

IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY LIVE GREEN!

**HOW TO MAKE
YOUR EVENT
SUSTAINABLE**



A Primer

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Ever want to make your events more sustainable but don't know where to begin?

This document can help start you off on the right foot! Any ISU organization, interested in making their events a little "greener," will find this quick primer on how to do so to be a wonderful companion for any organization's reference materials or resource binder.

Pre-event



Green Your Vision

The successful greening of your event starts in your mind, in the brainstorming and planning.

Consider designating a sustainability chair or director to your planning committee.



Green Your Shopping List

Avoid buying new things.

1. Reuse old items.
2. Reach out to your social networks and groups you have worked with in the past and build a relationship of reciprocity.

(A) Borrow their equipment and resources with the expectation that you will, in return, support them in the future.

3. Reach out to groups that you haven't worked with yet and begin a relationship of reciprocity.

(A) Just because you may not be involved with the same activities doesn't mean partnering opportunities do not exist.

4. Take advantage of campus resources.

(A) Ex. [The MU](#), [Student Activities Center](#)

Avoid disposable, plastic water or pop bottles, borrow a large jug instead.

If you MUST buy new things, bring your own reusable bag to the store.



Green Your Vendor List

Look for vendors who have had experience with green products and services or are willing to work with you.

1. Ask them about sustainable options.
2. If they do not have any ideas, ask them to find and provide them—be persistent: the more demand they receive, the more they will provide options to future customers.

If you are just buying a few products and not working through a vendor, look for green certified products.

If you have to go with disposables for an event, look to make sure they are compostable, not just biodegradable.

1. Biodegradable products break down through the action of a naturally occurring microorganism, such as bacteria, fungi etc. However, when dumped in landfills, it can create methane or contain toxins.
2. Compostable is pretty close to biodegradable plastic but it is able to break down into carbon dioxide, water and biomass at the same rate as paper, should not produce any toxic material, and should be able to support plant life.
3. For more information: <http://www.greenlivingtips.com/articles/197/1/De-gradable-Biodegradable-Compostable.html>

TIP: Check out New American Dream's Conscious Consumer Marketplace for great leads on sustainable vendors and products! Go to www.newdream.org



Green Your Food Options

Look for local food options!

To increase social sustainability, look to partner with other groups on campus who can provide alternative dishes such as ethnic, vegetarian or vegan options; consider sampling organic products as well.

Publicity



Be Creative

Dress up in a creative costume that represents your event or organization and stand by the library free-speech zone with a big sign about your event!

Set up a table and a computer or two at places like the MU or the Library and get people to attend the event through Facebook on your computers.

1. The Student Activities Center offers a host of services for student organizations from reserving tables at the MU to recycling and publicity!

Get out in the public and interact with people, don't just rely on posters to draw people to your event!



Use Networks and Connections, Not Paper

Use social networking sites, like Facebook, and set up an event.

Let Merry Rankin, the ISU Sustainability Director, at mrarkin@iastate.edu about what you have going on and they can market it through their publicity channels!

Add it to the Live Green! calendar at: <http://www.livegreen.iastate.edu/events/>

Submit your event to the Newline newsletter for Registered Campus Organizations. For instructions, email sac@iastate.edu.

Contact your [local newspapers](#) for community-wide events or the [ISU Daily](#) for campus events!

1. Don't be afraid of making too many contacts! The more contacts, the better chance of getting coverage.
2. Don't forget the Des Moines Register! It may not be a local Ames paper but it can still help give your event some good publicity.

Contact all the local TV and Radio stations. For example:

1. 'Mel in the Morning' on the radio station 1430KASI is open to publicize any event going in Ames that is open to the Ames Community.

(A) The show meets at a new location every Month.

(B) The show goes from 7:30 to about 8:30am depending on the number of speakers.

(C) Show up at the location about 10 minutes before at 7:20ish. There will most likely be a line of a few other speakers who are going to talk as well.

(D) Mel, the host, will ask you a few basic questions about the event and your responses are your chance to talk it up, so come up with some main talking points.

(E) For more information or the month's locations you can call for the show at 515-232-1430 or email at melcrippen@1430kasi.com.

The Event



Energizing The Event

Remember the rule: more with less.

Look for low energy solutions to your event; do as much as you can without energy.

Look for alternative ways to power your events.

1. Search for vendors who provide biodiesel or solar generators.



Educate Staff, Vendors, and Guests About What You're Doing and Why!

"Events involve a big group of people — staff, vendors and guests — and the key to greening them successfully is education. The staff need to know what changes are being made on the event to make it green and why each choice was made. If they don't know why, then they can't educate others, especially the vendors who will be executing the plans.

For example, if you are composting food scraps, everyone should know what goes in the compost bin and why the choice to compost was made.

Vendors need to know both how and why changes are being made to the event. Most vendors have standard practices, and deviating from normal operations can be confusing. But, by understanding the consequences of their operations and product choices, they will learn how and why to make changes to a more sustainable operation.

For example, if you establish a no idling policy for load-in, when the trucks arrive, explain how the policy saves gas and cuts down carbon dioxide emissions. Guests need to be educated as well — they should know what you are doing to green your event and why.

For example, if you're using LED lighting, [let everyone] know you made that choice to save energy.

There are many ways to communicate with guests without taking away from the event: Add a sustainability page to the event website, have signs at the event, or find fun ways to educate. People want to know that they are making smart choices when they attend a green event — it makes them feel good.

The more people are educated, the more they will expect green best practices to be the industry standard. Staff, vendors and guests will speak out and reject an event when it is not green."

— Joshua Mark, Executive Director of Special Event Production, Creative Services, and Director of Sustainability, FOX Broadcasting Company

You will likely find new people are interested and attracted to your event because of your green commitment.



Transportation for Guests

Try to get your event at a place where your guests can walk to.

If they need to drive, here are some great campus resources to use instead of encouraging each guest to drive their own car.

1. CyRide: <http://www.cyride.com/>
2. ISU RideShare: <http://rideshare.gsb.iastate.edu/>
3. WeCar: <http://aboutus.wecar.com/index.html>

There are plenty of resources available online as well

1. Tripmi: <http://www.tripmi.ie/>

After the Event & Clean-Up



Reduce

Try to limit the amount of resources that you use at your event, this can save you time, money and waste.



Reuse

Save the reusable items for your next event; think about supplying them to another group who needs it or has helped you in the past.



Recycle

Consider providing clearly labeled **recycling bins** or spaces during the event so sorting is not necessary during clean-up.

1. Reach out to groups on campus who already offer recycling and request their opinions about the event

(A) The GreenHouse Group is highly involved in recycling within the residence halls. Go to <http://sodb.stuorg.iastate.edu/view.php?id=1603>

2. Contact Allison Taylor at ataylor@iastate.edu or (515) 294-5350 in Athletics about possibly borrowing recycling bins (Cans for a Cause) for your event!

Think about providing clearly labeled **composting bins** or containers during the event so as to gather compostable materials at your event.

1. The University Compost Facility offers a low-cost way to dispose of them—All compost is then used for university landscaping, new construction projects, existing buildings and planting beds.

(A) **Acceptable materials:** leaves, grass clippings, perennial and grass debris from cleaning up landscape beds, greenhouse plant material, food waste with nothing else in it (no plates, silverware, cups, etc.), potting soil, sod and topsoil are okay

(B) **Unacceptable materials:** No metal, no sticks, twigs, branches or bigger woody material (such as prunings or trimmings from shrubs, trees and the like); no sand, no plastic or garbage of any kind, no plastic garbage bags, water bottles, cans, cardboard, of any kind, also no plates, food utensils, and cups (not all "compostable" eatery is actually compostable you have to make sure you have the right kind).

(C) Materials should be brought out to the facility in garbage cans, totes, or in the back of a pickup or other vehicle. Please don't use plastic garbage bags.

(D) When materials are brought to the facility, you must get on the scale and get your vehicle's full weight and then again empty. Then go inside the scale house and write down the weights and other info on clipboard for campus materials so we know who to bill. The charge is \$5/ton with a minimum of \$5 for less than a ton

(E) For more information contact Steve Jonas at sjonas23@iastate.edu or (515) 450-0581



Share Your Successes

Tell the ISU Sustainability Director, Merry Rankin, at mrarkin@iastate.edu so she can help other groups make connections.

Update your organizations profile on the Live Green! website.

1. If your group doesn't have a profile on the website yet, consider it.

Join the Green Umbrella.

Planning an event can be a lot of work and sustainable events are no exception. Thankfully, with the right team and tools, it can also be a fun and engaging process! This quick primer can be a strong companion as your plan your next event.

Contact the ISU Sustainability Director, Merry Rankin, at mrarkin@iastate.edu or livegreen@iastate.edu for more ideas and to start your planning!

Thank you for your continued support!

LIVE GREEN!

www.livegreen.iastate.edu

