

SUSTAINABILITY

EVENT PLANNING GUIDE



1 — PLANNING YOUR EVENT

- By using the checklists provided, please select sustainability initiatives to implement at your event. Checked boxes indicate practices that regularly occur at the venues on a daily basis. Unchecked boxes indicate practices that may be implemented if desired, and items marked with stars suggest sustainability practices event producers may choose to execute prior to arriving at our venue.
- Discuss the initiatives you have selected with your event manager and catering sales manager. They are well equipped to handle your sustainability requests, questions and concerns. They can also address any additional costs associated with implementing suggested sustainability practices.
- Finalize the sustainability practices that will be implemented during the event.
- Create a communications statement on the selected practices for distribution to event participants and other stakeholders.



2 — EXECUTE YOUR PLAN

- Communicate any additional requests that arise throughout the event with your event and catering managers.
- Convey details of the event's sustainability practices to all event staff and third-party vendors to promote their participation in the efforts.
- Incorporate the event's sustainability practices into all participant communications (registration, announcements, signage, website, etc.).

3 — REVIEW AND ASSESS

- Evaluate the event's sustainability practices and initiatives, identifying successes and areas that may be improved in the future.

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EVENT EXECUTION – RECYCLING EFFORTS

- ☒ Provide recycling bins facility-wide in a 1:1 ratio with trash receptacles giving guests the opportunity to recycle bottles, cans and mixed paper.
- ☒ Collect organic materials for composting in all back-of-house areas and restrooms, as well as all public spaces.
- ☒ Recycle cardboard, plastic wrap, construction material, cooking oil, vinyl tablecloths and banners, fluorescent bulbs, pallets and kitchen-based recyclables to ensure that at least 50% of all event waste is diverted from the trash.
- ☐ Schedule Guest Services personnel at public composting areas to answer questions and educate public on composting practices.*
- ☐ Enroll facility Green Team to assist exhibitors during event load-out with recycling and composting efforts.
- ☐ Request a post-event sustainability report that details recycling, waste, compost and energy usage. Share the data with your attendees post-event and use to compare against future events.
- ★ Reuse plastic name tag holders / lanyards. Encourage participants to return their tag holder / lanyard with a prize drawing.

- ☒ Standard Sustainability Practices at Our Venues
- ☐ Optional Sustainability Practices Available at Our Venues
- ★ Suggested Sustainability Practices for Event Producers
- * Item May Require Additional Cost

EVENT EXECUTION – COLLATERAL

- ☒ Print event materials on-site at the Loffler Business Center using a minimum of 30% recycled-content office paper. Loffler Business Center recycles all ink and toner cartridges.
- ☒ Reduce paper requirements of event logistics and planning through digital document formatting and wireless connectivity, where available.
- ☐ Use non-reinforced material to print indoor promotional banners to ensure recyclability.
- ☐ Mount posters on biodegradable or recyclable products, rather than foam core.
- ✦ Minimize paper usage by inviting participants via email and encouraging participants to register online.
- ✦ To prevent paper waste, work with event staff to evaluate past events of similar scope and size to forecast the amount of materials and handouts needed.
- ✦ Create a password protected section of your website that contains event materials accessible only by participants.

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EVENT EXECUTION – FACILITY REQUIREMENTS

- ☒ Utilize Green Seal-certified cleaning products for nearly all facility maintenance.
- ☒ Provide recycled-content (a minimum of 20%, in some cases up to 100%) custodial paper products including toilet paper, hand towels, facial tissue and napkins.
- ☒ Choose Energy Star-rated electronics and EPEAT-certified computer equipment.
- ☒ Minimize energy usage during non-event hours by reducing lighting, heating and cooling.
- ☒ Utilize virtual server technology to minimize energy requirements of IT services.
- ☒ Optimize energy use with computerized HVAC and lighting controls, demand management software, and retrofitted lighting technology.
- ☒ Reduce the carbon footprint of the event by 1) offsetting 100% of electricity and cooling with renewable energy, and by 2) heating the facility with 70% renewable energy from District Energy Saint Paul.
- ☒ Utilize renewable energy for hot water and heating at Saint Paul RiverCentre using a 1 MW rooftop solar thermal array tied into the District Energy system.
- ☒ Provide water-efficient fixtures for event use in the form of efficient low-flow/automatic faucets.
- ☒ Increase energy efficiency of event by using reduced heating and/or cooling levels during load-in and load-out.

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ATTENDEES, EXHIBITORS & SPEAKERS

- ☒ Recycle vinyl tablecloths from exhibitor tables.
- ☒ Provide designated cardboard and shrink wrap bins for exhibitor packaging disposal during load-in and load-out.
- ☒ Use an online ordering system for exhibitors to purchase facility services vs. paper forms.
- ☐ Encourage exhibitors and speakers to print materials locally, such as at the Loffler Business Center, the venue's on-site business center.
- ☐ Offer a sustainability tour of our venue to your guests as part of the event to further educate them on sustainable practices.
- ☐ Engage guests in the event's sustainability efforts through social media posts (both from the venue and your organization).
- ☐ Work with the venue to select post-event donation resources for unused items.
- ✦ Provide recommendations for vendors and decorators to assist in ensuring their participation in facility recycling efforts.
- ✦ Provide pens and notepads by request only, and when requested use pens and notepads with recycled content.

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TRANSPORTATION

- ☒ Provide charging stations for up to eight electric vehicles in adjacent parking ramp.
- ☒ Supply secure bicycle parking at multiple locations around the event facilities.
- ☐ Partner with Twin Cities Metro Transit to provide free bus and/or light rail rides to and from the venues for ticketed attendees.
- ☐ Provide event-specific preferred parking spaces to hybrid or electric vehicle drivers attending the event.*
- ☐ Offset attendees' travel to the event by signing up for our Trees for Travel program, through which urban trees are planted across the Twin Cities.
- ✦ Utilize hybrid, electric, and/or high-efficiency vehicles for all event-related transportation.
- ✦ Give discounts to attendees who traveled to the event using alternative transportation or carpools.

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FOOD & BEVERAGE

- ☒ Utilize china, glass and silverware when possible; otherwise select compostable foodservice-ware (plates, bowls, cups, forks, knives, spoons, etc. when available).
- ☒ Serve most condiments in bulk or in reusable containers versus non-recyclable individually wrapped packets.
- ☒ Compost all kitchen waste and unserved, prepared food.
- ☒ Recycle all back-of-house kitchen items including cans, bottles, cardboard, paper, cooking grease, pallets and shrink-wrap.
- ☒ Provide compostable cups at water cooler stations.
- ☒ Use hydration stations rather than offering individual bottles of water.
- ☐ Choose fairly traded, organic coffee and tea to ensure these items are produced in a way that is socially and environmentally responsible.
- ☐ Donate unserved, prepared food to a local charity (in accordance with USDA rules).
- ☐ Select locally grown and/or organic ingredients, based on availability.*
- ☐ Select locally sourced alcoholic beverages, to reduce the transportation requirements of these items.*

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DÉCOR

- ✦ Request centerpieces and decorations that are organic and therefore compostable, such as flowers; or choose décor that can be reused for future events.
- ✦ If organic centerpieces are used, encourage participants to take the items with them, thereby eliminating waste.

GENERAL

- ☒ Select a venue that provides ongoing sustainability training to staff.
- ✦ Get creative! Design an event-specific promotion that educates and engages attendees in the sustainability efforts.
- ✦ Communicate the event's sustainability practices to staff prior to the beginning of the event.
- ✦ Develop a reward program that encourages responsible behavior from event participants, staff, and committee members.

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NOTES

To learn more about the sustainability efforts in our facilities, please visit our dedicated sustainability website at rivercentre.org/sustainability.