

SUSTAINABLE EVENT PLANNING GUIDE



WHAT IS A SUSTAINABLE EVENT?

There is more to a sustainable event than just recycling.

Sustainable event planning is a proactive approach to event planning that anticipates the environmental, health, and community impacts of the event from every angle. These events are committed not only to proper waste management, but also waste reduction, minimizing their carbon footprint, supporting the local economy, and using their platform to educate guests about sustainability whenever possible.

STEP 1: COMMIT TO SUSTAINABILITY

Set goals: How are you going to be sustainable? Stick to them.

When working with other organizations, make sure they are also involved in your commitment to sustainability.

STEP 2: PLAN ECO-FRIENDLY LOGISTICS

**Location and Transportation:
Limit Transportation Emissions**

- Choose somewhere that is easily accessible by bike or public transportation to limit transportation emissions
- Share guides and information on how to get to the venue using public transportation or bike.
- Organize a carpool, and/or live stream the event
- Staying on campus is also a great option!

Exhibitors/Guest Speakers

- If you are inviting guest speakers, make sure they are local to limit travel costs!
- Tell guest speakers about your commitment to sustainability so that they are on the same page.
- Discourage guest speakers from bringing excessive printed materials.
- Offer to send out materials digitally either before or after the event
- If they really must bring handouts, make sure you only print what's necessary.

Have attendees RSVP online to avoid over purchasing or over preparing materials

- Facebook, Eventbrite, and Brown Paper Tickets are all good resources!

STEP 3: MARKET SMART

Minimize your use of Flyers and poster

- If you have to use them, try to make them small so you can fit a few flyers on one page, and post them in strategic locations
- If possible, print on recycled paper and make sure your flyers are properly recycled afterwards

TIP: Foam poster boards can easily be reused by painting over the old design and starting over!

Utilize Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, email, Eventbrite, and word of mouth to advertise

Use giveaways responsibly

- Everyone loves free stuff, but most of those giveaways end up in a landfill. Use practical giveaway items.
- **Think:** "Is this something people would use?"

Do's
Reusable mugs,
reusable water
bottles, pens,
reusable shopping
bags, SEPTA
tokens/passes

Don'ts
Magnets, Frisbees,
drink cozies,
mardi-gras style
beads,
individually
wrapped items

- Avoid putting dates on materials so that they can be used for years to come
- Make sure your giveaway items were made sustainably and ethically

TIP! Look for items that are organic, fair-trade, recycled / recyclable, and/or biodegradable

STEP 4: ORDER FOOD

Order Strategically

- Encourage guests to RSVP so that you only buy as much food as you need
- Choose food that can be eaten without utensils to cut down on dining ware that ends up in the trash

Choose food that is local, organic, and fair trade whenever possible

- Have Vegetarian/Vegan options to be inclusive

If everyone ate vegetarian for just one day, it would prevent 4.5 million tons of animal excrement; almost 7 tons of ammonia emissions, a major air pollutant. (altnet.org)

Buy in bulk!

- Not only does this save you money, avoiding individually packaged items

Do's

Chips, soft pretzels, 2 liter bottles of soda

Don'ts

Plastic water bottles, individual bags of snacks

Reusable/Sustainable Dining Ware

- DO NOT USE STYROFOAM
- Order compostable plates, flatware, and linen table cloths through Sodexo for an added cost or for smaller events, you can contact the Office of Sustainability for reusable plates.
- Email guests and encourage them to bring their own dishware.

STEP 5: USE REUSABLE & RECYCLABLE DECORATIONS

Investing in some key decorations can save you money on decorations costs in the future

- Keep dates off of banners so that you can use them multiple times.
- If you are purchasing single-use decorations (i.e. balloons, streamers, party hats, etc.) make sure they are biodegradable, recyclable, and/or made from recycled materials.

Get creative!

- Making decorations out of recycled materials can be a fun project for you student organization and a great way for members to meet volunteer hour requirements.

TIP! Butcher paper instead of plastic table cloths is a fun alternative because it's recyclable (as long as it doesn't have food waste) and people can draw on it

STEP 6: MANAGE RECYCLING AND TRASH

Limit Handouts and Printed Materials

- Only print what you need and encourage guests to only take you if they really want it.
- If you need materials, you can collect emails and send out digital copies of all the event materials before or after the event.
- Posting all the event materials to a website is also a great alternative!

Label Waste Bins and Encourage guests to use them properly

- This could be announcements throughout the event about your commitment to sustainability with instructions on how to sort waste.
- Have volunteers stationed at bins to help guests sort waste.

TIP! Make sure your site actually has trash AND recycling bins

STEP 7: CLEAN UP RESPONSIBLY

Properly dispose of everything!

Donate any leftovers or give them away at the end of the night

For smaller events: Organize composting food waste with Temple Community Gardens. Email at templevegetables@gmail.com

Turn off all electronics/lights before you leave!