

# Green Events Guidelines

When organizing a campus event, please consider adopting some or many of these “green” guidelines to help lower the impact that your event has on the Earth. Did you know that the plastic utensils that are thrown away after one use don’t break down for hundreds of years? Your grandchild’s grandchild’s grandchild could come across a fork that you used once at a party! As an alternative, use reusable utensils, plates, and glasses and help lower your environmental impact. Below you will find guidelines for organizing and implementing “green” events. Good luck!

## Communicating About Your Event

- Advertising
  - Print advertising for your event on recycled paper with soy-based inks.
  - Send invitations out digitally rather than printing and sending them through the U.S. mail.
  - Make information available online.
  - Allow for online RSVPs
  - Claim your glory – advertise your event as a “Green Event”
- Signage at Your Event
  - Post signage to clearly indicate what can and cannot be recycled. (Digital versions of this signage will be available from the Office of Sustainability’s website.)

## Decorating For Your Event

- Sustainable Decorations
  - Use decorations that you already own.
  - Look for non-plastic decorations; paper or fabric decorations can provide good alternatives.
  - Avoid plastic decorations, including one-use plastic table coverings (“cloths”), balloons
  - Avoid foam decorations.
  - Choose decorations that can be used again (and that likely will be)
  - Choose potted flowers or plants that can be used on campus at other events or planted in beds (make sure you collaborate with Facilities well in advance if this is your intent)

- Giveaways
  - Choose giveaways or “swag” that are made from more sustainable materials (metal, cloth, wood, etc.)
  - Choose giveaways that have sustainable messaging (e.g., a metal water bottle)
  - Choose giveaways that will not likely be thrown away once participants leave the event.
  - Let your participants know why you made the choices that you did to provide fewer/no/more sustainable giveaways.

### **Non-Catered Events**

- Recycling
  - Work with Sodexo and/or other caterers to ensure that recycling takes place at your campus events.
  - Provide recycling bins for staff to use as well as for guests.
  - Recycle all glass bottles, plastic bottles, recyclable plates and cups
  - Encourage guests to participate in our recycling efforts. It will help us and will help them feel that they are part of our cause.
- Composting
  - Work with Sodexo and/or other caterers to ensure that composting takes place at your campus events.
  - Compost all food, paper napkins, paper plates.
  - Encourage guests to participate in our composting efforts. It will help us and will help them feel that they are part of our cause.

### **Catered Events**

- Food Sourcing
  - Work with Sodexo and/or other caterers to provide organically grown foods (including vegetables, meats, dairy products) whenever possible and feasible.
  - If tea and coffee are provided, make sure they are Fair Trade certified and have low environmental impact (e.g., organic, shade grown, etc.)
  - Work with Sodexo to ensure that food provided is grown on farms that are committed to protecting the human rights of their farm workers.
  - Work with Sodexo and/or other caterers to provide whole foods that are prepared by the caterer (rather than processed foods that are reheated).

- Serve only tap water (no bottled water, which contains toxic chemicals and creates trash and/or recycling).
- Offer water bottle refill stations (or allow guests to refill their water bottles/glasses from pitchers that are at the event).
- Composting & Recycling
  - Request of the event caterer that recycling containers be made available at all events. Recycling bins should be larger than trash receptacles to provide a visible illustration of the campus' commitment to sustainability.
  - Request of the event caterer that, for events where food is served and taken away by staff, that a composting container be provided and that food be composted by Sodexo staff. Materials put into the compost would then be added to our compost at Wismer.
  - Request of the event caterer that all food-related materials used at events be reusable, compostable or recyclable.
- Food-related goods
  - Give priority to:
    - Reusable dishes, utensils, glasses
    - Washable linens (napkins and table cloths) rather than disposable.
    - Consider serving finger food rather than foods that require utensils.
  - Rent items that you need for your event rather than purchasing and throwing them away).
  - Ban Styrofoam cups and plates from your event.
  - Use paper plates rather than recyclable plastic plates if at all possible. These can be composted.
  - Use compostable utensils rather than throw-away plastic utensils.

## **Carbon Footprint at Your Event**

Many of these suggestions will lower your carbon footprint. We strongly support any efforts you make to lower the emissions that are associated with your event. Remember, there are emissions associated with food production, waste disposal, transportation, printing, shipping, production of goods, etc. The more you can do to act sustainably, the better off we all are!

**Thank you for your interest in and your efforts toward hosting a sustainable event here on the Ursinus College campus, or elsewhere!**

**Office of Sustainability, Ursinus College**

