Green Event Guide
Provided by Oregon State University Campus Recycling

Getting Started and Planning

- Set sustainability goals that your planning committee can all get behind. You may have one person coordinating the efforts, but you need everyone on board and on the same page.
- Find ways to communicate and display information electronically vs. using printed materials at planning meetings (e.g. send agendas electronically vs. printing them). If your meeting attendees want paper on which to take notes, keep a small stack of paper that has been printed on only one side, and offer it at meetings.
- Determine if and how you will measure your conservation efforts (energy saved, CO₂ avoided, water conserved, waste diverted, etc.). How will you determine if you have met your goals?

Marketing and Invites

- Make your sustainability goals part of your marketing plan! Publicize your sustainability goals and efforts on all marketing materials.
- Publicize your sustainability goals and efforts when communicating with attendees. Set expectations and provide tips about sustainability to attendees.
  - Sample: “Our goal is to make this a waste free event. Please help us reach our goal by refraining from handing out materials at your table that are not recyclable or compostable (if you need guidance on this, please email recycle@oregonstate.edu). For example, offer cookies on a platter with tongs or candy in a gumball machine, rather than individually wrapped items.”
- Set up online event registration vs. paper forms.
- Invite exhibitors/presenters and attendees using an electronic invitation, email or by phone.
- Promote your event electronically:
  - Email
  - E-invitations (e.g. Evite)
  - Email lists
  - Websites – put at least basic info on your website; see if other groups/departments will link to your page or calendar listing
  - MU TVs (fee required unless event is held in the MU); contact: Kent Sumner at Kent.Sumner@oregonstate.edu or 7–8511
  - Submit event listing to the OSU calendar (requires an ONID login) and Barometer calendar (fill out their online form)
  - Submit a public service announcement (PSA) to KBVR FM – download the PSA submission form and a guide to writing your PSA
  - Put messages, links, photos, etc. out over social media accounts (Facebook, Twitter, blogs, etc.) managed by your department or general OSU accounts
  - Send a slide to professors teaching relevant courses, requesting they put it up at the start of their class
- Promote your event verbally:
  - Schedule and make announcements in relevant courses
  - Make personal phone calls
  - Encourage word of mouth by generating buzz – talk it up with those you know and get them excited
- If/when printing promotional materials, choose wisely:
  - Print only what you need
  - Print double–sided
  - Request maximum recycled content
  - Request paper whitened without chlorine and favor white and pastels over brights
- Put a line on the bottom of your materials such as, “Printed on 100% recycled paper. Please recycle me after Dec. 20th.”
- Sustainability is a holistic concept that includes environmental, social, and economic considerations. Consider whether or not you are reaching everyone within your target audience and try to remove barriers to participation. Are they differently abled (contact Disability Access Services for help providing special accommodations)? Might your audience speak languages other than English? Might they need assistance meeting your registration fee? Do they need childcare? Think about the potential barriers to participation and try to accommodate as many as you can.

**Site Selection and Transportation**
- Choose a venue that offers “green” facilities:
  - If the site is off campus, will they be able to provide recycle or compost bins? Campus Recycling can generally only provide event recycling services for on-campus events.
  - Does the venue offer energy efficient lighting or appliances? Do its kitchens and restrooms have low flow fixtures?
  - Ask the venue these questions. Even if they do not offer these features, by requesting them, you are creating customer demand.
- Choose a site that fits your expected attendance – too large and you will use more energy to light and heat/cool than necessary.
- Select a location that is in close proximity to your target audience and accessible by bus, bicycle, or walking, to make alternative transportation more feasible.
- Promote alternative transportation to the event for both attendees and exhibitors/presenters:
  - Refer guests to Google Maps, which allows people to map directions by bike or alternative transportation. You could also identify the location of Corvallis Transit Services bus stops and route numbers, include a link to bus schedules in electronic marketing, and/or post schedules at your event for your guests’ convenience.
    - For example, Campus Recycling and Surplus hosts the Repair Fair once a term and adds directions to their warehouse by address, gives the bus stops that stop nearby, and provides a map of the warehouse location as well as directions on where to enter. Check out the blog post for the 2016 fall Repair Fair for an idea of how to set-up directions like this.
  - When choosing the time for your event, try to have it coincide with the bus schedule – you cannot ask your guests to ride the bus when it’s no longer running after your event ends!
  - Identify the location of nearby bike racks
  - If the location is unfamiliar to many, consider having someone volunteer to lead a bike caravan from a central spot out to the event.
  - Provide info for the Beaver Bus
  - Encourage carpooling by referring guests to the online rideshare program Drive Less Connect
  - Identify alternative transportation options before vehicle parking information, to signify the priority of the former.
- Work with Information Services to set up video conferencing for out-of-town presenters and attendees.

**Presenters and Performers**
- Support and showcase local talent – speakers, trainers, musicians, etc. – from OSU and the surrounding community.
- Seek out and invite exhibitors who use sustainable practices. Invite local sustainability groups from on and off campus to engage and educate your attendees.

**Event Materials**
- Post event material online or have people sign up to receive it via email, rather than printing copies for every attendee. If you must print something, make it small and include a web address for further info online.
- Rather than giving a program/handout to every attendee, hang a few large info posters at the event or place just one sheet per table. Think your attendees will need to take notes? Provide scrap paper (e.g. paper printed on only one side) as an option at the entrance or tables.
- When printing is needed, choose wisely:
• Print only what you need
• Print double-sided
• Request maximum recycled content
• Request paper whitened without chlorine and favor white and pastels over brights
• Put a line on the bottom of your materials such as, “Printed on 100% recycled paper whitened without chlorine. Please recycle when done with me.”
• OSU Printing and Mailing provides these options

• Borrow nametags from University Events. They are the 2.25” x 3.5” pin back, plastic fold-over style. Set up a way to collect them at the end of the event, such as asking guests to leave them on their table and/or having clearly labeled boxes at every exit. Prices are subject to change, but they will charge for nametags that are not returned.
  o As an example, for the 2016 Corvallis Sustainability Town Hall, we borrowed 500 nametag holders and 61 were not returned. We paid $9.15 to replace those that were lost, which is less than what we would have paid for 600 disposable, adhesive nametags.

• Decorate with materials that are reusable or at least recyclable/compostable:
  o University Events has a supply of borrowable items such as table centerpieces, easels and banners, which are free to borrow for campus events. Use their request form to borrow items.
  o Special Occasions also offers many rentable items (fee required).
  o Consider using décor to double as gifts, such as a vase centerpiece or potted plant that you offer to presenters or guests at the end of the event.
  o Use living plants, flowers, leaves, pinecones, branches, produce, etc. and compost them at the end of the event.

• If you are giving gifts to presenters, consider offering “experiences” such as tours or gift certificates to a local restaurant instead of trinkets. If this is not possible, hand out items that are useful, reusable, durable, and recyclable (branded reusable mugs/bottles, for example). When choosing an item, ask yourself where this item will be a year from now; if it’s likely the landfill, consider another gift.

• If you have vendors tabling at your event, discourage them from distributing candy and trinkets meant to draw people to the table, but are designed to be thrown away. This, particularly wrapped candy, is one of the biggest challenges to having a waste free event. As mentioned above, set expectations and provide tips about sustainability to exhibitors.
  o Sample: “Our goal is to make this a waste free event. Please help us reach our goal by refraining from handing out materials at your table that are not recyclable or compostable (if you need guidance on this, please email recycle@oregonstate.edu). For example, offer cookies on a platter with tongs or candy in a gumball machine, rather than individually wrapped items.”

• Last but certainly not least: place signage around your event highlighting your sustainability efforts. This is very important! You are making an impact by reducing your event’s environmental footprint; you are increasing your impact many times over if you’re also educating your guests on sustainable practices.

**Waste Collection**

• Campus Recycling provides recycling services for special events on campus
  o We can collect recyclables, compost, and trash
  o We provide bins and signs, and can help set them up
  o We pick up bins and ensure the material is sent to the right place
  o We can provide measurements of collected material if desired
  o We can train your volunteers, if you want to provide composting services at your event. Recycling station monitors are required as stated in OSU’s compost policy.
• Use our [online form](#) to make your request, or call the Recycling Manager at 7–2856.

**Food Service**

• Use Campus Recycling’s event recycling [online form](#) to request bins and service for recycling and composting. Recruit volunteers to staff recycling stations. If you would like help in training your volunteer waste station monitors, contact the Recycling Manager at 7–2856 and they will provide you with some training tools.
• Use reusable serving ware whenever financially possible – plates, bowls, silverware, mugs, glasses, linen napkins, tablecloths, etc. Contact OSU Catering for prices.
• When appropriate, consider asking your guests to bring their own serving ware set.
• When reusable serving ware is not a possibility, ensure that everything served is either compostable or recyclable – compostable plates/flatware/cups/napkins, and recyclable cans and bottles.
  o When you want to collect compost, make sure everything is fiber-based ONLY (fiber-based compostable service ware including cups, plates, knives, forks, spoons, etc. need to be certified by the Biodegradable Products Institute (BPI)). If you are interested in servicing for compost at your event, you will need people staffing your waste station(s) to help attendees sort in accordance with OSU’s compost policy. Monitors are responsible for instructing consumers on which materials are acceptable for recycling, composting, and trash/landfill.
  o To find out what items are accepted in the compost, visit OSU’s compost policy webpage or contact the Recycling Manager at 7-2856.
  o To find out what items are accepted in recycling, contact Campus Recycling or visit our OSU Recycle Guide for more information.
• If you’re serving small snacks rather than a meal, consider serving finger foods with napkins, which don’t require utensils or plates (this can help with portion control too, saving you on food costs).
• If ordering sack lunches to be eaten during a meeting, ask for a sackless lunch. Save a bag and label and give your guests a buffet instead. Side dishes such as chips can be served in big bowls instead of individual containers/packages.
• If you’re using a catering company, communicate very clearly what your sustainability goals are, plus include specific instructions regarding your waste reduction goals. When working with a caterer, you will likely need to provide very specific instructions and should inquire about possible fees.
  • Ask that all food service products (plates, cups, utensils, straws, etc.) be compostable (specifically labeled as fiber-based only and certified by the Biodegradable Products Institute (BPI)). Ask for bare toothpicks and no plastic wrap.
  • Ask that condiments and coffee service materials be served out of pitchers, pump bottles, pour jars, bowls, etc. – nothing individually wrapped or in packets.
  • If you’re encouraging guests to bring reusable mugs/bottles, request drink carafes be put on risers.
• Choose a caterer that composts food prep waste and donates un-served food (e.g. OSU Catering does both).
• Request as much local, seasonal, organic, and/or fair trade food as your budget allows.
• When requesting local, define local. Do you mean grown/produced in Oregon? Local? In Benton County?
  o Check out the UHDS Food Sourcing webpage for a list of all their local produce growers. Use this list for ideas on where you can get local produce for your event.
• Consider reducing or avoiding meat and other animal products from your menu (eating lower on food chain uses fewer natural resources, plus it is likely to save you money).

**Water**

• Serve tap water over bottled water whenever feasible.
  o It’s a healthy beverage
  o It’s local
  o It requires less water, electricity, and petroleum to produce and transport
  o It’s free
  o Check out this video and website if you would like more info on the impact of bottled water
• Find out if restroom sinks and toilets are low flow and label them as such.
• Want metrics? Contact the Sustainability Officer of the OSU Sustainability Office – for help in measuring water use at your event.

**Energy**

• Ask the venue if there are ways to reduce lighting use. Could some lights be turned on but not others? How might natural light be maximized?
• Work with the venue manager to regulate temperature. If you are having a lot of attendees in a relatively small space, consider requesting that the heat be turned down – save energy and your attendee’s comfort! Avoid having to open windows or doors to dump excess heat.
• Put projectors and other equipment on standby when not in use; give these instructions to whomever is running the AV equipment.
• Turn off lights and equipment when done at the venue, if no one is using the space immediately after you.
• OSU also has a solar trailer (a trailer with solar array on top and batteries below) to help power your on-campus, outdoor event. Request it using this online form. Contact the Sustainability Officer of the OSU Sustainability Office for more info.
• Purchase renewable energy for your event:
  o Bonneville Environmental Foundation, where OSU purchases its renewable energy, sells renewable energy credits at a very cost effective rate for campus facilities, typically less than $50 for most events. For more info, contact the Sustainability Officer of the OSU Sustainability Office.
  o The Pacific Power Blue Sky program can help “green” events by purchasing the equivalent amount of Renewable Energy Certificates to match the event’s kWh usage in exchange for a marketing opportunity (space for an info table, announcements, booth, presentation, etc.). For more info, contact their Outreach Coordinator, Lydia Fraser by email or phone (503-773-9652).
• Want metrics? Contact the Sustainability Officer of the OSU Sustainability Office for help in estimating or measuring electrical or natural gas use at your event.

Post-Event Evaluation and Reporting
• If you survey attendees about your event, incorporate questions about your sustainability efforts. Did they notice? Do they like the changes? Do they have suggestions?
• If you measured your conservation achievements, report them!
  o To exhibitors, presenters, and volunteers (and thank them for helping you)
  o To attendees if you’ve captured their contact info (and thank them for helping you)
  o To the media, by sending a media release

For More Information

Case Studies
Reports on greening past events can be accessed on Campus Recycling’s resource webpage.

Results
Event results and updates on other sustainability–related information can be found via our social media accounts:

facebook.com/osurecycling  twitter.com/osurecycling  instagram.com/osurecycling

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