Sustainable Event Planning at Knox College

Choose five or more of these actions to make your next event more sustainable.

Food & Drinks

Caterers/Food Trucks

- ☐ Choose a caterer or food source that supports sustainable options, like Bon Appetit at Knox.
- ☐ Communicate with your caterers about how and why you would like to host a more sustainable event.

Menu options

- ☐ Create a plant-powered menu with primarily vegetarian and vegan options.
- ☐ Provide fresh and healthy menu options, including **local** & seasonal produce grown or produced within 150 miles. If catering through Bon Appetit, ask about the possibility to use Knox farm produce.
- ☐ Look for eco-certified labels to serve more sustainable foods, like certified organic, free-range, fair trade. For reference, look at these guides from EcoWatch or Spruce Eats

Packaging

- ☐ Choose to serve food & beverages plated or buffet-style to avoid individually packaged items.
- ☐ Avoid offering individual single use bottles of water and other items with lots of packaging. Encourage people to bring their own beverage containers or provide cups from the RE-USE kit that people can refill in nearby water filling stations.

Serviceware

- ☐ Avoid single-use disposable utensils/dishes (paper, plastic, styrofoam) and/or encouraging attendees to bring their own reusable beverage bottles, utensils, and containers.
- ☐ Choose the RE-USE kit provided by the Office of Sustainability. The RE-USE KIt can accommodate 60 individuals and includes reusable plates, bowls, cups, and utensils).
- ☐ Request caterer or delivery service to not include disposable items like utensils, cups, plates, and condiments. Request other options.
- ☐ If single use utensils/dishes are needed, use BPI certified compostable materials and ensure you are providing and managing compost receptacles at the event (more information in the waste section).
- ☐ If reusables and compostables aren't accessible for your event, buy dishes and/or utensils recyclable in Galesburg or made from 100% recycled content.

Food Waste/Food Recovery
- ☐ Avoid over-ordering food by requiring event registration
- ☐ Recover any leftover food
    - ☐ Encourage attendees to take home leftover food that hasn't been put out.
    - ☐ Communicate with the Office of Sustainability to get a food scrap compost bucket and/or choose to participate in the [Community Scale Composting Program](#)
    - ☐ Event organizers should contact FRN or the [Office of Sustainability](#) if leftover food is anticipated. Individually box/wrapped foods and potentially buffet-style foods can be accepted. Alternatively, Knox's Free Food GroupMe allows event organizers to quickly advertise unexpected leftover food to students.
- ☐ [Participate in the Community Scale Composting Program](#) at Knox farm.

Event Marketing & Communication
Before event (requests)
- ☐ Request in pre-event communication that event attendees bring their own reusable plates, mugs, cups, utensils, etc. (if reusables are not being provided)
    - o Example: "In an effort to reduce single-use waste at this event, we encourage everyone to consider bringing their own reusable [insert item] to enjoy the food and beverages."
- ☐ Request in pre-event communication that event attendees bring their own reusable food containers to take home leftover food.
- ☐ Inquire into attendee dietary restrictions and accessibility needs during event registration.

Before event (advertising)
- ☐ Promote using only paper-free marketing methods, including listservs, events calendars, social media, digital screens, chalk, word of mouth, etc.
- ☐ Ensure any printed material is on 100% recycled content or FSC-certified paper
- ☐ Reduce paper use. Use half/quarter sheets or printing double-sided when appropriate, then recycle all paper flyers after the event (avoid laminating so you can recycle it).
- ☐ Visit the [Share Shop](#) for acquiring decorations and/or donate your decorations after your event.
- ☐ Purchase reusable materials like banners & tablecloths. Avoid including one-time dates or slogans on materials so materials can be reused. Donate used items to Share Shop.

During event (announcements)
- ☐ Avoid individual programs by encouraging attendees to take photos of centralized programs on tables or near entrances (e.g. poster-sized), and/or use digital programs
- ☐ Announce instructions at the beginning of the event for how to manage materials: landfill, recycle, and organics/food scrap collection at the venue

Purchasing

Choosing items

- ☐ Replace material prizes (i.e. swag, giveaways, or low-quality and single use plastic merchandise) with experiences, services, reusable items or gift certificates to campus vendors or local businesses
- ☐ Ensure any purchased items are durable and useful to attendees over time
- ☐ Purchase items that are eco-certified and ethically made (e.g. climate pledge friendly, Fair Trade)

Choosing companies

- ☐ Select vendors with a public commitment to sustainability, transparent working conditions, and ethical sourcing practices

Waste/Material Stream

- ☐ For small events, (under 75 people), work with your caterer or the Office of Sustainability to pick up appropriate waste receptacles (including food scrap bins, compost receptacles, and/or recycling bins).
- ☐ Secure event monitors to ensure guests understand how to sort their waste/materials and avoid contamination. Ask people participating in your event to volunteer for this.
- ☐ Post appropriate signage above waste bins for guests to reference when sorting their waste into bins. Request appropriate signage from the caterer. Contact the Office of Sustainability to request a pdf of signage for Organic Recycling/Compostables, Recycling, and Landfill.
- ☐ For large events, request proper landfill and recycling bins from Facilities. Work with Bon Appetit and/ or the Office of Sustainability to provide a management plan for food scrap bins and composting bins. This can only be done if there is available staff and may be an additional cost with Bon Appetit.
- ☐ Confirm that the caterer will recycle and/or appropriately manage all materials.