration are tasked with communicating with school personnel and taking on the initiatives, pursuing buy in. One to two sustainability champions are designated from each school, who participate in quarterly meetings to learn and take inspiration from other locations. Students are encouraged to participate and projects are often student-driven.

Custodial staff, haulers, and nutrition services have been key stakeholders within the program, especially as compost initiatives have developed.

Monthly newsletters with resources and environmental reports are posted publicly, allowing school teams to set benchmarks and compare progress across the district.

## Challenges and Benefits:

Staff turnover and transfers are a perennial problem and so a standardized training and continuity program was essential for program progress. Changing perspectives on contamination and germ transfer from the Covid-19 pandemic has made single-use items more pervasive.

Benefits are varied and significant. Sustainability is built into the curriculum, from energy savings, gardening and nutrition, business and supply chain management. Many families begin recycling based on student education and feedback through the "Garbology" program. Cost savings have been quantified through the composting program and energy efficient updates when items required replacement.

*[Learn more about the LPS Sustainability Master Plan at home.lps.org/sustainability.](https://www.lps.org/sustainability)*