



OHIO UNIVERSITY GREEN EVENTS GUIDE 2021



OHIO GREEN EVENTS GUIDE

Make the commitment to “Green” your event!

Today, heightened pressure on our environment’s limited resources is harming the ecosystems they sustain and creating environmental injustices in every corner of the globe. A significant source of this pressure comes from our throw-away culture, especially the single-use items that have become commonplace for their low-cost convenience. This is particularly true for events. Packaging-dependent food choices, plastic bottles, disposable service ware, marketing giveaways, and guest transportation are just some aspects of an event that create waste directly or indirectly. These options also accumulate indirect costs for both event hosts and attendees that could be avoided. We now know that the costs of our choices stretch far beyond their single use. Hosting a “Green Event” is one way to manage event choices responsibly and thoughtfully to minimize environmental impacts.

Green Events focus on integrating sustainability into every step of the event process. This means that the environmental, social, and economic aspects are considered, and adaptations are made to reduce negative impacts. A goal of achieving “zero waste” is central to Green Events, which is defined as diverting 90% of waste from landfills through recycling and composting. This guide will help Ohio University students, organizations, staff, departments, and community groups host Green Events on campus.

By following the simple suggestions in this guide, you can easily demonstrate your organization’s or department’s commitment to the environment, showcase responsible practices, and help reduce the University’s waste footprint. Your Green Event choices will create a lasting impression on attendees and encourage them to make environmentally- conscious choices as well! Contact the Ohio University Office of Sustainability for a free Green Event consultation or organizational training as you plan your event by emailing sustainability@ohio.edu.

Thank you for your efforts in promoting sustainable choices at Ohio University!

VENUE SELECTION



Consider the following ideas for choosing a more sustainable event venue:

- Reserve an **outdoor space** to reduce energy usage.
- Reserve a space in a LEED-certified building
 - ‘LEED’ stands for Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design, and it is awarded to buildings that use resources efficiently in construction, operation, and maintenance.
 - Ohio University has several LEED-certified buildings with event space, including Schoonover, Tupper Hall, McCracken, Grover Center, Jefferson Hall, and Nelson Commons.
- Choose a location with **natural lighting**, so it is possible to open blinds and turn off the lights.
- Choose a **central location** that attendees can walk, bike, or use public transportation to get to.
- Remember to **turn off the lights** when rooms or spaces are not in use.
- Reserve venues on campus from:
 - Event Services
 - Campus Recreation
 - Ohio University’s Registrar’s Office Astra Scheduling
 - Ohio University Athletics



Selecting a “Green” venue can serve as an educational opportunity for teaching attendees sustainability practices!

FOOD SELECTION

Whether you are using OHIO Catering or working with a local vendor, consider the following tips to maximize sustainable choices:

☐ **Explain your Green Event goals** when ordering food and make sure your food supplier is committed to helping you achieve those goals.

- If using OHIO Catering, request a “Zero Waste Event”.
- Note: If your event is planned for an Ohio University venue and you are budgeting more than \$250 for food, you are required to use OHIO Catering.

Exemptions to this policy are possible by filling out the “Food Policy Exemption Form”.

☐ Food and beverage selection

- Request **seasonal and local foods** to reduce transportation emissions.

OHIO Catering offers local and seasonal options from the Student Farm and other nearby farms!

Contact the Senior Catering Manager at 740-566-0933 at least one week in advance of your event to request local options.

- Go **vegetarian or vegan!** Plant-based products have a lower carbon footprint.
- Consider supplementing the dishes with **locally sourced** foods to support local farming. Make sure to discuss with OHIO Catering if you choose to do so.



Plastic products are produced from petroleum and can take more than 1,000 years to break down. Using plant-based or reusable products is a much more sustainable option!

FOOD SELECTION



□ Waste reduction

- Request **buffet-style displays** instead of individually packaged foods or boxed lunches to reduce packaging waste.
- Consider serving appetizers or small bites that only require serving utensils, if hand sanitizer or hand-washing is available.
- Request **containers of bulk beverages** (e.g., lemonade, iced tea, water) instead of cans or bottles.
- Request **reusable china or compostable service ware** for your order.
- Avoid all polyethylene products (a.k.a. Styrofoam), or anything that is not recyclable or compostable.
- Request **linens** instead of paper napkins when possible.
- Request to serve condiments in **pumps/refillable containers** rather than in individual packets (e.g., ketchup, salt and pepper, sugar).
- If serving coffee, offer creamer in **pitchers** to reduce single-use containers and request **wooden stir sticks** instead of plastic.
- Make sure you have ordered the correctly sized recycling, compost, and landfill bins for your event. You can find more information about this process in the **waste management** section.

DECORATIONS

Your event décor can leave a lasting, positive impression on your guests. Consider the suggestions below to decorate in a sustainable, low-waste way:

Replace single-use decorations with **reusable items**.

- Tablecloths, napkins, and more are available for **rent** from OHIO Catering and local vendors.
- Consider using **live plants** rather than cut flowers for centerpieces. These can be repurposed post-event as event giveaways, donations to nursing homes, or similar.

Plants can be purchased from a variety of local vendors.

- If cut flowers are preferred, check with Event Services on who is using the venue before/after your events and see if you can **share centerpieces** to reduce waste and share the cost!

Organizations, such as Flower Power Gives and the I Do Crew, also coordinate donations of cut flowers from events to local nursing homes.

Connect with OHIO Catering or local vendors for floral arrangements in reusable containers.

- Invest in **reusable** nametags with customizable inserts.

Put out a basket and sign at the end of the day to collect nametags holders to be reused at future events.

- If using lanyards, collect them at the end of the event for reuse. Your attendees will thank you!
- Printing Services can create a customized tablecloth or sign for your organization or department that can be reused many times.
- Try **making your own** decorations! Check out our Pinterest page for ideas: <https://www.pinterest.com/sustainableou/>.

Use only **compostable or recyclable decorations** if single-use decorations are necessary.

- Avoid balloons, Styrofoam, unnecessary plastics, etc.
- If you are a student organization, remember that you cannot use SAC funding for your events if you plan to use single-use products (anything not compostable or reusable).

Email sac@ohio.edu with specific questions on what they will fund.



Investing in reusable decorations is more cost effective long term and more visually appealing!

HANDOUTS

Handouts are very common at events, but are expensive to print or procure, inconvenient for event attendees to carry around, and produce a lot of waste. Thankfully, there are ways to do things differently. Try some of these ideas at your next event:

- Consider dry-erase whiteboards or digital display monitors for agendas or directional signage instead of printouts.
- Employ a conference app that can **electronically** house all of your event information for attendees.
- Encourage attendees (especially vendors or organizations with informational or activity stations) to **seek alternatives** to handing out landfill-destined giveaways. This could include:
 - Condense all advertising information into a single handout flyer or posting the information and links on the organizer's central website.
 - Send out an email following the event with each party's information instead of printing attendee contact lists.
 - Pass out a flash drive containing relevant information or contacts; attendees can reuse the flash drive in the future for other purposes.

Remember: providing attendees with a branded item with long-term utility is better for the vendor's marketing purposes.

- Have a single copy of a flyer for attendees to take photos of.
- Minimize printing by:
 - Ensure unavoidable printing is double sided.
 - Make power point presentations handouts have multiple slides per sheet.
 - Share power point presentations electronically post-conference.
- If handouts are distributed, make them **meaningful and reusable** – well-thought out giveaways will leave a lasting impression and are more sustainable.



WASTE MANAGEMENT

A well-planned event can minimize waste by reducing use of single-use items and reusing event supplies. For any waste that is produced, proper waste separation is **essential** for diverting waste from the landfill and turning it into a resource. Campus Recycling at Ohio University is available to help implement your event's waste management goals.

Request **compost** and **recycling** bins for your event from Campus Recycling by filling out an online Facilities Work Request.

- Visit www.ohio.edu/facilites and follow the prompts for a Work Request.
- Select 'Maintenance, Grounds, Recycling, Pest Control Requests'.
- Select the location for your event from the drop-down box.
- Complete the form fields and be sure to include the following information:

Date and start and end times of the event

A note if your event will be multiple days

The anticipated number of attendees

For compost service, provide detailed information about your catering choice (packaging, condiments, quantity, etc.)

Where you would like the bins to be placed

Desired pick up and drop off times

What can be recycled?

- Ohio University has mixed-stream recycling for paper, glass, metal, cardboard, aluminum foil, and plastics #1-7. For a current list of accepted materials, visit: www.ohio.edu/recycle.

Keep all liquids and food waste out of the recycling.



Paper



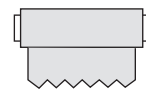
Glass



Aluminum



Cardboard



Aluminum Foil



Plastic #1-7

Even though the university cannot currently compost 'compostable' products, using non-petroleum based products still reduces pressure on natural resources and damage from mining.

WASTE MANAGEMENT

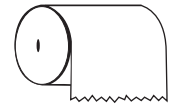
□ What can be composted?

- ONLY food waste and napkins are accepted in the compost bins. Compostable products (such as clamshells, compostable plastics, etc.) are NOT currently accepted.

Make sure no plastics or other packaging end up in the compost bin.



Food



Paper Towels

□ It is extremely important to **separate waste correctly** and **not contaminate waste streams**. Here are some strategies to encourage proper disposal:

- Strategically place compost, recycling, and landfill bins around the venue in **highly visible and trafficked areas**. Keep the three options together with **proper signage** to maximize attendee awareness.
- For larger events, consider recruiting volunteer “Bin Goalies” to assist at “Zero Waste Stations” to help attendees select the appropriate bin for their waste.

Many on-campus student organizations, such as the Climate and Sustainability Ambassadors, are eager to find volunteer opportunities.

- Have the MC, DJ, or event organizer announce your event’s commitment to reducing its environmental impact and how guests can utilize composting and recycling bins. Encourage multiple announcements of this sort, especially if guests are arriving and leaving throughout.

□ Remember to **budget** for recycling and composting bins in your planning.

- Student Organizations can order bins for **half price!**

Attendee education is essential for effectively diverting waste. Make sure signage is clearly displayed and don't be shy in your event announcements to encourage attendees to embrace your Green Event goals!



TRANSPORTATION



In order to make the event more accessible, remember to publicize inexpensive and convenient ways to travel to the event. Expecting attendees to travel in personal vehicles contributes to harmful greenhouse gas emissions and excludes those who do not have access to a car. Here are some strategies to utilize sustainable transportation options:

In your event publicity, encourage your attendees to:

- **Walk**

- **Bike**

Check with the Office of Sustainability on coordinating a Bike Valet Service.

- Take an **e-scooter**

- **Carpool**

- Use **public transportation** (e.g., Athens Public Transit (APT), Campus Area Transit System (CATS), statewide bus systems, such as GoBus, OHIO Transportation Airport Shuttles)

- Use OHIO's **sustainable transportation** options (e.g., Green Cab, Zipcar, Campus Fleet Leaf & Volt)

- Use a **ridesharing** service (such as Lyft or a carpooling app)

Take transportation options into consideration when selecting your venue. Locations that can be accessed by a variety of the above services give attendees more **flexibility** in travelling to your event.

Consider purchasing “carbon offset credits” from a third-party to indirectly reduce greenhouse gas emissions produced during the event and support local carbon sequestration projects.

PROMOTIONS & MARKETING

Promoting your event is important for its success. Promoting it as a Green Event can have a positive impact on attendance, as well as spread awareness for sustainability. Try these tips to reduce waste in promotions:

Electronic invitations:

- There are many **online services** that can be used to send out electronic invitations.
- Encourage guests to RSVP online—especially for meals—so you can plan and order your food and supplies accordingly.
- Publicize the **green transportation options** for transportation to your venue.

Promotions:

- OHIO Compass online news source: www.ohio.edu/news
- OHIO event calendar: www.ohio.edu/calendar
- BobcatConnect
- Social media
- Email
- Digital display boards around campus and in Baker Center (contact Event Services to reserve)

Coordinate **sidewalk chalking** near your venue. Ask a student organization to assist!

- University policy has the following requirements for sidewalk chalking:

It can only be done by student organizations, faculty and staff, or registered students of Ohio University.

Only water-soluble sidewalk chalk can be used.

Only chalk on horizontal surfaces not covered by an overhang.

With the exception of Morton hill, only chalk on concrete or asphalt surfaces.

Avoid date stamping your signage. Try “Event Today” signage that can be reused for recurring events.

REGISTERING YOUR EVENT

Get credit for all of your hard work! Register your Green Event on the Office of Sustainability's website (www.ohio.edu/sustainability) after you have decided on your event details. This helps Ohio University track Green Events and offer planning assistance if necessary.

EVENT CLEAN UP

As an event planner, you've already mastered organization. Post-event details are just as important! Remember these tips for post-event success:

- ❑ Thank attendees for coming and participating in your Green Event! Please consider sharing attendee feedback with the Office of Sustainability's Green Events program at sustainability@ohio.edu.
- ❑ Dispose of compost, recycling, and landfill waste properly as coordinated with your host/venue manager and Campus Recycling.
- ❑ **Save and properly store** any decorations and signage that can be reused in the future. This is especially important for student organizations that may have rotating leadership.
- ❑ **Spread the message of sustainability** with friends and colleagues and encourage them to make their next event Green!



THANK YOU!

Thank you for taking a stand for the environment and promoting sustainability and zero waste practices at Ohio University. Your actions not only preserve precious resources, but also inspire others to practice sustainability in their own lives. The widespread impact of your efforts and environmental consciousness is immeasurable.

Resources & More Information

- Ohio EPA Green Events Resources:
<https://epa.ohio.gov/Portals/41/recycling/Green%20Ribbon%20Exhibits%20March2014.pdf>
<https://epa.ohio.gov/Portals/41/recycling/Sustainable%20Events%20Guide%20March%202014.pdf>
- Ohio University Catering Services:
<https://www.ohio.edu/food/catering>
- Ohio University Classroom Scheduling:
<https://www.ohio.edu/registrar/classroom-scheduling>
- Ohio University Events Calendar:
<https://calendar.ohio.edu/>
- Ohio University Event Services:
<https://www.ohio.edu/student-affairs/event-services>
- Ohio University Moving & Surplus Equipment Rentals:
<https://www.ohio.edu/moving-surplus/rent>
- Ohio Zero Waste Pinterest Page:
<https://www.pinterest.com/ohiozerowaste/?eq=ohiozerowaste&etslf=3560>
- The City of Columbus Green Event Guide:
https://www.columbus.gov/uploadedFiles/Columbus/Programs/Get_Green/Sustainable_Columbus/Green%20Events%20Guide.PDF
- The Events Industry Council's Centre for Sustainable Events:
<https://www.eventscouncil.org/Sustainability/CSE>
- The Office of Sustainability's Pinterest Page:
<https://www.pinterest.com/sustainableou/>