

# SPRING 2021

## COLGATE OAK EVENT CHECKLIST

Do you want to green your next event\* and achieve Oak Event Certification? Embrace these six principles to reduce waste and advance sustainability at your next event. Your guests will appreciate it.

\*We understand that events may look different this semester, so please disregard sections of the checklist that do not apply to your event. As per University guidelines, all Oak certified events still must comply with the Commitment to Community Health.

### 1) **ACCESSIBILITY AND DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION CONSIDERATIONS**

- Ensure that your event is accessible to all individuals, considering any disabilities that may prevent certain individuals from accessing your event.
  - Consider offering a Zoom recording of any events that individuals can access should they be unable to access any in-person event.
  - Consider offering closed captioning for virtual events or providing an ASL interpreter for any in-person events.
- Track the participation in your event in order to determine if any groups are being excluded from your event, whether intentionally or unintentionally.
  - Consider having a Gate Card check in that will allow you to better understand what demographics are attending your event.
  - Consider collecting other demographic information in post-event surveys.
- Ensure that your event is properly recognizing any of the necessary citations for any part of your event.
  - This could include recognizing the IP rights of any citations, as well as preparing a land acknowledgement statement to be read at the beginning of your event.
    - If needed, request help from the sustainability office and a land acknowledgement statement will be provided to you.
- Encourage the use of pronouns during any introductions.
- Communicate and publicize your event through at least two other campus partners to promote accessibility for all individuals.

### 2) **REDUCE OR ELIMINATE DISPOSABLES**

- Use paperless signs and posters.
  - Tip: Distribute posters as PDFs/ in JPG format and use the Colgate App and [Campus Calendar](#) to advertise events instead of printing posters.
  - We recommend using platforms like [canva.com](#) to create specially formatted posts for each type of social media in order to increase the reach of advertising and eliminate the need for physical posters.
  - Create generic posters that can be laminated for use at future events.

- Email information/programming/reference material prior to meeting instead of printing hard copies.

### **3) SOURCE LOCAL & SUSTAINABLE FOOD & BEVERAGES**

- Work with [Campus Dining Services](#) to feature local foods on your menu.
- Reduce meat options, especially red meat, and offer more vegetarian and vegan options.
- Provide food with high nutritional value (e.g. soup and salad instead of pizza) and offer a variety of options to accommodate dietary needs and restrictions.
- Ensure coffee is [Fair Trade](#) and/or [Rainforest Alliance Certified](#)

### **4) USE EARTH-FRIENDLY & SOCIALLY-RESPONSIBLE PRODUCTS**

- Opt for biodegradable choices over plastics (e.g. nametags, dinnerware).
  - Use stickers as name-tags instead of opting for a plastic option.
- Support women and minority-owned businesses.
- Only offer useful giveaway items that are reusable, recyclable, or biodegradable.

### **5) REDUCE WASTE AND RECYCLE**

- Feature bottle & cans recycling, paper recycling, and landfill waste bins.
  - We recommend you post signage on a wall above bins or on the lids of the bins themselves.
  - Request recycling bins for our two-stream recycling system in your work order (one for paper, one for bottles and cans).
- Create signage with event-specific waste disposal guidelines to help guests.
  - Tip: Contact the Office of Sustainability to borrow recycling signage specific to the items served at your event ([sustainability@colgate.edu](mailto:sustainability@colgate.edu)).
- Composting options are available for large campus events.
- Use a Google Form, [sign-up sheet](#), E-vite (such as paperless post) or Facebook events to ensure that you are not ordering excess food. For all unavoidable print materials use 100% post-consumer recycled or scrap paper and print double-sided to reduce waste.

### **6) ALTERNATIVE TRANSPORTATION**

- Choose event locations and accommodations based on your participants' needs.
  - If your event attendees are predominantly Colgate staff, faculty, or students, hold your event on campus. Campus attendees will save on both gas and wear on their vehicles.
- Support zero-emission transportation.
  - Encourage participants to walk or bike to the event by choosing an easily accessible location and highlight access to secure bicycle storage during the event.
- Plan your event during downtimes (after classes and regular hours) for students and faculty. This will help give attendees more time to get to the event and not have to opt to drive or choose more convenient/last minute travel methods.

- ❑ Use alternatives to face-to-face meetings.
  - ❑ Use Google Hangouts or Zoom to video call guest speakers or use telephone calls to reduce the cost and commuter emissions.
  - ❑ Refer to ITS's [Event Support page](#) for more information on how to pursue these options.

## **WHY ARE THESE IMPORTANT?**

### **Reducing and Eliminating Disposables**

- Reducing and eliminating disposables from your event will help to greatly reduce the amount of waste produced and environmental impact that your event has.
- Creating paperless signs and posters will also reduce the overall amount of waste that your event produces. Virtual notifications and advertisements can also be just as effective in disseminating information about your event!

### **Sourcing Local or Sustainable Food and Beverages**

- Serving locally sourced foods and beverages reduces that amount of fossil fuels that are produced in the transportation of food.
- Serving food buffet style prevents serving pre-packaged foods, which are often wrapped in wasteful single-use plastics.
- Ensuring that coffee is Fair Trade or Rainforest Alliance Certified assures that your purchase is environmentally friendly and benefits the farmers and their communities.
- Encouraging BYO events helps to prevent waste that is associated with disposable utensils and other materials at events.

### **Using Earth-Friendly and Socially Responsible Products**

- Utilizing biodegradable products, instead of plastics, allows them to be more easily disposed of, making them more environmentally friendly.
- Only offering reusable products for any giveaways prevents items from being wasted after your event ends.

### **Reducing Waste and Recycling**

- Featuring bottles and cans, paper, and landfill bins helps to encourage recycling, prevent recycling contamination, and prevent unnecessary wastes.
- Having composting at your event greatly benefits your ability to prevent as much waste as possible, including food waste.
- Having RSVP's or a sign-up sheet helps to prevent ordering too much food and works to prevent large amounts of food waste.

### **Accessibility and Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion Considerations**

- Ensuring that your event is accessible to all individuals ensures that your event is being as equitable as possible, a core tenet of social sustainability.

- Tracking participation in your event is another way to ensure that your event is being as equitable as possible, and provides you the opportunity to correct any oversight in terms of accessibility.
- Acknowledging any necessary citations is a good way to make sure that your event is properly recognizing any bodies or organizations that play a significant role in your event, even if you weren't aware of their role beforehand.

### **Alternative Transportation**

- Choosing the event location based on participants' needs helps to prevent unnecessary travel and greenhouse gas emissions.
- Planning your event time around participants' schedules allows your event to be more accessible and prevent participants from having to resort to last minute, less environmentally friendly sources of travel, like driving.
- Arranging a carpool form allows participants from further away to reduce the amount of greenhouse gas emissions that they produce in their travel to your event.
- Using alternatives to face to face meetings, like Zoom and other virtual events, is the best way to eliminate waste and any unnecessary environmental impacts from your event.