



Sustainable Events Guide

CORNELL UNIVERSITY | CAMPUS SUSTAINABILITY OFFICE

Expanded details for each of these actions can be found on the [Sustainable Events Certification and Guide website](#)

Event Location & Transportation

- Choose a venue that is one of 30 Cornell [LEED-certified buildings](#) or has other sustainability features like natural light
- [Choose a venue](#) near a TCAT stop and/or [EV charging locations](#)
- Recommend or provide local accommodations that minimize travel distance for multi-day events
- Encourage sustainable transportation, including buses, biking, walking, or [carpooling](#)
- Remote or hybrid participation options are available
- Offset the carbon footprint of participants' travel to and from the event by [purchasing carbon offsets](#). Consider offsetting emissions from the entire event

Food and Beverage

- Pick a menu that is primarily plant-based, locally produced, [in-season](#), or eco-certified (Organic, free-range, fair trade, [Monterey Bay Seafood Watch standard](#))
- Select the caterer based on [sustainability criteria](#)
- Serve food buffet style or bite-size/finger food style
- Serve beverages in bulk
- Supply reusable plates and serving materials through the caterer or [Dish Truck](#)
- If disposable service is needed, only offer [materials recyclable in Tompkins County](#)
- Avoid over-ordering food by requiring event registration
- Encourage attendees to take home leftover food
- Develop a backup food redistribution plan for any leftover food

Event Marketing & Communication

- Request in pre-event communication that event attendees bring their own reusable service ware and bottles to enjoy food and drinks or Tupperware to bring home leftover food
- Inquire into attendee dietary restrictions and accessibility needs during event registration
- Announce instructions at the beginning of the event for how to landfill, recycle, and compost at the venue
- Announce at the beginning of the event a land acknowledgment
- Promote only using paper-free marketing methods, including social media, LCD screens, chalk, listservs
- Any printed material is on FSC-certified, unlaminated, half/quarter sheets, or double-sided paper
- Purchase reusable materials like banners & tablecloths and avoid using one-time dates or slogans
- Add sustainable event certification logo on event promotions

Purchasing

- Replace material prizes (i.e., swag, giveaways, or low-quality merchandise) with experiences, food, or gift certificates to campus vendors or local sustainable business
- Ensure that any purchased items are useful to attendees
- Most items are purchased from vendors with a public commitment to sustainability
- Most items purchased are eco-certified (e.g., climate pledge friendly, Fair Trade)

Waste

- Request proper landfill and recycling bins from R5
- Ask the caterer to compost behind-the-scenes or book a Compost Crew to provide front-of-house compost services
- Post [well-labeled signage](#) above waste bins to prevent contamination

