



Venue - Event Location, Electronics, Energy Use

- Host the event outdoors, in a LEED-certified building, or in a venue with sustainable features such as CFL or LED lighting and low-flow toilets
- Use power strips for all electronics, and shut off strips between sessions or when otherwise not in use; unplug electronics that are not on a power strip

Materials - Decor, Giveaways, Table Coverings

- Use centerpieces that will be reused at future events, or that guests will take home with them (e.g. locally grown plants)
- Prioritize decor that is natural, compostable, and/or recyclable; avoid balloons and other single-use, non-recyclable items
- Use reusable (i.e. cloth) table coverings or paper table coverings that will be recycled or composted
- Prioritize experiences over physical objects if giving away prizes (e.g. coupons or gift certificates to local businesses); alternately, choose objects that are recycled and/or reusable (e.g. reusable grocery bags made from recycled plastic)

Communication - Name Tags, Sustainability Messaging, Schedules/Handouts

- Offer primarily electronic versions of event handouts (e.g. emails, an event app, or on display TVs); if handouts are necessary, print double-sided and use recycled paper and soy-based ink
- Provide reusable name tags and collect them for use at future events, or provide recyclable or compostable name tags and offer a location to properly dispose of them
- Communicate that the event is “green” via pre-event electronic communication (e.g. emails or event website)
- Solicit feedback regarding the “green event” from event attendees to improve the success of future events

Transportation - Public Transit, Ridesharing, Video-Conferencing

- Offer video-conferencing/webinar options for out-of-town participants to reduce the need for long distance travel
- Provide information about public transit options and bicycle routes to get to the event
- Provide information to help coordinate ridesharing between event attendees
- Offer incentives for choosing sustainable transportation (e.g. a discount, prize, sticker that says “I biked here!” etc.)

Food - Sustainable Foods & Beverages, Dishware, Food Donation

- Communicate sustainability goals to vendors/caterers

- Prioritize vegetarian and/or vegan options; if meat or seafood is served, ensure it is sustainably sourced and avoid red meat
- Use RSVPs to ensure that an appropriate amount of food is provided and to solicit dietary restrictions from guests
- Feature local, organic, and seasonal foods and label them as such
- Serve third-party certified foods, such as Fair Trade, Humane Certified, Rainforest Certified, etc, and label them as such
- Avoid individually packaged foods and condiments; buy in bulk when possible
- Use all reusable dishware and utensils
- Choose recyclable or compostable dishware if reusable dishware cannot be used; always avoid styrofoam containers
- Choose recycled plastic utensils if reusable utensils cannot be used (plastic utensils are never recyclable in the UW system)
- Serve foods that do not require utensils, or provide reusable utensils
- If food is served buffet style, provide smaller plates and signage to encourage people to only take what food they can eat
- Provide beverages in bulk to avoid individually-packaged beverages and to reduce waste; buy sweeteners and cream in bulk quantities
- Provide reusable coffee stirrers in place of disposable stirrers
- Encourage guests to bring their own reusable bottles for beverages or provide them (or cups which can be recycled or composted)
- If serving alcohol, prioritize sustainable local breweries, wineries, and distilleries
- Donate leftover food; compost what cannot be donated

Waste - Recycling, Compost, Volunteer Training

- Request general or customized Trash, Recycling, and Compost signage from the UW-Madison Office of Sustainability
- Place recycling bins next to trash bins with appropriate signage for each, and ensure that the contents are recycled after the event
- Provide compost bins with corresponding signage, and ensure that the contents are composted after the event
- Train all people staffing the event on the proper waste disposal practices for the event

Above and Beyond

- Serve a completely vegetarian or vegan menu
- Source locally at least 50% of food items served
- Provide incentives for guests to use public transportation, bicycles, or rideshare instead of single-occupancy vehicles
- Give a land acknowledgement to recognize indigenous peoples and their traditional territories' unique and enduring relationship with the University
- Make the event Zero Waste (meaning that at least 90% of waste is diverted from landfill – contact the Office of Sustainability for further resources)
- Purchase carbon offsets to reduce the impact of travel/energy associated with the event
- Develop a socially impactful project as part of the event

Questions? Contact the Green Events team at greenevents@lists.wisc.edu.