



The GreenGatherings Sustainability Plan: A Guide to Greening Your Event

Overview

The purpose of the GreenGatherings Sustainability Plan is to help you, as an event planner, identify how you can make your next event more environmentally friendly. This guide has been designed to help you phase in green initiatives over time and identify what will work for you and your event.

How to Use the Plan

The guide includes seven key focus areas for your consideration when evaluating how to make your next event greener:

1. Recycling
2. Transportation
3. Energy
4. Food Waste/Organics
5. Local and Organic Food
6. Waste Reduction
7. Construction and Demolition

Each focus area has the following information included for your use and reference:

- **Goals:** Each focus area has one or more goals associated to it. Consider which goals will work best for you. There are also spaces for you to fill in a timeline and identify who will lead each task.
- **Responsibilities:** A list of specific responsibilities is associated to each goal, with spaces for you to keep track of completed tasks and notes.
- **Strategies:** The strategies included are useful tips to help you be successful in achieving your goals.
- **Resources:** A list of resources for each focus area with links to organizations that can provide additional assistance or information is also included.

If you're just getting started, read through the entire list and think about what focus areas and tasks will work for you and your event. Remember, greening doesn't happen all at once, so think about small steps that you can take to start. By focusing on attainable tasks at the beginning, you'll be able to work your way to a greener event in no time.

How to Tell Your Story

- Share your completed Sustainability Plan with GreenGatherings by sending it via email to info@rethinkrecycling.com.
- Fill out a Case Study form to share your greening experience with others looking to go green. The form is available online at www.rethinkrecycling.com/events.

Focus Area #1: RECYCLING

Goal #1: Manage aluminum cans, plastic bottles, cardboard and any other recyclables generated at your event as a resource by collecting and recycling them.

Timeline:

Person(s) Responsible:

Responsibilities

<u>Task</u>	<u>Done</u>	<u>Notes</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hire and manage recycling service provider 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitate procurement of recycling bins, either by purchasing them yourself or asking your service provider if they have bins available. 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Include recycling information in press packet and in materials provided to your vendors/exhibitors. 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor and evaluate recycling program 		

Strategies

<u>Strategy</u>	<u>Notes</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When arranging for recycling collection services, check first with the hauler providing your waste service. If they do not provide services, contract with a separate recycling collection service. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide easily identifiable recycling containers that are well labeled in English and any other language spoken by a majority of your attendees. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Select containers for bottle and can recycling that have holes big enough for recyclables, but small enough to discourage people throwing trash into the container. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Co-locate a recycling container with every trash container to make it convenient to recycle. 	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create consistent signage promoting recycling, throughout event. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide vendors and exhibitors information well in advance AND on the day of the event on how to recycle cardboard and other wastes from their operations. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stage recycling and trash storage containers ("dumpsters") provided by the recycling/trash hauler where event attendees will not have easy access, to avoid misuse of the containers. This may be on-site or off-site. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educate event participants and employees ahead of time through newsletters and information on website that there will be recycling at event. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Track your successes and lessons learned. Track how well the containers were used, the number of helpers overseeing the recycling system, how frequently containers needed servicing, how serious a problem contamination was, etc. to help make the next event more successful. 	

Resources

- **Technical Assistance**
 - Minnesota Pollution Control Agency: www.pca.state.mn.us
- **Purchase of Additional Recycling Containers**
 - RAM (Recycling Association of Minnesota): www.recycleminnesota.org
- **Lists of Recycling Service Providers**
 - Rethink Recycling: <http://www.rethinkrecycling.com/businesses/waste-management-guide/recycling-pick-services>

Focus Area #2: TRANSPORTATION

Goal #1: Encourage participants to arrive at event using alternative transportation—such as biking, walking, riding the bus, or carpooling.

Timeline:

Person(s) Responsible:

Responsibilities		
<u>Task</u>	<u>Done</u>	<u>Notes</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research available bicycle, pedestrian, and transit options 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include transportation information (such as links to Metro Transit’s trip planner, bike maps, and walking maps) in all event communications such as in the press packet and on event website 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research options for providing bike racks to attendees, either through purchase or promoting existing racks 		
Strategies		
<u>Strategy</u>	<u>Notes</u>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Note bike rack locations on festival map or website. 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage and promote the use of Park and Ride and ridesharing and provide information and maps on website. 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider holding your event at a location easily accessible by public transit 		
Resources		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bicycle Racks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ DERO (local company bicycle rack manufacturer): www.dero.com • Local Transit Resources <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Metro Transit: www.metrotransit.org <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Trip Planner: http://metrotransit.org/tripPlanner/Default.aspx ◦ St. Paul Smart Trips: http://www.smart-trips.org/ ◦ Biking and Walking Maps <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ http://www.smart-trips.org/maps.php ▪ http://www.stpaul.gov/index.asp?NID=1212 		

Focus Area #3: ENERGY

Goal #1: Implement energy reduction measures at your event		
Timeline:		
Person(s) Responsible:		
Responsibilities		
<u>Task</u>	<u>Done</u>	<u>Notes</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research available venues for event that are powered by renewable energy or purchase green power for your event. • 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement energy reduction measures at your event/venue 		
Strategies		
<u>Strategy</u>	<u>Notes</u>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use energy efficient lighting 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purchase renewable energy credits (RECs) 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lower thermostat for event (if indoors) 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote use of revolving doors at event (if available and indoors) 		
Goal #2: Encourage vendors to use alternative fuels and technologies to power vehicles and equipment needed for the event.		
Timeline:		
Person(s) Responsible:		
Responsibilities		
<u>Task</u>	<u>Done</u>	<u>Notes</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Survey vendors on current alternative fuels and technology use 		

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research and provide information on alternative fuels and energy to vendors 		
Strategies		
<u>Strategy</u>	<u>Notes</u>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide information to vendors in vendor packets on alternative fuels and technologies for event energy needs, such as generators powered by bio-fuel. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Highlight cost-benefit information 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide a sign to vendors who have indicated a use of alternative fuels and technologies in vendor packets for display at their booth. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sign will indicate to event participants that vendor is using alternative fuels and technologies. 		
Resources		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alternative Fuels and Technology <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minnesota Renewable Energy Society: http://www.mnrenewables.org/ Minnesota Environmental Initiative: http://www.mn-ei.org/ 		

Focus Area #4: FOOD WASTE MANAGEMENT

Goal #1: Educate event vendors on and implement food waste recycling program for vendors		
Timeline:		
Person(s) Responsible:		
Responsibilities		
<u>Task</u>	<u>Done</u>	<u>Notes</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluate service providers for collection of food waste and paper products for composting. 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Include question on vendor survey and information in vendor packet on program 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hire and manage composting service provider 		

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research options for procuring compostable dinnerware if necessary and coordinate joint purchase if possible. 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include information on program in press packet 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor and evaluate composting program 		

Strategies

<u>Strategy</u>	<u>Notes</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask potential service providers about: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specific experience with events • End markets for food waste recycling (e.g. composting, food to hogs) 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include the following items in service provider contract once service provider has been selected: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vendor is responsible for providing and placing bins, monitoring bins throughout the event and emptying as needed, transporting materials to end market • Pricing • Insurance coverage 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop education piece to include in vendor packet on food waste collection plan to be implemented. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include cost-benefit and environmental benefit information. • Include contact information for vendors to send in questions 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Execute contract with service provider for collection of food waste from vendors. Work with service provider to implement food waste recycling program with vendors. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If using food composting as your food waste recycling option, explore options for joint procurement of compostable serving ware for all food vendors at event. If joint procurement is not available, plan to implement a ban on non-compostable serving ware. 	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include education piece in vendor packet on implementation of food waste collection plan. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include information on joint procurement or ban on non-compostable serving ware. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include question on vendor exit survey on food waste recycling program and how it worked for the vendors. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluate success of program through vendor exit survey and data from service provider. Evaluate expanding program to event participants. 	

Goal #2: Expand food waste recycling program for food waste created by event participants.

Timeline:

Person(s) Responsible:

Responsibilities

<u>Task</u>	<u>Done</u>	<u>Notes</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with food waste recycling services provider to expand program to event attendees 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include information on program in press packet 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor and evaluate composting program 		

Strategies

<u>Strategy</u>	<u>Notes</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand contract with service provider for collection of food waste to include food and paper waste from event participants. Work with service provider to implement food waste recycling program with participants, including providing receptacles. 	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include education piece in vendor packet on expansion of food waste collection plan to include event participants. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide education on the new program via newsletter articles, press release, signage at the event, etc., to event participants. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where containers are provided, containers for all items (compostable food/paper waste, recycling, trash) should be clustered together. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide clear and consistent signage throughout the event regarding what to separate. 	
Resources	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technical Assistance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Ramsey County: http://www.co.ramsey.mn.us/ph/ • Service Providers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Rethink Recycling: http://www.rethinkrecycling.com/businesses/waste-management-guide/materials-name/food • Case Study <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ 2002 SWMCB/Carver Co. report on project in Carver County with PGA Golf tour: http://www.swmcb.org/files/PGAFinalReport.pdf 	

FOCUS AREA #5: LOCAL AND ORGANIC FOOD

Goal #1: Encourage and facilitate the use of local/regional and seasonal food or organic foods from local chefs, farmers and distributors.		
Timeline:		
Person(s) Responsible:		
Responsibilities		
<u>Task</u>	<u>Done</u>	<u>Notes</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include question on vendor survey on local and organic food use 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide resources on local and organic food in vendor packet 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research and procure local food options if selecting event menu yourself 		

Strategies	
Strategy	Notes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a sign to food vendors who have indicated a use of local and/or organic food in vendor packets for display at their booth. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sign will indicate to event participants that vendor is serving local and/or organic food. • Highlight community support angle where local food is used 	
Resources	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Food Sources <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Heartland Food Network Marketplace: www.heartlandfoodnetwork.org ○ Minnesota GROWN Directory: http://www.mda.state.mn.us/food/minnesotagrown/ 	

FOCUS AREA #6: WASTE REDUCTION

Goal #1: Implement waste reduction practices at your event		
Timeline:		
Person(s) Responsible:		
Responsibilities		
Task	Done	Notes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluate potential waste reduction strategies that can be implemented at your event 		
Strategies		
Strategy	Notes	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use technology to minimize paper waste (e.g. electronic press kit, electronic registration) 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use reusable plates, silverware and linens 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use reusable decorations or signs 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get and accurate count of attendees and design menus in a way that reduces waste (e.g. finger foods) 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use reusable nametags 		

Resources

- Reduce.org: www.reduce.org
- RethinkRecycling: <http://www.rethinkrecycling.com/businesses/reduce-reuse-recycle>

FOCUS AREA #7: CONSTRUCTION AND DEMOLITION

Goal #1: Implement environmentally friendly construction and demolition practices at your event

Timeline:

Person(s) Responsible:

Responsibilities

<u>Task</u>	<u>Done</u>	<u>Notes</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Evaluate potential environmentally friendly construction and demolition strategies that can be implemented at your event		

Strategies

<u>Strategy</u>	<u>Notes</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use recyclable materials for temporary structures	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Donate demolition materials	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Rent temporary structures instead of constructing them	

Resources

- Minnesota Recycled Products Directory: <http://www.pca.state.mn.us/oea/RPDIR/index.cfm>
- Minnesota Materials Exchange: <http://mnexchange.org/>
- Green Institute: <http://www.greeninstitute.org/>
- The ReUse Center: <http://www.thereusecenter.com/>
- The Deconstruction Institute: <http://www.deconstructioninstitute.com/>
- Building Materials Reuse Association: <http://www.buildingreuse.org/>