

Sustainable Event Suggestions

We all know how hard it can be to live a little lighter on the planet. If you're looking for some ways to make your events a little greener, check out some of the following suggestions. Remember, sustainability is a journey; it's not about being perfect, it's about making the best decision you can at the time. Every little bit helps! We appreciate you taking the time to consider joining the Park District in *our* sustainability journey. If you have any other suggestions to add to this list, please contact us at heller@pdhp.org.

Invitations:

- Print your invitations double sided on recycled paper using vegetable-based inks
- use scrap paper for drafts
- update your mailing list to avoid sending out invites that will be returned
- print addresses directly on envelopes
- Email invitations
- ask for email or phone RSVP

Transportation:

- Encourage carpooling
- Provide information on possible public transit options
- If public transit is not convenient, offer a shuttle from a place where it is more easily accessible

Decorations and Giveaways:

- Use reusable decorations or things left over from other events
- Have guests take decorations and centerpieces home at the end of the event
- Consider not having giveaways or goodie bags, or consider having all items be reusable, useful or consumable

Handouts and Presentations:

- Avoid unnecessary handouts: email agendas, action items, meeting notes, etc. to participants before or after your meeting
- Print necessary handouts double sided on recycled paper with vegetable-based inks
- Use dry erase boards for agendas and meeting notes



Sustainable Event Suggestions

Beverages:

- Big 2 ½-5 gallon jugs of water are preferable to individual plastic water bottles
- Provide pitchers of water and paper cups
- Use reusable glasses instead of paper cups
- If coffee is being catered, ask provider not to bring lids, stir sticks, straws, creamer, sugar, etc.; provide creamer and sugar in bulk and have reusable spoons or wooden stir sticks (vs. plastic) for stirring
- Encourage all participants to bring a reusable water bottle, coffee mug, etc.

Dishware:

- Compostable or paper dishware is better than plastic, even if it gets thrown away
- Use reusable dishes and utensils; most caterers only require that you rinse everything before returning it, so you won't have to do dishes either way

Food:

- Ask for condiments in bulk containers vs individual packets
- Large trays of sandwiches, salads, pasta, etc. are preferable to highly wasteful boxed lunches
- Consider having servers carry around trays of finger foods so that dishes aren't required at all
- Look for caterers that use local, organic, sustainably grown and/or fair trade foods
- Ask for a seasonal menu, so that foods that can't be grown locally aren't transported in from around the world

Waste:

- Make sure your guests and caterer know that recycling bins are available, and encourage them to recycle paper, glass, aluminum and plastic waste materials
- Beverage containers should be emptied and food containers should be rinsed before they are recycled
- If you are providing items that are recyclable, but not commonly thought of as such, make sure your guests know to recycle these items
- Have someone stationed by the garbage and recycling bins to help guests make the appropriate decision
- Encourage guests to bring reusable containers to take home leftovers; compost the rest at home, or commercially if that service is available in your neighborhood
- Donate leftover food to a soup kitchen or shelter
 - Unused trays of food can be donated to Cool Food Pantry in Waukegan
 - Please call Gail at 847.662.1230 to see if they are able to accept your donation
- Confirm attendance numbers with the caterer the day before the event to avoid over-buying food

