

Multnomah County

Green Meeting & Event Policy

Best Practices Manual and Checklist

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Why Meet Green? *Save money and the environment!*

Multnomah County is committed to sustainable practices in our operations and in our community. As a leader in sustainability, the county believes that walking the talk is a best practice when it comes to our meetings and events.

Green meetings and events ensure that all aspects of an event, including its location, food services, transportation and the provision of materials are approached with the goal of minimizing the negative impact on the environment. Not only do green meetings benefit the environment, they often save money too. Providing water in pitchers with reusable cups can result in significant savings over purchasing bottled water.

Hosting a green meeting or event can help to:

- Reduce greenhouse gas emissions and air contaminants;
- Improve energy and water efficiency;
- Reduce waste and support reuse and recycling;
- Reduce the environmental impacts associated with food production, consumption and disposal; and
- Save taxpayer money.

How to Use this Best Practices Manual and Checklist

When you are planning a meeting or event, or attending one, use the following easy checklists to help guide your decision-making.

- 1.** Use the checklist at the very beginning of your planning for the most effective and efficient results.
- 2.** Consult with your departmental Sustainability Liaison or the Office of Sustainability if you have questions or need assistance.
- 3.** Self-certify that your meeting is a Green Meeting or Green Event of Excellence and proudly display a certificate of recognition at your meeting, event or conference. See last page for details.

1. Best Practices When Hosting a Green Meeting or Event

Meeting Communications: Goal is to save paper!

- Write agendas on meeting room white board instead of printing for participants.
- E-mail agendas to attendees and suggest that meeting attendees do not print agendas because the agenda will be available at the meeting.
- E-mail handouts to participants or post them on a web page instead of printing.
- Create shared folders for meeting documents instead of handouts.
- Project important documents on screen during the meeting.
- If printing documents is necessary, print on both sides of the page on 100% post consumer recycled content paper.
- Format documents for efficient paper use by using smaller font size, minimum margins, and minimum white space.
- Use reusable dry-mark erasable boards with non-toxic markers or blackboards, overheads and slides instead of paper flip charts.
- Create signage that can be reused for future events.
- Avoid printing PowerPoint presentations. If necessary, print multiple slides per page on both sides of the page.

Transportation: Goal is to reduce climate emissions!

- Encourage attendees to telecommute to the meeting by offering a call-in number.
- Choose a meeting location that is close to as many attendees as possible and accessible by public transportation.
- Provide information about which bus lines or rail service the meeting or event location and provide a link to TriMet's website: www.trimet.org. Example language includes: This location is easily accessible by transit and is served by bus lines #4, 6, 10, and 14. Please visit www.trimet.org to plan your trip.
- Coordinate meeting start times so that it's convenient to take public transportation. Visit www.trimet.org for transit schedules.
- Include list of attendees and building locations in emailed agenda so that attendees can carpool.
- If driving, carpool with nearby attendees.

Composting and Recycling: Goal is to reduce landfill waste!

- Ensure that recycling, garbage and composting (if available) bins at the location are well marked, have accurate signage, and are large enough to hold the anticipated amount of waste and recycling. Visit <http://MINT/recycle> for recycling information and current signs.
- Pair garbage, recycling, and compost bins together in high traffic areas to maximize capture of compostable and recyclable materials.
- If composting is available, be sure to inform attendees which materials can and cannot be composted. Visit <http://MINT/recycle> for composting information and signs.

Energy Conservation: Goal is to reduce electricity use!

- Turn off the lights when leaving a meeting room.
- Turn off projectors and computers when not in use.

Food and Beverage Service: Goal is to reduce landfill waste, promote local economic vitality, and reduce hunger in our community.

- When a caterer is being used, ask the caterer to provide durable or compostable serviceware. Serviceware includes any and all cups, plates, forks, spoons, knives and straws. Preference will be given to durable serviceware over compostable serviceware. If composting services are not available in the building where the meeting or event is held, ask the caterer to take back the organic waste and compostable serviceware (if used) and compost it.
- Avoid the use of bottled water by providing pitchers of tap water and durable cups or if using a caterer ask them to provide these instead of individual bottle water.
- Provide durable dishes, cups, napkins and silverware. When not possible, encourage attendees to bring their own reusable coffee mugs or use compostables.
- Purchase condiments, creamer and sugar in reusable or recyclable bulk containers.
- Serve finger or bite size foods that require no serviceware.
- Avoid unnecessary disposable items like plastic straws and plastic coffee stirrers.
- Ensure food and beverage packaging is recyclable and that it will be recycled.
- Work with your caterer to include locally grown, seasonal and organic ingredients.
- Provide beverages in bulk whenever feasible, or in containers that are reusable or recyclable in the facility's recycling program
- Provide food buffet-style instead of using individually packaged meals or pre-plated quantities.
- Minimize the amount of meat served. Raising food animals requires more energy, water and other inputs than growing grains or vegetables.
- Donate surplus usable food to charities. Utilize Metro's [Fork It Over Program](#) to locate charitable organizations closest to the meeting or event.

2. Best Practices When Hosting a Green Conference

Communications: Goal is to reduce paper!

- Use electronic advertising, promotion, and registration whenever possible.
- If printing documents is necessary, print on both sides of the page on 100% post consumer recycled content paper.
- Format documents for efficient paper use by using smaller font size, minimum margins, and minimum white space.
- Use reusable dry-mark erasable boards with non-toxic markers or blackboards, overheads and slides instead of paper flip charts.
- Ensure staff, attendees and stakeholders are informed of the event planning environmental strategies and initiatives.
- When handouts are necessary, let exhibitors know in advance the expected number of attendees to help them avoid bringing excess material.
- Suggest exhibitors avoid printing dates and slogans on exhibit materials so that they may be easily reused.
- Reuse nametags made of recycled content and provide reuse collection bins for them.
- Create signage that can be reused for future events.

Venue Selection: Goal is to walk the talk!

- Choose a venue that has a comprehensive recycling program that includes paper, metal, glass and plastic as well as food compost.
- If using multiple facilities, look for locations where the hotel and event venue are within walking distance of each other.
- Seek out meeting rooms with natural light to conserve energy and increase productivity.
- Give preference to venues that have:
 - A comprehensive environmental policy;
 - Programs to recycle and otherwise reduce solid waste;
 - Programs for the conservation of energy and water;
 - Programs to reduce the use of harmful chemicals;
 - Programs to improve indoor air quality; and
 - Other environmental initiatives.

Accommodation Selection: Goal is to support green businesses!

- Choose a hotel that is connected to the airport, bus, train station and event venue by mass transit.
- Give preference to hotels that have Green Seal certification or have:

- A comprehensive environmental policy;
- Programs to recycle and otherwise reduce solid waste;
- Programs for the conservation of energy and water;
- Programs to reduce the use of harmful chemicals;
- Programs to improve indoor air quality; and
- Other environmental initiatives.

Transportation: Goal is to reduce climate emissions!

- Encourage attendees to telecommute to the conference by offering a call in number.
- Inform attendees about environmentally preferable transportation choices such as mass transit and carpooling for reaching their destination.
- Provide information about the local public transit system to attendees. For bus schedule information visit www.trimet.org.
- Create awareness surrounding carbon neutral transportation. Suggest purchasing carbon offsets for unavoidable travel.

Food and Beverage Service: Goal is to reduce landfill waste, promote local economic vitality, and reduce hunger in our community.

- When a caterer is being used, ask the caterer to provide durable or compostable serviceware. Serviceware includes any and all cups, plates, forks, spoons, knives and straws. Preference will be given to durable serviceware over compostable serviceware. If composting services are not available in the building where the meeting or event is held, ask the caterer to take back the organic waste and compostable serviceware (if used) and compost it.
- Avoid the use of bottled water by providing pitchers of tap water and durable cups or if using a caterer ask them to provide these instead of individual bottles of water.
- Provide durable dishes, cups, napkins and silverware. When not possible, encourage attendees to bring their own reusable coffee mugs or use compostables.
- Purchase condiments, creamer and sugar in reusable or recyclable bulk containers.
- Ask delegates to sign-up for meals they will attend to reduce food waste and costs.
- Provide durable dishes, cups, napkins and silverware. When not possible, encourage attendees to bring their own reusable coffee mugs or use compostables.
- Purchase condiments, creamer and sugar in reusable bulk containers.
- Serve finger or bite size foods that require no serviceware.
- Avoid unnecessary disposable items like plastic straws and plastic coffee stirrers.
- Ensure food and beverage packaging is recyclable and that it will be recycled.
- Work with your caterer to include locally grown, seasonal and organic ingredients.
- Provide beverages in bulk whenever feasible, or in containers that are reusable or recyclable in the facility's recycling program

- Provide food buffet-style instead of using individually packaged meals or pre-plated quantities.
- Minimize the amount of meat served. Raising food animals requires more energy, water and other inputs than growing grains or vegetables.
- Donate surplus usable food to charities. Utilize Metro's [Fork It Over Program](#) to locate charitable organizations closest to the meeting or event.

Recycling and Composting: Goal is to reduce landfill waste!

- Ensure that recycling, garbage and composting (if available) bins at the location are well marked, have accurate signage, and are large enough to hold the anticipated amount of waste and recycling. Visit <http://MINT/recycle> for recycling information and current signs.
- Pair garbage, recycling, and compost bins together in high traffic areas to maximize capture of compostable and recyclable materials.
- Educate attendees on what can be recycled or composted and where.
- Designate a volunteer to serve as the recycling advisor and help to seek out additional recycling opportunities.

Energy Conservation: Goal is to reduce electricity use!

- Turn off the lights when leaving a meeting room.
- Turn off projectors and computers when not in use.

3. Best Practices When Attending Conferences

Accommodation Selection: Goal is to support green businesses!

- Choose a hotel that is connected to the event venue by mass transit or is in walking distance.
- Choose a hotel that has adequate recycling and composting programs.
- Give preference to hotels that have:
 - A comprehensive environmental policy;
 - Programs to recycle and otherwise reduce solid waste;
 - Programs for the conservation of energy and water;
 - Programs to reduce the use of harmful chemicals;
 - Programs to improve indoor air quality; and
 - Other environmental initiatives.

Transportation: Goal is to reduce climate emissions!

- Consider telecommuting to the conference.
- Utilize public transportation whenever possible.
- If possible, carpool with other attendees.

Other Considerations: Goal is to walk the talk away from home!

- If possible, register for the conference online.
- Before printing out documents, ask to see if they will be provided at the event, or use a laptop to avoid printing materials entirely.
- Help to reduce waste by bringing a reusable mug and water bottle.

Multnomah County Green Meeting or Event of Excellence Certificate

Proudly display your efforts!

In order to qualify and self-certify for a Green Meeting or Event Certificate, the meeting, event, or conference you organize must:

- At a minimum, comply with two (2) checklist items in each action area.

For example, in order for your meeting to qualify for a Green Meeting Certificate, you will need to use the green meeting/event checklist to ensure that you have complied with at least two action items in each of the following action areas:

- Meeting Communications
- Transportation
- Recycling and Composting
- Energy Conservation
- Food and Beverage Service

After you have self-certified that your meeting or event complies with at least two checklist items in the above action areas, print the attached Multnomah County Green Meeting or Green Event Certificate to be proudly displayed at your meeting, event or conference.