



GREEN EVENT RESOURCES

TIPS AND TRICKS FOR EVERY OCCASION



WHY HOST A GREEN EVENT?



In line with President Monaco's focus on making Tufts a more sustainable university, **it is important that offices take steps towards promoting sustainability in their day-to-day activities, including events.**

Between food, advertising, invitations, decorations, and transportation, events are **resource-intensive**, but this guide can help you reduce your impact.

green event (n): an event executed in an environmentally and socially responsible manner

But what does that mean when planning an event?

- Minimizing water and energy usage
- Minimizing waste production
- Minimizing greenhouse gas emissions from travel, food choices, etc.
- Effectively communicating eco-friendly aspects of your event
- Encouraging participants to continue sustainable practices outside of your event

GENERAL TIPS

The following pages present checklists for events of different sizes, natures, and locations. Choose the one that best fits your event – but first, review these general tips for eco-friendly events.

SUSTAINABLE EVENT PRINCIPLES

1. Reduce any negative environmental impact caused by the event
2. Support local economy and society through your event's purchases and goals
3. Promote eco-friendly actions by effectively communicating sustainable aspects of your event
4. Monitor the success of certain actions in concordance with eco-friendly event principles in order to determine which actions are most effective
5. Encourage participants to continue sustainability practices outside of your event

TOP WAYS TO REDUCE YOUR IMPACT

1. Avoid paper invitations
2. Use large water dispensers instead of bottles
3. Prioritize [video conferencing](#) or enable carpooling or use of public transit
4. Encourage guests to bring their own dishware, napkins, etc.
5. Serve mainly locally grown and organic food, mostly vegetarian if possible, in a buffet style
6. Serve condiments in bulk
7. Recycle and compost as much as possible and provide instructions to guests

Green Event Checklists

Use these checklists to assign roles, determine materials, and otherwise plan your event.

SMALL IN-OFFICE MEETINGS

Topic	Individual Responsible	Completion Date
Materials		
Send out invitations and reminders via email.		
Email out presentations and meeting agendas instead of printing them.		
Write the agenda on a white (or black) board or flip chart or show a PowerPoint on a projector screen instead of printing out hard copies for each person.		
If handouts are unavoidable, enlarge the margins and print them double-sided. Print in black and white to save money.		
Food (if provided)		
Provide reusable dishware or ask individuals to bring their own place-setting (cups, mugs, plates, Tupperware, silverware) to the meeting.		
If disposables are used, see the zero waste event guide for tips about what dishware to buy and how to sort them. Compostable disposables are preferable since most dishware can no longer be recycled.		
Use napkins made from recycled content paper.		
If you are providing cups, also provide a permanent marker so that individuals can label their cups for reuse.		
Use serving utensils from previous catered events or bring some from home for the day.		
If you provide drinks, avoid single-serving beverages by offering drinks in two-liter bottles or pitchers.		
Avoid excess packaging by providing pitchers or cartons of milk, creamer, and sweeteners instead of individually wrapped servings. Bring home any leftover perishables to use rather than throwing them away.		
Put out surplus food for students and colleagues and/or remind individuals ahead of time to bring containers to take food home with them. If you have a lot, use the e-list Free Food at Tufts .		
If clean-up is necessary, use green cleaners to clean up meeting space.		
Waste		
Make sure there are recycling bins next to the Landfill bins in the room.		
Provide a compost bin for individuals to compost food waste and compostable material (e.g. napkins) and designate an individual to bring it to a compost toter on campus. All compost drop-off spots can be found on the Tufts Eco-Map .		

LARGE OFF-CAMPUS EVENTS (1/2)

Topic	Individual Responsible	Completion Date
Location		
Choose a location that is accessible via public transit and include specific directions (transit lines, stop names, and links to more info). List public transit directions first, followed by carpooling info (e.g. an online ride-sharing tool such as miles2share), then car and parking info.		
If your event will require lodging, reserve a block of rooms at a hotel that meets "green" standards .		
Provide a video or teleconferencing option for remote participants.		
Materials		
Send out invitations and reminders via email or Evite . If you must send out paper invitations, use recycled content paper, vegetable-based inks and logos that encourage individuals to recycle their invitations.		
Encourage individuals to RSVP using email, online, phone calls, or in person rather than leaving reply cards or notes.		
For conferences, use mobile applications like Guidebook instead of printing out programs.		
Project the agenda or write it on a white (or black) board or flip chart instead of printing out hard copies for each person		
When decorations are necessary, use reusable decorations (e.g. tablecloths, potted plants, or bowls with water and flowers).		
Provide reusable name tag holders that are collected at the end of the event and reused. Recycle the paper insert.		
Provide eco-friendly speaker gifts such as carbon offsets for their travel or useful items that can be used at your event or in the future (e.g. reusable bags, mugs). Eco-friendly awards and plaques are also available. Try purchasing a gift that is made of post-consumer recycled content.		
Avoiding giveaways to participants is the most sustainable option, but giving a gift that promotes sustainable behavior, such as a reusable water bottle, is the next best thing.		
Food		
Select a caterer who uses sustainable practices such as local and/or organic food, a serving dish reuse program, eco-friendly dishes, and has a good selection of vegetarian options. Offer primarily vegetarian food. Avoid red meat or unsustainably-sourced seafood .		
Choose hors d'oeuvres that can be consumed without utensils or bowls (e.g. finger food).		

LARGE OFF-CAMPUS EVENTS (2/2)

Topic	Individual Responsible	Completion Date
Food (continued)		
Use napkins for finger foods and simple desserts (cookies, brownies) instead of plates.		
Use napkins made from recycled content paper.		
Request pitchers or cartons of milk, creamer, and sweeteners.		
Request pitchers or carafes for drinks, including water (you might need to remind caterers to NOT provide bottled water).		
Bring surplus food back to the office for students and colleagues. If you have a lot, use the e-list Free Food at Tufts .		
Waste		
Providing reusable dishware is the best option. If that is not possible, encourage people to bring their own place setting.		
If disposables are used, see the zero waste event guide for tips about what dishware to buy and how to sort them. Compostable disposables are preferable since most dishware can no longer be recycled.		
Arrange to compost food waste as well as napkins and compostable dishware. The Office of Sustainability is available to organize large-scale Zero Waste events for crowds over 100 people, and will provide student workers to monitor the Zero-Waste stations. Contact recycle@tufts.edu for help with this.		
Request clearly labeled recycling bins to be placed wherever there are trash bins.		
Communication		
Draw attention to eco-friendly aspects of your event with signs, info in your program, and in the event invitation email.		
Brief all volunteers and staff about eco-friendly aspects of your event so that they explain them to others.		
Announce waste disposal options before meal begins or during meal, especially if there is composting available. Be sure to mention things like "All items here - plates, utensils, food, cups - go in the compost bin."		

LARGE ON-CAMPUS EVENTS (1/2)

Topic	Individual Responsible	Completion Date
Location		
Provide attendees information on how to get to Tufts via public transit and/or the Davis Square Shuttle . Suggest an online carpool tool such as miles2share .		
Provide a video or teleconferencing option for remote participants.		
Materials		
Request cloth tablecloths.		
When decorations are necessary, use reusable decorations (e.g. tablecloths, potted plants, or bowls with water and flowers).		
Provide reusable name tag holders that are collected at the end of the event and reused. Recycle the paper insert.		
Send out invitations and reminders via email.		
If you must send out paper invitations, use recycled content paper, vegetable based inks, and logos that encourage individuals to recycle their invitations.		
Encourage individuals to RSVP using email, online, phone calls, or in person rather than leaving reply cards or notes.		
Project the agenda or write it on a white (or black) board or flip chart instead of printing out hard copies for each person.		
For conferences, use mobile applications like Guidebook instead of printing out programs.		
Provide eco-friendly speaker gifts such as carbon offsets for their travel or useful items (e.g. reusable bags, travel mugs). Eco-friendly awards and plaques are also available. Try purchasing a gift that is made of post-consumer recycled content.		
Avoiding giveaways to participants is the most sustainable option, but giving a gift that promotes sustainable behavior, such as a reusable water bottle, is the next best thing.		
Food		
Request an eco-friendly meal from catering. Consider the carbon footprint of the food you are providing.		
Choose hors d'oeuvres that can be consumed without utensils or bowls (e.g. finger food).		
Request pitchers or carafes for drinks, including water (you might need to remind caterers to NOT provide bottled water).		
Request bulk condiments instead of single-serving packaged condiments.		

LARGE ON-CAMPUS EVENTS (2/2)

Topic	Individual Responsible	Completion Date
Food (continued)		
<p>If inside, label water fountains as places to fill up water bottles. Provide cambros (from Tufts Catering), glass drink dispensers, or pitchers of water. If outside, request outdoor water fountains to be put up by Facilities (available on the Academic Quad and near Gifford House).</p>		
<p>Bring surplus food back to the office for students and colleagues. If you have a lot, use the e-list Free Food at Tufts.</p>		
<p>Use napkins made from recycled content paper.</p>		
<p>Offer primarily vegetarian food. Avoid red meat or unsustainably-sourced seafood.</p>		
Waste		
<p>Providing reusable dishware is the best option. If that is not possible, encourage people to bring their own place setting.</p>		
<p>If disposables are used, see the zero waste event guide for tips about what dishware to buy and how to sort them. Compostable disposables are preferable since most dishware can no longer be recycled.</p>		
<p>Arrange to compost food waste as well as napkins and compostable dishware. The Office of Sustainability is available to organize large-scale Zero Waste events for crowds over 100 people, and will provide student workers to monitor the Zero Waste Stations. Contact recycle@tufts.edu for help with this.</p>		
<p>Request clearly labeled recycling bins to be placed wherever there are trash bins.</p>		
Communication		
<p>Announce waste disposal options before meal begins or during meal, especially if there is composting available. Be sure to mention things like "All items here - plates, utensils, food, cups - go in the compost bin."</p>		
<p>Brief all volunteers and staff about eco-friendly aspects of your event so that they explain them to others.</p>		
<p>Draw attention to eco-friendly aspects of your event with signs, info in your program, and in the event invitation email.</p>		
<p>Let out-of-town guests know about the Zipcars available on campus.</p>		
<p>Include information in the participant packets about what is recyclable at Tufts. You can obtain recycling mini-brochures by emailing sustainabilityoffice@tufts.edu</p>		

FORMAL MEETINGS (1/2)

Topic	Individual Responsible	Completion Date
Location		
Find a location that requires the fewest amount of people to drive.		
If attendees are coming from all four campuses, provide audio or video conferencing options and/or encourage individuals to carpool or take the T. List public transit directions first, followed by carpooling info (e.g. an online ride-sharing tool such as miles2share), then car and parking info.		
Hold meetings during the business day or right at the end of the day to minimize extra car trips.		
Materials		
Send out invitations and reminders via email. If you want a fancier look, use a tool such as Evite .		
Email out handouts and meeting agendas or project them at the event instead of printing them for each person.		
If handouts are unavoidable, enlarge the margins and print double-sided to save paper. Print in black and white to save money.		
Collect and reuse any name tag holders. If the meeting is a recurring event, create reusable name tags that will be collected at the end of the meeting.		
Food		
Use reusable dishware if possible.		
Encourage people to bring their own mug and/or reusable water bottle.		
Choose hors d'oeuvres that can be consumed without utensils or bowls (e.g. finger food).		
Use napkins for finger foods and simple desserts (cookies, brownies) instead of plates.		
Avoid wasteful single-serving beverages by offering beverages in pitchers (you might need to remind caterers to NOT provide bottled water).		
Offer primarily vegetarian food. Avoid red meat or unsustainably-sourced seafood .		
Bring surplus food back to the office for students and colleagues. If you have a lot, use the e-list Free Food at Tufts .		

FORMAL MEETINGS (2/2)

Topic	Individual Responsible	Completion Date
Waste		
Announce waste disposal options before meal begins or during meal, especially if there is composting available. Be sure to mention things like "All items here - plates, utensils, food, cups - go in the compost bin."		
Provide a compost bin for individuals to compost food waste and compostable material (e.g. napkins) and designate an individual to bring it to a compost toter on campus. All compost drop-off spots can be found on the Tufts Eco-Map .		
Arrange to compost food waste as well as napkins and compostable dishware. The Office of Sustainability is available to organize large-scale Zero Waste events for crowds over 100 people, and will provide student workers to monitor the Zero Waste Stations. Contact recycle@tufts.edu for help with this.		
Providing reusable dishware is the best option. If that is not possible, encourage people to bring their own place setting.		
If disposables are used, see the zero waste event guide for tips about what dishware to buy and how to sort them. Compostable disposables are preferable since most dishware can no longer be recycled.		
Avoid excess packaging by providing pitchers or cartons of milk, creamer, and sweeteners instead of individually wrapped servings. Bring home any leftover perishables to use rather than throwing them away.		
Make sure there are well labeled recycling bins next to every Landfill bin.		
Ask the caterer to take back and reuse the serving dishes, tongs, and serving spoons.		

OTHER GREEN EVENT RESOURCES

- Our [Organizer's Guide to Zero Waste Events](#): This guide provides information about large and small events, what materials to purchase, and how to set up on the day of your event.
 - The Office of Sustainability is available to organize large-scale Zero Waste events for crowds over 100 people, and will provide student workers to monitor the Zero Waste Stations. If your event is less than 100 people, but you are still interested in hosting a Zero Waste event, the Office of Sustainability is happy to assist you in organizing one, but does not provide workers and bins for these events.
- [MeetGreen](#): a conference management, consulting and training firm that works with associations and corporate organizations to improve sustainability of events and conferences.
- [EPA's Green Meetings and Conferences Policy](#): more helpful event planning checklists
- GreenSeal's list of [certified green hotels](#): search by state
- EPA [resources for finding Green Hotels](#)
- [Green Restaurant Association](#): provides list of certified green restaurants, searchable by city
- The [15 Best Places for Organic Food in Boston](#) could be a good place to start when looking for a caterer.
- [Basil Tree Catering](#) prioritizes local, organic, and vegetarian options.
- [Decoding Food Labels](#): our guide to deciphering the differences between organic, natural, grass-fed, seafood safe, and other labels you're likely to see as you create your event's menu
- [Tufts Recycling](#): Request bins, clarify what can or cannot be recycled or composted, and more