



VIRGINIA GREEN TRAVEL CHAPTERS PROGRAM

VIRGINIA GREEN

Virginia Green is a unique program that encourages the tourism industry throughout Virginia to become more sustainable and environmentally conscious. The program is supported by the Virginia Tourism Corporation, the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality, and the Virginia Restaurant Lodging & Travel Association. It is administered by the non-profit organization, the Virginia Green Travel Alliance.

CHAPTER PROGRAM

Virginia Green was started in 2008 and has successfully helped more than 1800 tourism businesses certify their commitments to be a more sustainable business partner. Certified Virginia Green partners are available to visitors in all regions of Virginia and visitors can plan green vacations at www.VirginiaGreenTravel.org. However, many of our local & regional tourism organizations were generally unaware of the certified Virginia Green partners that existed in their regions. Some localities had no idea that they had dozens of certified Virginia Green partners. Our message to these communities is, "Please take credit for having your own, locally-based green tourism program" that is still run and supported by the Virginia Green program.



The Virginia Green Travel Chapters program was created to help regional tourism entities realize that green tourism is one of the many tools / resources that they have available to them to market to visitors. Moreover, we want our Virginia Green partners to contribute to and be part of community-level sustainability efforts. It is our hope that Chapters will engage with other local programs in the community and that this will increase awareness of and support for our Virginia green-certified partners.

VIRGINIA GREEN CHAPTER PLANS

Each year, Virginia Green Travel Chapters are required to update their annual Chapter plans. Chapters must:

- (1) review / correct the contact list for current Virginia Green partners;
- (2) review the number of VG partners in each sector and set goals for improvement;
- (3) state new goals for the coming year; and
- (4) propose steps / projects to achieve those goals.

The Virginia Green Travel Alliance assists where it can in helping to achieve those goals and expand the branding of the program within the community.

VIRGINIA GREEN TRAVEL CHAPTER HISTORY

The Virginia Green Travel Chapters Program was created in 2016 and initially engaged 8 regional “charter chapter” partners. The program has not sought to grow as the VGTA sought to establish the planning process, but the chapter program now has 11 engaged local / regional chapters. The levels of progress and the paths of engagement have varied greatly. However, all chapters have submitted annual plans of some sort and updated their existing partner databases; and progress is being made.

In 2018, the VGTA plans to begin recruiting its second round of VGT Chapters that want to establish locally-based programs and work with the VGTA towards branding their communities as green travel destinations.

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*Blacksburg-Christiansburg-Montgomery County plan is being developed in conjunction with its larger Green Business Challenge.





ARLINGTON GREEN

About Arlington's Chapter Program

The Arlington's chapter has recently been working to expand their program. In the past Arlington has been named the second most green city in the country, therefore they are working to enhance their already green minded city. For the rest of 2017 the chapter has set a goal and made a plan for how they will reach that goal.

Chapter Contact - Courtney Cacatian, Arlington Convention and Visitors Service

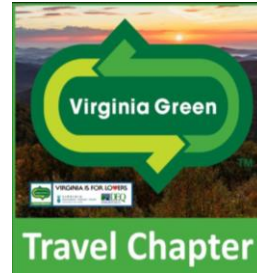
Additional Organizations Involved - None

Number of Partners - 22

Goal for 2017 - increase participants by 6 (3 lodging, 2 restaurants, 1 festival/event)

Plan for Getting There

- Workshop - Arlington plans to host a workshop to get members excited about the program and to make the program something their partners think about more actively
- Website/Chapter Landing Page - Arlington is working to create a landing page for their chapter, they currently do include, on their E-Newsletter, a link to the Virginia Green website for businesses to become certified
(<https://www.stayarlington.com/tourism-industry/hospitality-newsletter/all-issues-of-stayarlington-e-newsletter/stayarlington-e-newsletter-march2017/>)
- Publications, e-newsletters, and social media - they plan to put more emphasis on informing people in the community about the program and updates on what they are doing
- Referrals - they are looking for potential partners to refer them to the Virginia Green program
- Bicycle Friendly Tourism/Communities - Arlington is encouraging local efforts with the chapter's partners to support/expand biking opportunities throughout the community
- Green Packages - They are working to link multiple Virginia Green Travel partners to attract green minded visitors to the city by register the partners as a "Virginia Green Getaways" or "Virginia Green Travel Packages"



CHARLOTTESVILLE GREEN TRAVEL

About Charlottesville's Chapter Program

The Charlottesville chapter has a dynamic similar to that of Harrisonburg's, due to the chapter's close affiliation with the colleges in each city. Charlottesville is unique because they have their own internship program. This program has helped keep the community more involved and engaged. For the rest of 2017 the chapter has set a goal and made a plan for how they will reach that goal.

Chapter Contact - Kurt Burkhart, Charlottesville Albemarle Virginia Green Chapter

Additional Organizations Involved – UVA Sustainability Programs, Charlottesville Sustainability Office

Number of Partners - 56

Goal for 2017 - increase participants by 5-10 (3 lodging, 3 restaurants, 2 festival/event, 2 other) and improve already existing partnerships

Plan for Getting There

- Workshop - they plan to host a workshop to get members excited about the program and to make the program something their partners think about more actively
- Website/Chapter Landing Page - Charlottesville is working to create a better web presence. They currently have a landing page that explains what Virginia Green is and has a list of all of their chapter's partners
(<https://www.visitcharlottesville.org/about/virginia-green/>)
- Newsletters/Social Media - They plan to send out updates through newsletter and social media
- Referrals - They are looking for potential partners to refer to the Virginia Green program
- Outreach - Charlottesville will be reaching out to other sustainability programs and organizations to try and make the community more eco friendly

- Bicycle Friendly Tourism/Communities - Charlottesville is encouraging local efforts with the chapter's partners to support/expand biking opportunities throughout the community
- Green Packages - They are working to link multiple Virginia Green Travel partners to attract green minded visitors to the city by registering the partners as a "Virginia Green Getaways" or "Virginia Green Travel Packages"



CHESAPEAKE GREEN

About Chesapeake's Chapter Program

Chesapeake has led the way in the sheer number of events they have certified. They have their logo at every event along with a link to their own website. One of the most notable characteristics of the Chesapeake Green Chapter is that it is closely affiliated with the city's Tourism Department and that the Parks & Recreation Department is very engaged and has certified all of their events and festivals.

Chapter Contact - Wendy Debman

Additional Organizations Involved - None

Number of Partners - 26

Goal for 2017 - increase participants by 5

Plan for Getting There

- Website/Chapter Landing Page - Chesapeake is gathering a team to work on the web page and will have it ready in about 6 months. Chesapeake currently has two landing pages, one specifically for events and another for meeting/lodging, both of which briefly explain the program
(Lodging - <http://www.visitchesapeake.com/meetings/virginia-green/>
Events-<http://www.cityofchesapeake.net/government/Boards-Commissions/full-listing/ceic/VA-green-info.htm>)
- Newsletters - Chesapeake Green will feature Virginia Green into their (Tourism's) newsletters several times a year
- Referrals - they are looking for potential partners to refer to the Virginia Green program
- Recruiting - they plan to have multiple recruiting events to gain more partners and, more specifically to the Chesapeake, recruit more restaurants



HAMPTON GREEN TRAVEL

About Hampton's Chapter Program

Hampton has a very diverse profile of members. The area has certified many events such as the Pirate Day and Bay Day and they are working towards recruiting more restaurants in the area. In order to increase the number of partners for their chapter they have created this plan to help them reach their goals.

Chapter Contact - Lori Leib and Mary Fugere, Hampton
Convention & Visitors Bureau

Additional Organizations Involved - None

Number of Partners - 17

Goal for 2017 - increase participants by 10

Plan for Getting There

- Workshop - Hampton plans to host a workshop to get members excited about the program and to make the program something their partners think about more actively
- Website/Chapter Landing Page - Hampton currently has a landing page but they plan to revamp the site. The current website is simply page describing all the different green initiatives in Hampton and there is a section on Virginia Green (<http://www.hamptonroadschamber.com/page/green-initiatives/>)
- Referrals - they are looking for potential partners to refer to the Virginia Green program
- Other - Hampton held a bike/walk this past September to honor the cities' first bicycle and pedestrian plan



HARRISONBURG GREEN

About Harrisonburg's Chapter Program

The Harrisonburg chapter has recently been working to expand their program. They have one of the best web presences out of all the chapters. This chapter has a dynamic similar to that of the Charlottesville chapter due to its affiliation with James Madison University. For the rest of 2017 the chapter has set a goal and made a plan for how they will reach that goal.

Chapter Contact - Brenda Black, Harrisonburg Tourism

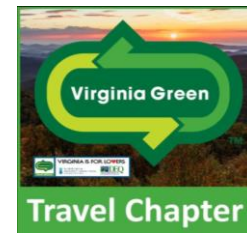
Number of Partners - 17

Additional Organizations Involved – JMU, Harrisonburg Public Works

Goal for 2017 - increase participants by 8 (4 restaurants, 2 attractions, 1 festival/event, 1 other)

Plan for Getting There

- Workshop - They plan to host a workshop to get members excited about the program and to make the program something their partners think about more actively
- Website/Chapter Landing Page - Harrisonburg has a landing page for their chapter, they plan to promote the chapter with links for visitors to use, and they are working to improve their already existing website. Their current page lives on their tourism site and there is a page dedicated to explaining the program and it includes a list of all of their partners
[\(https://www.visitharrisonburgva.com/virginia-green-program/\)](https://www.visitharrisonburgva.com/virginia-green-program/)
- Social Media- Harrisonburg is creating a social media presence for the chapter
- Referrals - They are looking for potential partners to refer them to the Virginia Green program
- Bicycle Friendly Tourism/Communities - Harrisonburg is encouraging local efforts with the chapter's partners to support/expand biking opportunities throughout the community
- Green Packages - They are working to link multiple Virginia Green Travel partners to attract green minded visitors to the city by register the partners as a "Virginia Green Getaways" or "Virginia Green Travel Packages"



NEWPORT NEWS GREEN

About Newport News' Chapter Program

In the past 10 years Newport News has focused on certifying events and festivals in their city. They have multiple branches of the government working on this program and are actively trying to get the Tourism department more involved with the chapter. They have been actively recruiting partners and have set ambitious goals for the rest of 2017.

Chapter Contact - Rebecca Cutchins (Tourism), Cindy Brouillard (Tourism), Shelly Ezanno (Parks), and Jennifer Privette (Sustainability); Newport News Green Tourism

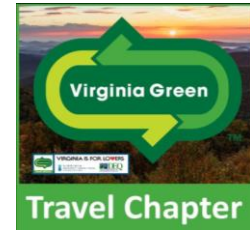
Additional Organizations Involved - None

Number of Partners - 13 facilities and 25 events/festivals

Goal for 2017 - increase participants by 10 (1 hotel, 5 restaurants, 2 attractions, and 2 festivals/events)

Plan for Getting There

- Workshop - Newport News plans to host a workshop to get members excited about the program and to make the program something their partners think about more actively
- Website/Chapter Landing Page - Newport News is working to create a website before the end of the year, they currently are listed on the DEQ website.
- Announcement - They plan to create more of a social media presence
- Festivals & Events - Newport News is encouraging all events in the city to become certified and are working to incorporate the Virginia Green logo
- Referrals - Newport News is looking for potential partners and refer them to the Virginia Green program
- Outreach - They will be reaching out to the Newport News Green Foundation to inform them about Virginia Green, the chapter designation, and plan



PRINCE WILLIAM/MANASSAS

About Prince William/Manassas Chapter Program

Prince William County chapter has been working to expand their Virginia Green program. The county has a number of green initiatives for the community to become involved in and they are looking to add Virginia Green to the list of programs. For the rest of 2017 the chapter has set a goal and made a plan for how they will reach that goal.

Chapter Contact - Mark Kowalewski

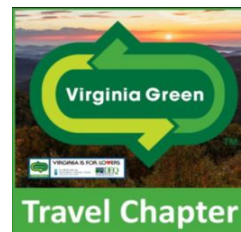
Additional Organizations Involved - None

Number of Partners - 17

Goal for 2017 - increase participants by 4 (1 lodging, 1 restaurants, 1 festival/event, 1 other) and improve already existing partnerships

Plan for Getting There

- Workshop - they plan to host a workshop to get members excited about the program and to make the program something their partners think about more actively
- Website/Chapter Landing Page - Prince William County is working to create a better web presence. The webpage team will begin work in September and hope to complete the website by the end of the year.
- Newsletters/Social Media - They plan to send out updates through newsletter and social media. They are also planning on dedicating part of an e-blast to Virginia Green
- Referrals - They are looking for potential partners to refer to the Virginia Green program
- Outreach - Manassas will be reaching out to other sustainability programs and organizations to try and make the community more eco
- Green Packages - They are working to link multiple Virginia Green Travel partners to attract green minded visitors to the city by creating group itineraries and green packaging for the outdoor recreation messaging



RICHMOND GREEN TRAVEL

About Richmond's Chapter Program

The Richmond chapter has been at the heart of the program and that shows through the number of partners they have. Richmond has been working on becoming more sustainable and has a sustainability program for their city and this green initiative has permeated throughout the cities' programs, including the Virginia Green chapter. Richmond started out strong with the number of members they recruited and now they are looking to gain more members and improve the already existing partnerships.

Chapter Contact - Jack Berry

Additional Organizations Involved - Virginia Green

Number of Partners - 153 (40 lodging, 38 restaurants, 9 attractions, and 34 events)

Goal for 2017 - increase participants by 7 (2 lodging, 2 restaurants, 1 attraction, and 2 events)

Plan for Getting There

- Website/Chapter Landing Page - Richmond chapter currently has Virginia Green information on their tourism website, after a Virginia Green search on their website they have links to lists of their Virginia Green certified attractions and restaurants

(Attractions-<https://www.visitrichmondva.com/plan/eco-friendly/green-attractions/> Restaurants-<https://www.visitrichmondva.com/plan/eco-friendly/green-restaurant/>)

- Newsletters/Social Media - They plan to put more emphasis on informing people in the community about the program and updates on what they are doing
- Referrals - they are looking for potential partners to refer them to the Virginia Green program
- Outreach - Richmond will be reaching out to other sustainability programs and organizations to try and make the community more eco friendly
- Bicycle Friendly Tourism/Communities - They are working to link multiple Virginia Green Travel partners to attract green minded visitors to the city by register the partners as a "Virginia Green Getaways" or "Virginia Green Travel Packages"



SHENANDOAH GREEN TRAVEL

About Shenandoah's Chapter Program

The Shenandoah chapter has been working to expand their Virginia Green program. The county has a number of green initiatives for the community to become involved in and they are looking to add Virginia Green to the list of programs. For the rest of 2017 the chapter has set a goal and made a plan for how they will reach that goal.

Chapter Contact - Jenna French

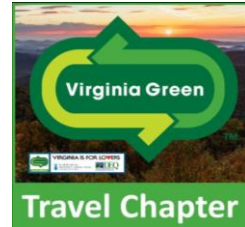
Additional Organizations Involved - None

Number of Partners - 3

Goal for 2017 - increase participants by 5(1 lodging, 1 restaurants, 2 welcome centers) and improve already existing partnerships

Plan for Getting There

- Workshop - they plan to host a workshop to get members excited about the program and to make the program something their partners think about more actively
- Website/Chapter Landing Page - Shenandoah is working to create a better web presence
- Newsletters/Social Media - They plan to send out updates through social media and promote members on social media
- Festivals/Events - Shenandoah is encouraging festivals and events to recycle
- Referrals - They are looking for potential partners to refer to the Virginia Green program
- Outreach - Shenandoah will be reaching out to other sustainability programs and organizations to try and make the community more eco friendly
- Bicycle Friendly Tourism/Communities - Shenandoah is working with the town, Woodstock, to create bike trails and bike racks around town



VIRGINIA BEACH GREEN

About Virginia Beach Chapter Program

For the past 10 years Virginia Beach has led the way for the rest of state. The Virginia Beach chapter is specifically working to create a full “Green Getaway” tourism industry. They are striving to provide opportunities for tourists to stay in green lodging, eat at green restaurants, and go to green attractions. To meet this goal they have created a plan that will help them get there.

Chapter Contact - Kimberlee Dobbins and Ron Kuhlman, Virginia Beach
Convention & Visitors Bureau

Additional Orgs Involved - none

Additional Orgs - GOAL for 2017: Virginia Beach Hotel Association, VB Restaurant Association, VB RAC GREEN Committee.

Current Number of Partners - 203

Goal for 2017 - increase participants by 10 (3 hotel, 3 restaurants, 1 attractions, and 3 festivals/events)

Plan for Getting There

- Workshop - they plan to host a workshop this Fall to get members excited about the program and to make the program something their partners think about more actively
- Website/Chapter Landing Page - Virginia Beach is working to create a landing page for their chapter. On their tourism website they do have a search filter for Virginia Green certified lodging for tourists looking for VAG hotels.
- Festivals & Events - they are actively reaching out to event organizers in the city to become certified because most events are run by private companies rather than the city itself
- Referrals - Virginia Beach Tourism plans to reach out to its partners to identify businesses that would be logical candidates to become certified Virginia Green Travel Partners

- Outreach - Virginia Beach will be reaching out to other sustainability programs and organizations, such as the RAC Green Committee, to try and make the community more eco friendly.
- Green Packages - are working to link 2 or more Virginia Green Travel partners to attract green minded visitors to the city by register the partners as a “Virginia Green Getaways” or “Virginia Green Travel Packages”