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Green Janitor Program is a Win-Win: Produced Lower Energy and Water Use for Building Owners, & Positive Impact on Janitors' Lives, SeedLA Report Shows

LOS ANGELES (June 15, 2017) The [U.S. Green Building Council-Los Angeles](#) chapter (USGBC-LA), along with Building Skills Partnership (BSP), is proud to share a new report "[Analyzing and Expanding the Green Janitor Education Program \(GJEP\)](#)". The report, which found multiple benefits to the three year old program, was produced by [SeedLA](#), which undertook a 10-week pro-bono consulting and research project for the project, in order to quantify the impact of the GJEP to date and to strategize marketing the program to new buildings.

The program was designed and implemented as a collaborative effort among the USGBC-LA, BSP, Building Owners and Managers Association of Greater Los Angeles (BOMA-GLA), and Service Employees International Union (SEIU)-United Service Workers West. Since 2014, the GJEP has trained nearly 600 janitors in 37 buildings throughout Los Angeles, San Diego, and Orange counties. During a 30-hour curriculum, janitors learn hands-on energy management and green cleaning training to address Operations and Maintenance practices that enable buildings to meet green performance standards, with special focus on resulting energy efficiency. They learn not only the how and what, but the *why*.

"The SEED study results, that clearly show us the economic savings and health benefits for participating in the GJEP, is the missing piece we needed to make the case for next wave of enrollment in the program," states [USGBC-LA](#) Executive Director Dominique Hargreaves. "I'm especially pleased that the team was able to research the new organics recycling laws and the Zero Waste program in the City of Los Angeles and show the cost savings for implementing diversion programs."

To expand the Green Janitors program, its impacts need to be conveyed to prospective building owners and managers, and as California, L.A. in particular, enforce increasingly strict recycling regulations, there is a need to assess the potential role of the GJEP in helping buildings meet these new standards. Given the number of janitors and buildings that have undergone the GJEP, it was now possible to assess its economic, environmental, social, and health impacts. Key findings of the [report](#):

1. Between 2013 and 2016, 76% of GJEP buildings saw a decrease in energy and



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water usage. GJEP buildings used 5.6% less energy on average in 2016 than non-GJEP buildings. These reductions in energy and water use are likely due to a combination of green building practices, such as retrofits, in addition to the GJEP. Having Green Janitors is the least expensive and easiest method to implement a number of practices that can reduce water and energy cost for buildings.

2. Based on the post-training surveys from trainees, it is clear that the GJEP has had a positive impact on the lives of the janitors who went through the program.
3. While most janitorial companies already provide [green cleaning] products to their staff, the GJEP takes the important step of helping janitors understand the benefits of these products. SeedLA found this to be an essential health and safety benefit to be emphasized as part of the curriculum and to the owners and managers.
4. As part of the Zero Waste LA initiative, commercial office buildings will be charged \$216.72 per three-cubic yard bin of trash removed by hauling companies each week. Bins dedicated to recycling and compost will be hauled for free. SeedLA estimates that a typical large office building will produce enough trash to fill approximately 10 of these bins every week. If buildings can divert even one bin per week to recycling and compost, then can save approximately \$11,000 per year on trash hauling costs. SeedLA notes that the GJEP can help buildings achieve this, and further recycling / savings, by providing buildings with signs and flyers to encourage recycling and to label different types of waste bins.

Speaking in 2015 at a GJEP event, Chief Sustainability Officer, City of Los Angeles, Matt Petersen stated that the GJEP represents "the three legs of sustainability: environment, equity and economy. The janitors are really the front line of creating a sustainable LA...they are walking our talk. And then they take the knowledge into their individual communities, becoming citizen entrepreneurs, and encouraging friends and family to live and act sustainably."

The Green Janitor program has been a key focus of USGBC-LA efforts to expand upon green jobs in the region. USGBC-LA has also recently launched the GPRO program which similarly bridges the green gap in knowledge for contractors. It prepares them to work in high-performance buildings and optimizes their role on the team in terms of commissioning, waste management, construction activity pollution prevention, and more.

For more information on GJEP or GPRO, please visit www.usgbc-la.org, or email Dominique Hargreaves at dominique@usgbc-la.org.

About U.S. Green Building Council-Los Angeles



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