

## Involving Youth in Your Agency's Sustainability Activities



Local agencies use a variety of methods to involve young people in local government. Many cities and counties have active youth commissions or youth councils. As local agencies embrace sustainability goals, new opportunities emerge to engage young people. Whether the sustainability activities involve energy efficiency, planning for a more bike-friendly downtown, responding to climate change or updating a General Plan, local agencies throughout California can benefit by including youth as part of the process.

Asking youth for their input allows the local agency to benefit from the fresh perspectives of young residents who have the most at stake in their community's long-term future. Youth involvement can also help local agencies more cost-effectively target the resources serving them. Such participation also gives young people opportunities to identify and address issues or challenges that directly affect their lives and the well-being of their communities. And exposing young people to local government and the roles and responsibilities of staff and elected officials may lead them to consider careers in local government.

Involving young people also offers the potential to add to the community's awareness and support for the sustainability effort under way. Consider, for example, how news about a sustainability program or policy can "go viral" when the young people involved share information about their participation and excitement using social media, such as Twitter or Facebook.

### Youth, Planning and Climate Change

The scientific consensus is that climate change will have a direct and indirect impact on Californians, including young people who may be more affected as the consequences of climate change become increasingly pronounced over their lifetimes. Young people hear and learn about climate change from a variety of sources and have varying degrees of understanding of the science, impacts and ways to address climate change.

Increasing numbers of cities and counties are developing climate action plans, as well as incorporating sustainability policies into their General Plans. Many also include policies to address climate change and reduce greenhouse gas emissions in General Plan updates.

Virtually all of the strategies that reduce greenhouse gas emissions also promote local sustainability and provide opportunities to engage youth. For example, making communities more walkable and bicycle friendly can reduce greenhouse gas emissions by decreasing vehicle use. Input from youth can help improve the effectiveness of these policies, because young people frequently walk and bike to their destinations.

San Mateo County leaders organized a “Shared Vision 2025” process consisting of 10 public forums in 2007 to get broad public input in plotting a course for the next 15 years of development in the county. As part of a series of community meetings designed to reach a wide cross section of residents, organizers specifically targeted groups of people who were typically less likely to attend public meetings, such as teens. About 125 teens from throughout the county gathered at a youth town hall meeting and worked in small groups, with each electing a spokesperson to report the goals their group identified.

### **Positive Messages about Climate Change Are the Best Approach**

Some researchers have noted the potential for increased anxiety among youth due to climate change and its future impacts. Educating young people about how they and their community can address climate change through policies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions as well as through individual behaviors, such as recycling and using less energy, is a more positive and effective approach than repetitive “doom and gloom” messages about the future impacts of climate change.

The Manhattan Beach City Council asked its Environmental Task Force to develop recommendations to address a range of environmental challenges, including climate change and the need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. To ensure that young people would be represented, two seats on the 16-person task force were set aside for youth members. An eighth-grader and a high-school student served alongside the adult task force members. The task force proposed recommendations that were approved by the city council, including green building and water conservation measures.

In developing its climate action plan, the City of San Carlos held two community forums where residents helped prioritize possible actions that the city could take to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions. Seventy-five teens and preteens participated in one forum, which included discussions and exercises that educated them about climate change and allowed them to share their ideas about which actions the city should adopt.

In Fremont about 150 residents — one third of them youth — attended a community event to prioritize the recommendations of a green task force. They also signed pledges to reduce their own greenhouse gas emissions.

In El Dorado County the youth commission helped write a green resolution and supported its successful passage. The resolution sets goals to reduce the environmental footprint of county residents in areas including waste and energy usage reduction, planning, construction and air quality.

## Youth and Energy

Investing in energy efficiency and promoting energy conservation saves resources and money while reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Involving youth in energy-related policies and programs benefits not only the youth but the community as well, as the following examples illustrate.

The San Diego County Department of Parks and Recreation, in partnership with San Diego Gas & Electric Co., offers a program called Energy Saving Adventures at its two teen centers in Lakeside and Spring Valley. The program teaches teens about the practices and principles of energy efficiency through classroom and recreation center activities, field trips, outdoor adventures and school and community events. The Energy Saving Adventures program is designed to inspire San Diego youth to practice and promote energy-saving initiatives in their own homes and communities.

The City of Indio's Youth Advisory Council and other young Indio residents were asked to share ideas about how to design a new teen center. The resulting center is not only fun but also solar-powered, thanks to the climate- and energy-conscious youth who were involved in its planning.

Santa Clarita's second annual art contest encourages middle- and high-school students to tell the city how they and their families are combating escalating gas prices by using the city's buses. "Go Green and Dump the Pump!" is part of the Santa Clarita Transit Go Green Art Contest, which accepts traditional art, graphic design or photography entries. The city displays the winning artwork at its Transit Maintenance Facility.



## Looking to Our Future

The saying, "We are only borrowing the planet from our children," speaks volumes about the importance of engaging youth in local agencies' sustainability activities. In addition to the experiences and values that the young people gain from participating, youth engagement in local sustainability activities provides local officials with perspectives and input to improve both the planning and implementation of these efforts. The future belongs to our youth, and it is their future to help plan.

### Does Your Agency Have a Story to Tell?

Does your agency involve young people in activities related to sustainability? Do you have a story to tell? For more information about how to share your agency's story with colleagues statewide, e-mail [sustainability@ca-ilg.org](mailto:sustainability@ca-ilg.org).

For additional resources on engaging youth in sustainability, go to [www.ca-ilg.org/InvolvingYouthSustainability](http://www.ca-ilg.org/InvolvingYouthSustainability) to download a PDF of the companion resource for this article.

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This whitepaper is a service of the Institute for Local Government (ILG) whose mission is to promote good government at the local level with practical, impartial, and easy-to-use resources for California communities. ILG is the nonprofit 501(c)(3) research and education affiliate of the League of California Cities and the California State Association of Counties. For more information and to access the Institute's resources on sustainable communities, go to [www.ca-ilg.org/Sustainability](http://www.ca-ilg.org/Sustainability).

The Institute welcomes feedback on this resource:

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## **Involving Youth in Sustainability: Additional Resources**

### Companion Resource to Youth and Sustainability White Paper

As local agencies embrace sustainability, new opportunities arise to engage youth in related efforts. To assist local agencies, the Institute for Local Government (ILG) compiled a list of educational and information resources local agencies may consider as they engage and educate youth on sustainability, climate change, energy efficiency and other topics. This is the companion resource to the ILG's Youth and Sustainability white paper ([www.ca-ilg.org/InvolvingYouthSustainability](http://www.ca-ilg.org/InvolvingYouthSustainability)). (Note: Inclusion in this list does not constitute an endorsement or recommendation by ILG.)

Does your agency know of other resources to help children and youth understand sustainability issues? Does your agency have programs to educate children and youth about sustainability issues in your community or stories to share about your agency's experience? If so, please let us know by contacting ILG at [sustainability@ca-ilg.org](mailto:sustainability@ca-ilg.org).

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## Institute for Local Government (ILG) Resources

### *Public Engagement and Collaborative Governance – Youth Engagement*

<http://www.ca-ilg.org/youthengagement>

ILG provides local officials information and resources that support effective and inclusive public engagement, including youth engagement.

- **Public Engagement and Collaborative Governance Briefing Papers for Youth Commissions**  
<http://www.ca-ilg.org/briefingpapers>  
ILG has created a series of “Briefing Papers” for Youth Commissions and Youth Advisory Councils. The papers provide ideas on how youth commissions and advisory councils can take action to address a variety of community issues such as:
  - *Addressing Climate Change: Ideas for Youth Commissions*  
[www.ca-ilg.org/ClimateChangeYouthBriefingPaper](http://www.ca-ilg.org/ClimateChangeYouthBriefingPaper)
  - *Youth Engagement and Local Planning: Ideas for Youth Commissions*  
[www.ca-ilg.org/YouthandPlanningBP3](http://www.ca-ilg.org/YouthandPlanningBP3)

### *Sustainable Communities*

<http://www.ca-ilg.org/sustainability>

ILG’s Sustainable Communities programs help local officials identify and apply policies and best practices that support sustainable communities — places that foster and maintain a high quality of life for their residents on an ongoing basis.

ILG offers sustainability resources in the following topic areas.

- **Land Use**  
<http://www.ca-ilg.org/landuse>  
Offers resources and tools to support local officials in efforts to shape communities in ways that are economically, socially, environmentally and fiscally sustainable.
- **Healthy Communities**  
<http://www.ca-ilg.org/healthycommunities>  
Provides resources local officials can use to protect and improve community health by integrating health considerations into planning, land use and other decisions, and by connecting working families with no- and low-cost health insurance for their children.
- **Climate Change**  
<http://www.ca-ilg.org/ClimateChange>  
Provides resources for reducing greenhouse gas emissions, saving energy, and saving money.

- ***ILG Sustainability Whitepapers, Tipsheets and Pamphlets***  
<http://www.ca-ilg.org/SustainabilityWhitepapers>  
This series of whitepapers, tipsheets and pamphlets provides an overview of selected issues, resources and examples related to climate change, healthy communities and land use.
- ***Climate Action and Sustainability Best Practices***  
<http://www.ca-ilg.org/ClimatePractices>  
The Best Practices Framework offers suggestions for local action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in 10 best practice areas, both in agency operations and the community at large. Specific best practice suggestions can be used to undertake stand-alone programs or can be part of a broad-based climate action plan. The suggestions and case studies are designed to reflect the variation among cities and counties and offer a variety of options ranging from simple steps to more complex projects.
- ***Beacon Award: Local Leadership Toward Solving Climate Change***  
<http://www.ca-ilg.org/BeaconAward>  
The Beacon Award recognizes and celebrates California cities and counties that:
  - Reduce greenhouse gas emissions and energy use;
  - Adopt policies and programs to address climate change; and
  - Promote sustainability.

## General Climate Change and Sustainability Resources

### ***CA.GOV Climate Change Portal***

<http://climatechange.ca.gov/>

Includes a wide range of basic information about the science of climate change, frequently asked questions, impacts, actions and more.

### ***California Air Resources Board: Climate Change Program***

[www.arb.ca.gov/cc/cc.htm](http://www.arb.ca.gov/cc/cc.htm)

Provides information on California's [Scoping Plan](#). The Plan is a central requirement of [Assembly Bill 32](#), the Global Warming Solutions Act requiring California to develop [regulations](#) that will reduce greenhouse gas emissions to 1990 levels by 2020.

### ***CoolCalifornia: Champion the Cause***

[www.coolcalifornia.org/youth](http://www.coolcalifornia.org/youth)

The CoolCalifornia youth website offers ways for youth to get involved in raising awareness and reducing greenhouse gas emissions in their community by calculating their carbon footprint and their school's carbon footprint. It further provides an interactive series of suggested actions and questions that students can answer to identify whether they'll take certain climate actions. CoolCalifornia also offers an annual competition that selects teens to be California Climate Action Champions who take part

in international youth summits. The website includes links to scholarship opportunities and awards, as well as an extensive list of educational links where youth can learn more about the science behind climate change and its impacts.

***California Air Resources Board: Climate Curriculum Resource***

[www.arb.ca.gov/cc/curriculum/curriculum.htm](http://www.arb.ca.gov/cc/curriculum/curriculum.htm)

Includes an assortment of curriculum providing links to lesson plans, activities and teaching modules on climate change subjects. Information is categorized by elementary school, middle/high school and various grade levels that may include a combination of kindergarten through 12th grade.

***California Air Resources Board: Kid's Corner***

[www.arb.ca.gov/cc/kids/kids.htm](http://www.arb.ca.gov/cc/kids/kids.htm)

Offers kid friendly information on climate change including fun climate activities and green tips for kids to follow and share with their families.

***U.S. Environmental Protection Agency: Kids Club***

<http://www.epa.gov/kids/>

Provides information on climate change, greenhouse gases, air pollution, water pollution, recycling, carbon footprint reduction and the various effects of pollution on plants and animals through interactive games and activities.

***U.S. Environmental Protection Agency: Climate Change — What You Can Do at School***

<http://epa.gov/climatechange/wycd/school.html>

A directory of education and action planning resources to help students, educators and school administrators play a key role in reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

***U.S. Environmental Protection Agency: A Student's Guide to Global Climate Change***

<http://www.epa.gov/climatechange/kids/index.html>

Guides students through the basics of climate change and allows them to see its impacts, calculate their emissions and be a part of the solution.

***Climate Kids: NASA's Eyes on the Earth***

<http://climate.nasa.gov/kids/>

Provides information on the greenhouse gas effect and the impact it has on the ocean, as well as how the climate is changing and what can be done to help; includes links to a climate time machine and potential green careers.

***PEW Center on Global Climate Change: Kids Corner***

<http://www.pewclimate.org/global-warming-basics/kidspage.cfm>

Provides information on global warming in a question-and-answer format that explains facts and misconceptions.

***Environmental Literacy Council***

<http://www.envioliteracy.org/>

Offers more than 1,000 pages of background information and resources on a variety of environmental topics, curricular materials and book reviews designed to connect teachers and students with science-based information about environmental issues.

***Kids Ecology Corps***

<http://www.kidsecologycorps.org/kid-power/activities/be-your-own-paper-recycling-company>

Shows kids how to make changes in their environment and the world to promote sustainability. Includes information on a wide range of environmental issues from rain forests to air pollution, recycling and global warming.

***ECO Family Online: Green Planet 4Kids***

<http://greenplanet4kids.com/>

Presents information to kids in a comic strip format about water, electricity, heating and cooling, how to reduce, reuse and recycle, sustainable yards and gardens, transportation and environmental choices.

***BrainPop: Global Warming***

<http://www.brainpop.com/science/populationsresourcesandenvironment/airpollution/previous.weml>

Creates animated, curriculum-based content on environmental issues that supports educators and engages students. Resources include movies, quizzes, experiments, timelines and activity pages. All content is aligned with and searchable by state standards.

***Kids Portal Website***

<http://globalwarmingkids.net/>

Provides links to global warming, climate change information and what kids can do, including games, events, science projects, science centers and volunteer opportunities.

***ECOHEALTH: Environmental Change and Our Health***

<http://ecohealth101.org/index.php>

A tool for students and teachers interested in the environment and human health. Lesson plans, news clips and a glossary guide the user through the environment's impact on our health.

***Tiki The Penguin Says Let's Make a Kinder World for Everyone***

<http://tiki.oneworld.net/>

A fun and informative website for younger kids about the environment. The website deals with subjects like energy conservation, pollution and climate change.

***EcoKids: Earth Day Canada***

<http://www.ecokids.ca/pub/index.cfm>

An environmental website for kids and teachers covering a wide range of topics, including biodiversity, climate change, energy, waste, water and wildlife.

***PlanetPals.com: Friends for Earth***

<http://www.planetpals.com/>

Offers a wide variety of games and activities for children to teach them about sustainability. Teachers and parents will also be able to use this website to assist in teaching children about the universe, natural resources and its social issues.

***Big Green Help***

[http://www.biggreenhelp.com/index.jhtml?lang=en\\_AU#main](http://www.biggreenhelp.com/index.jhtml?lang=en_AU#main)

Designed to teach students about the environment and how to make a difference, through interactive games involving their favorite characters.

**The Energy Coalition: PEAK Students.net**

<http://www.peakstudents.org/>

A comprehensive standards-based educational program designed to empower elementary- and middle-school students with the knowledge to manage energy use in their homes, schools and communities. Includes a special teacher's corner with supplemental educational material at: [http://www.peakstudents.com/teachers\\_corner/default.asp](http://www.peakstudents.com/teachers_corner/default.asp).

***The Greens: A Website for Kids About Looking After the Planet***

<http://www.meetthegreens.org/>

Provides a wide range of information on environmental issues presented via games, quizzes and episodes and blogs centered around the "Green Family."

***Cool the Earth: Explore Our Energy Saving Actions***

[www.cooltheearth.org/action-coupons](http://www.cooltheearth.org/action-coupons)

Provides ideas on how youth and adults can reduce their carbon footprint by reducing their own greenhouse gas emissions and learning how much a specific action reduces personal or group greenhouse gas emissions.

***Climate Change Resource Center: Urban Forests and Climate Change***

[www.fs.fed.us/ccrc/topics/urban-forests/](http://www.fs.fed.us/ccrc/topics/urban-forests/)

Provides information on how much carbon is removed from the atmosphere by planting a tree.

**Empowerment Low-Carbon Diet: A 30-Day Program to Lose 5,000 Pounds**

[www.empowermentinstitute.net/lcd/](http://www.empowermentinstitute.net/lcd/)

Provides tools to measure the carbon footprint of their entire family or class and offers ways that their footprint can be reduced through a Low-Carbon Diet 30-day program workbook.

***Parkcitygreen.org Kids Calculator Lights***

<http://www.parkcitygreen.org/Calculators/Kids-Calculator.aspx>

Offers a kids carbon calculator and then educates them on ways to reduce their overall energy consumption.

## Resources by Sustainability Topic Area

### Air Quality

- ***Bay Area Air Quality Management District: Youth Outreach and Education***  
<http://www.baaqmd.gov/Divisions/Communications-and-Outreach/Community-Outreach/Youth-Outreach-and-Education.aspx>  
Provides science-based education and innovative youth-related programs that help youth better understand the importance of clean air to healthy in the community.
- ***U.S. Environmental Protection Agency AIRNOW: Air Quality Index***  
<http://airnow.gov/index.cfm?action=aqikids.index>  
Offers kids information, as well as interactive games and teaching materials, about the Air Quality Index and how air quality and air pollution affect health.
- ***California Air Resources Board: The Know Zone***  
<http://www.arb.ca.gov/knowzone/knowzone.htm>  
Includes information for kids, students and teachers about air pollution and measures that can be taken to keep the air clean.
- ***Clean Air Kids Air Quality***  
<http://www.clean-air-kids.org.uk/airquality.html>  
A series of information sheets, games and puzzles for children ages 5 to 11 to help them learn about the planet's air and how people affect it.

### Energy and Energy Efficiency

- ***U.S. Department of Energy: Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy: Roofus' Solar and Efficient Home***  
<http://www1.eere.energy.gov/kids/roofus/>  
Helps kids find ways that they can make their own homes more energy efficient.
- ***U.S. Department of Energy: What's Your Excuse***  
<http://www.loseyouexcuse.gov/index.html#/index>  
An interactive website that highlights simple ways that kids can make energy efficient choices in their homes.

- ***Energy Star: Kids Be an Energy Star***  
[http://www.energystar.gov/index.cfm?c=kids.kids\\_index](http://www.energystar.gov/index.cfm?c=kids.kids_index)  
Provides information to kids about the various types of renewable and nonrenewable energy, saving energy and global warming. Includes a parent/teacher area that offers lesson plans, games and activities.
- ***U.S. Energy Information Administration: Energy Kids***  
<http://www.eia.gov/kids/>  
Provides information for teachers and games and activities for kids. Information ranges from energy basics to renewable resources, saving energy, the history of energy, calculators and tools, games and a teachers section.
- ***Kids Save Energy: Games, Tips and Facts Just for Kids Who Want to Save Energy***  
<http://www1.eere.energy.gov/kids/>  
A U.S. Department of Energy website for kids with interactive games and information on how to save energy through various kinds of renewable energy and energy-efficient practices.
- ***Alliance to Save Energy: Green Schools Program***  
<http://ase.org/programs/green-schools-program>  
Empowers students to make a difference in the way their schools use energy. Educates students about energy and the importance of energy efficiency and provides a diagnostic toolkit to assess the energy usage in their school.
- ***California Energy Commission: Energy Quest***  
<http://energyquest.ca.gov/index.html>  
Provides information on how to conserve energy and offers interactive resources for both kids and teachers.
- ***eMISSION Powered by ENERGY STAR and DoSomething.org***  
<http://apps.facebook.com/emissiongame/>  
A Facebook game centered around energy efficiency.
- ***Kids Corner: Energy Education is Fun!***  
<http://pseg.apogee.net/kids/>  
An interactive website that provides kids with information on energy, how and why we use it, conservation, the various types of energy and environmental impacts of energy use. It also includes an area for teachers that offers supplemental information and teaching material.

- ***The Children’s University of Manchester: Energy and the Environment — Renewable and Non-Renewable Energy***  
<http://www.childrensuniversity.manchester.ac.uk/interactives/science/energy/renewable.asp>  
Offers resources and online interactive learning materials about energy and the environment, including energy basics, electricity usage, renewable and non-renewable energy, the advantages and disadvantages of various energy resources, and energy and global warming.
- ***Energyhog.org***  
<http://www.energyhog.org/>  
Provides an interactive game that kids can complete to improve the energy efficiency of their homes. A similar website is also available to educate adults.
- ***Energy Efficiency Education Program***  
<http://www.k12e3.org/>  
Teaches kids how their actions can have an impact on energy conservation. Includes a link for teachers with professional development, curriculum, materials and online support.
- ***City of Roseville Electric Kids Corner***  
[http://www.roseville.ca.us/electric/about/kids\\_corner/default.asp](http://www.roseville.ca.us/electric/about/kids_corner/default.asp)  
Provides information for kids on energy, water conservation, safety and the Utility Exploration Center, a hands-on learning facility that teaches kids and adults about sustainable living practices through new technologies and energy and water conservation.
- ***Alameda Municipal Power: Energy Fun for Kids***  
<http://www.alamedamp.com/resources/energy-fun-for-kids>  
The Kids Corner is a website where kids can learn about electricity, energy savings and electrical safety. Includes fun games and activities to help kids learn about energy and energy efficiency and access information that they can share with their family and friends.
- ***PG&E: Educational Resources — Students’ Site***  
<http://www.pge.com/myhome/edusafety/teach/educationalresources/students/>  
Offers educational material designed for various grade levels, including games, energy facts and teacher/parent resources. It also answers energy questions and provides a carbon footprint calculator based on energy use.
- ***PG&E: The Energenius Program***  
<http://www.pge.com/energenius/>  
Offers interactive, engaging programs for grades K-8. Each program includes detailed lesson plans, student activity books, posters and take-home materials.

Programs have been field tested and correlate to California State Content Standards.

- ***Sempra Energy Utility Energy Library (SDG&E)***  
<http://www.sdge.com/kids/>  
Provides energy-related information for kids, parents, teachers and students that covers energy safety, conservation, clean transportation renewable energy, water and energy and climate change.
- ***Redding Electric Utility: Your Community Utility Plugged Into Education***  
<http://www2.reupower.com/kidspg.asp>  
Offers games, quizzes and fun information to help kids learn about saving energy and staying safe around gas and electricity.

## Renewable Energy

- ***Lodi Green – Glowing Clean, Renewable Energy***  
<http://www.lodielectric.com/lodigreen.asp>  
Provides information to increase energy literacy and inspire sustainable energy practices. The website provides a link to GetWise.org, an education website for parents, teachers and kids on energy and water conservation.
- ***Alliant Energy Kids***  
<http://www.alliantenergykids.com/EnergyandTheEnvironment/RenewableEnergy/index.htm>  
Provides information on renewable energy with descriptions of the various types of renewable energy available, and includes a section with games for kids and resources for teachers and parents.
- ***Touchstone Energy Kids Zone***  
<http://www.totouchstoneenergykids.com/farm.php>  
Provides an interactive photo in which kids can click on items for fun games that teach them about energy efficiency and renewable energy.
- ***Geothermal Education Office***  
<http://geothermal.marin.org/>  
Provides information about geothermal resources and its importance in providing clean sustainable energy while protecting the environment. Includes data, a slide show, videos, classroom material and a question-and-answer section.

- ***Foundation for Water and Energy Education: Walk through a Hydroelectric Project***  
<http://www.fwee.org/walk.html>  
Provides balanced information regarding the use of water as a renewable resource in the Northwest United States. The virtual hydroelectric project shows how water is converted into energy.
- ***EnergyWhiz***  
<http://www.energywhiz.com/>  
Provides activities and information on photovoltaic power. Ideas include age-appropriate experiments, games and science fair projects.
- ***Kid Wind Project: Learn About Wind***  
<http://learn.kidwind.org/learn>  
Gives in-depth information on wind as a renewable energy resource, ideas for projects, experiments and potential careers.
- ***U.S. Department of Energy: Nuclear Student Energy Zone***  
<http://www.ne.doe.gov/students/intro.html>  
Designed for young visitors, this site offers several tracks of information and a teacher's lounge.

## Water and Wastewater

- ***U.S. Environmental Protection Agency: Exploring Estuaries***  
<http://water.epa.gov/learn/kids/estuaries/index.cfm>  
Provides information for kids on what an estuary is and the animals that live in the ecosystem, with a link for games and activities and a Teacher's Page.
- ***U.S. Environmental Protection Agency: Polluted Runoff (Nonpoint Source Pollution)***  
<http://www.epa.gov/owow/NPS/kids/>  
Provides kids with information on nonpoint source pollution through games activities and articles.
- ***U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Reclamation of the Mid-pacific Region: Managing Water in the West — Water Share***  
<http://www.usbr.gov/mp/watershare/resources/waterlearn.html>  
Teaches students about water conservation through animated, interactive episodes. Covers how water impacts issues related to nature, cities and agriculture. Includes custom-created teacher lesson plans for elementary, junior high and high schools.

- ***U.S. Geological Survey: Water Science for Schools***  
<http://ga.water.usgs.gov/edu/>  
Provides information on many aspects of water, using pictures, data, maps and an interactive center where kids can give opinions and test their water knowledge.
- ***Water Education Foundation: Project WET***  
<http://www.watereducation.org/doc.asp?id=1008>  
Facilitates and promotes awareness, appreciation, knowledge and stewardship of water resources through classroom-ready teaching aids and internationally sponsored Project WET programs.
- ***What Do You Know About H2O?***  
<http://www.mwdh2o.com/mwdh2o/pages/education/h2o/h2o.html>  
Includes a virtual map and interactive educational materials and games divided by grade level, including a section for post-secondary students and teachers.
- ***Save Our Water: Kids Can Save***  
<http://www.saveourh2o.org/node/3>  
Provides information for kids on water conservation through games, water facts and video clips.
- ***The Ground Water Foundation: Kids Corner***  
<http://www.groundwater.org/kc/kc.html>  
Offers groundwater basics, activities to try at home, games, models, education tools, programming and workshops.
- ***Scholastic Teachers Study Jams***  
[http://teacher.scholastic.com/activities/studyjams/water\\_cycle/](http://teacher.scholastic.com/activities/studyjams/water_cycle/)  
Provides information, games, vocabulary and supplemental information for teachers on the water cycle.
- ***Central Basin Municipal Water District: Education***  
<http://www.centralbasin.org/education.html>  
Provides tools for students and teachers who want to learn more about water and share the knowledge with others. Includes education links and resources based on grade level for teachers and students.
- ***Water Replenishment District of Southern California Education***  
<http://www.wrd.org/education/wrd-kids-club.php>  
Outlines the water cycle and provides other important information on water and water conservation.

- ***Long Beach 90H20 Kids***  
<http://www.lbwater.org/information/kids.php>  
Focuses on teaching kids the importance of water conservation and how essential it is to our lives; provides links to various games and informative websites.
- ***The City of San Diego: Kids Water Conservation Center***  
<http://www.sandiego.gov/water/conservation/kids/>  
Provides water-saving tips, fun water facts, a water conservation activity book, a recycled water activity book, and a water conservation poster contest and film contest.
- ***City of Santa Clara: California Water Trivia for Kids***  
<http://santaclaraca.gov/index.aspx?page=1432>  
Provides information for kids on water and water conservation through trivia and a variety of interactive games and printable resources.
- ***City of Oceanside: Clean Water Program Just for Kids***  
<http://www.oceansidecleanwaterprogram.org/kids.asp>  
Describes the different ways that pollution gets into waterways and what can be done to keep waterways clean. Provides links to clean water projects and educational resources for teachers.

## Waste Reduction and Recycling

- ***CALRecycle: Recycle Rex***  
<http://www.calrecycle.ca.gov/RecycleRex/>  
Information for kids on how to recycle, what to recycle, how to start recycling programs at school and a variety of recycling fun facts, games and activities.
- ***U.S Environmental Protection Agency Recycled Content (ReCon) Tool***  
[www.epa.gov/climatechange/wycd/waste/calculators/ReCon\\_home.html](http://www.epa.gov/climatechange/wycd/waste/calculators/ReCon_home.html)  
Provides information about how much greenhouse gas emissions are reduced by purchasing recycled products.
- ***National Institute for Environmental Health Services Kid's Page***  
<http://kids.niehs.nih.gov/recycle.htm>  
Shows kids how they can eliminate waste and protect the environment through reducing, reusing and recycling.
- ***Ollie Saves the Planet***  
<http://www.olliesworld.com/planet/usa/index.htm>  
Explores the four Rs — Reduce, Reuse, Recycle and Rethink — as they apply to the issues of waste, water, energy, air and biodiversity. Includes games, puzzles, information and projects.

- ***Association of Postconsumer Plastic Recyclers: Kids Recycling Zone***  
<http://www.kidsrecyclingzone.com/>  
Provides information on what recycled plastic products can be made into, and includes games and a few magic tricks.
- ***Waste Free Lunch: Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, Rot***  
<http://www.wastefreelunches.org/>  
Provides information on how kids can pack a waste-free lunch and start a waste-free lunch program at their school, and how parents and teachers can start a waste-free lunch program at their place of employment.
- ***San Mateo County: Recycle Works Kids***  
<http://www.recycleworks.org/kids/index.html>  
Walks kids through the paper process from the natural resources used to make paper to the finished product, and explains how they can use sustainable practices to recycle at home.
- ***Stopwaste.org (Alameda County Waste Authority): School — Students***  
<http://www.stopwaste.org/home/index.asp?page=498>  
Provides resources for kids and offers ways to make less waste and reuse more items at home and school.

## Land Use and Community Design

- ***Youth Voice in Community Design Handbook***  
[www.californiacenter.org/docs/Youth\\_Voices\\_in\\_Community\\_Design\\_2004.pdf](http://www.californiacenter.org/docs/Youth_Voices_in_Community_Design_2004.pdf)  
A how-to guide on getting youth involved in local policy-making and community planning.
- ***American Planning Association: Kids and Communities***  
[www.planning.org/kidsandcommunity](http://www.planning.org/kidsandcommunity)  
The Kids and Community Webpage includes youth activities and examples of youth engagement in planning.
- ***American Planning Association: ResourcesZine***  
[www.planning.org/resourceszine/index.htm](http://www.planning.org/resourceszine/index.htm)  
A searchable database with hundreds of ideas for involving young people in planning and teaching them about environmental protection, urban design, civic engagement, geography and GIS and other planning-related topics.

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## Individual and Community Action for Youth

- ***U.S. Environmental Protection Agency: Create a New Climate for Action - Do Your Part for Climate Change and Children's Health***  
<http://www.epa.gov/climateforaction/>  
Encourages teens to join with other teens to green their energy scene. It depicts how they can make a difference to the planet, children's health and the future. The tools show how to calculate one's impact and become a [Climate Ambassador](#) by motivating schools and the community to address climate change and children's health.
- ***Siemens: We Can Change the World Challenge***  
[http://www.wecanchange.com/?campaign=com\\_its\\_t\\_cdwg](http://www.wecanchange.com/?campaign=com_its_t_cdwg)  
Offers a national sustainability challenge that empowers students at every grade level to develop and share environmental solutions.
- ***Together Green: Act Today, Shape Tomorrow***  
<http://www.togethergreen.org/ActionCenter/Default.aspx>  
Explores different ways to start making a difference today by taking actions to be green.
- ***Action for Nature***  
<http://www.actionfornature.org/about>  
Encourages young people to take personal action to better their environments. The International Young Eco-Heroes Awards Program recognizes and encourages children and teens who have completed a project to "foster respect and affection for nature through personal action."
- ***Green Schools Initiative: Take the Green School Pledge***  
<http://www.greenschools.net/form.php?modin=51>  
Encourages students to take action and pledge to take the "Seven steps to a Green School."

## Resources that Address Multiple Sustainability Topics

- ***U.S. Environmental Protection Agency: Student Center***  
<http://www.epa.gov/students/index.html>  
Targeted towards students and contains information on air, climate change, conservation, ecosystems, environmental basics, human health, waste and recycling and water. Also includes information on neighborhood involvement and environmental careers.

- ***P&G Future Friendly Little Acts Meaningful Impact***  
<http://futurefriendly.com/Pages/Home.aspx>  
Teaches simple ways to save water, conserve energy and reduce waste and the impact that kids' actions have on their community.
- ***Green Allowance***  
<http://www.greenallowance.com/about>  
Designed to motivate and empower children to champion resource conservation and lead their families into becoming the most resource-efficient in the industrialized world. It shows the impact of kids' conservation actions in terms of the money that their parents save, which could be used to increase a child's allowance.
- ***Living Water Energy Resource Action Program***  
<http://www.getwise.org/index.php>  
Provides information on ways to conserve water and energy. Includes savings tips, links to local resources and product installation information, including helpful step-by-step videos. In addition, teachers can download classroom materials and find state and federal organizations to enhance the program while parents and students can find more information and get questions answered.
- ***Azusa Light and Water: Kids Korner***  
<http://www.ci.azusa.ca.us/index.aspx?NID=726>  
Provides links to various kid-oriented websites that provide information on energy, water and conservation. Some of the links include information provided by various federal agencies.

## Miscellaneous

- ***Tox Town Environmental Health Concerns and Toxic Chemicals: Where You Live, Work and Play***  
<http://toxtown.nlm.nih.gov/>  
Provides an interactive method for youth to explore and protect themselves from toxic and environmental hazards in their area. Sponsored by the National Library of Medicine.
- ***U.S. Department of Energy: Learning About Fossil Fuels***  
<http://fossil.energy.gov/education/energylessons/index.html>  
Includes games and lesson plans on the origins and productions of fossil fuels for younger students.

- ***Easy Appliance Parts Facts and Information: All About Energy***  
<http://www.easyapplianceparts.com/resources/Facts-And-Information-All-About-Energy.aspx>  
Provides information on energy, how generators and turbines work and how energy is produced in a power plant. Includes resources on various forms of both renewable and non-renewable energy and energy conservation through fact sheets, tips for kids, an educational electricity guide and more.
- ***Building Effective Youth Councils: A Practical Guide to Engaging Youth in Policy Making***  
<http://www.forumfyi.org/node/127>  
The *Guide* is designed to help state and local leaders create or strengthen their own youth councils. It provides a rationale for engaging youth in policy and decision-making processes; describes six keys to creating effective youth councils; and provides case stories of youth councils enabling legislation, and basic information about a range of youth councils and other resources. Prepared by The Forum for Youth Investment in collaboration with The National League of Cities' Youth, Education, and Families, and The National Conference of State Legislatures.

#### **Note about Links to Third Party Websites**

The Institute for Local Government (ILG) provides these links to third-party websites with resources about sustainability and youth as a service to local officials. In providing these links, ILG assumes no responsibility for the information practices of websites. ILG has not reviewed all of the third-party sites and does not control and is not responsible for any of the sites or their content. Inclusion of a website, or any information included in the website, does not constitute an endorsement or recommendation by ILG.

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The Institute welcomes feedback on this resource:

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