



How the **Green Infrastructure Champions Network** can help you!

What is green infrastructure?

Green infrastructure (GI) is a series of practices that mimic nature to manage stormwater. GI includes nature-based solutions like bioswales, rain gardens, or natural forests and systems that imitate nature like pervious pavement. These practices help restore the natural hydrological regime by allowing rainwater to infiltrate where it lands.

When rain falls on impervious surfaces like streets, sidewalks, parking lots, and buildings, it flows over these surfaces and enters storm sewers. As it flows, the water picks up and carries suspended solids, nutrients, and other contaminants. Traditional stormwater infrastructure is designed to move stormwater through pipes to a treatment plant or a nearby waterway. Stormwater discharges can threaten water quality and rain can overwhelm the system, resulting in flooding. GI can mitigate these concerns by capturing and treating rainfall at its source.

Why should my community care about green infrastructure?

Implementing GI can have many environmental, economic, and health benefits for your community. In addition to improving water quality and reducing flooding, GI can also help improve air quality, reduce atmospheric carbon dioxide, and create habitat.

Additionally, increased green space has been shown to increase property values and recreational opportunities, benefiting both businesses and homeowners. Permeable pavements, green roofs, and other types of GI can also reduce energy costs by reducing the amount of heat reaching and being absorbed by buildings.

Finally, research is increasingly showing that trees, plants and green space can have a positive impact on community health. Studies have linked access and proximity to green space with decreased levels of inner-city crime, higher longevity, and reduced stress.

What is the GI Champions peer-to-peer mentoring network?

The GI Champions peer-to-peer mentoring network connects experienced GI practitioners with individuals that would like to bring GI to their communities. The mentoring network fosters the transfer of knowledge from experienced GI practitioners to a broader network of communities across the binational Great Lakes basin. “Pioneer Champions” that have successfully implemented GI in their community are paired with “Emerging Champions” that are eager to expand GI implementation in their community. Champions meet monthly (by phone or in person) to discuss challenges, answer questions, and provide guidance and feedback. Emerging Champions are eligible to apply for small grants to help catalyze the mentorship network and build GI capacity in their community.

The Champions network is run by the Great Lakes Commission, which has a long history of facilitating collaboration to advance solutions to our region’s economic and ecological issues.

How do I get involved?

Visit www.glc.org/work/champions/network to get involved!