



# Green Your Event!

PLEASE USE THIS AS A GUIDE TO ASSIST YOU WHEN PLANNING YOUR NEXT EVENT.

- 1. GREENING PLAN:** To create a Greening Plan, start by deciding the primary goals of your event and the environmental areas you would like to impact the most. For example, would you like to focus on using all local products, so nothing is shipped in? Or would you like to strive for a zero waste event? Do you want to educate and involve your patrons in your greening measures? Incorporate as many items as possible and use this guide to get started.



- 2. VENUE:** The first step is locating an appropriate venue for your event. While you are scouting, keep in mind the needs of your event and the goals of your greening plan. Ask the venue manager about their recycling and food waste disposal programs, as well as the kind of products they use when cleaning their site and restrooms. In addition, ask the venue manager to outline their use of alternative energy sources and their efforts to reduce the overall amount of energy used to power the venue.

- 3. FOOD AND DRINKS:** Try to find a caterer and suppliers that use locally grown and/or organic food. Transportation mileage increases cost and environmental impact while decreasing quality and freshness of the food. Ask the caterer about scaling back the amount of meat and other animal products like dairy and fish. Encourage food vendors to increase plant-based menu items and offer vegetarian and vegan options. Check into your local beverage companies instead of shipping from the mainland. Work with caterers to identify local farmers and farm cooperatives to ensure local sourcing occurs. Additionally, ask farm vendors if they will collect food waste and compost from the event.

- 4. FOOD WASTE:** Only order what you think your event will need and make plans with a food bank to pick up the leftovers. Compost what you can – most farms accept compost if it does not contain meat, dairy, fish or eggs. Consider separating food waste to send to a local farm for composting. Another option is to identify pig farms in the area, most of them get their food from our food waste. Get in touch with a



group that does food waste pick-up in your area and find out the details of how to turn the food scraps into pig food. For most, it is as simple as scraping the food waste into a designated sealed trashcan and making sure it gets picked up within three days.

- 5. WATER:** The common denominator in every event is water. We all love it and need it! Use beverage dispensers or five-gallon water jugs. Remind attendees in your flyer and outreach to bring their reusable water bottles. Offer reusable or compostable cups for those who forget. Consider selling compostable cups for \$1 each to make up for any lost revenue from eliminating single-use plastic water bottles. Plastic Free Hawai'i offers their water refill stations to large events free of cost. Contact [plasticfree@kokuahawaiiifoundation.org](mailto:plasticfree@kokuahawaiiifoundation.org) to request a water refill station at your event.



- 6. FOOD WARES:** Ideally, you want to use reusable plates, glasses, forks, knives, etc. Your venue may offer reusable items already, or you can go to a local rental company to rent them for your event. If you need to use disposables, ask your caterer or food vendors to use compostable products. Compostable items include utensils, plates, straws, etc. that are made 100% from plants. These are non-toxic, environmentally safe alternatives that will not last hundreds of years in the environment like plastic does. Make sure you let your caterer or food vendors know to not bring Styrofoam or other single-use plastics to your event. If straws are required, use paper or compostable straws, and only provide them upon request. Check out our "How to Organize a Plastic Free Event" guide for more details.



- 7. RESTROOMS:** You can go the extra mile by finding out the kind of toiletry products that are used in the restrooms. Make sure to stock with 100% recycled paper for your toilet paper and paper towels. A nice touch to any event is using cloth hand towels that will be washed and used again. Simply place a basket of clean towels on the counter with a larger basket on the floor for the used ones. There are many all-natural, non-toxic hand soaps that are a

nice alternative to the usual pink liquid soap. If you are using portable restrooms, make sure they use minimal water, if any, for flushing and minimal chemicals to treat the waste.

- 8. TRAVEL** In your invite and pre-event materials, strongly suggest to your patrons to use alternative transportation. This could include bus, carpooling, walking, and/or biking, depending on the proximity of your venue. If available, encourage the use of bikesharing, and consider creating a 'bike valet' where your patrons that choose to bicycle will receive front row, secure parking. Another fun idea to assist people in their carpooling efforts is to provide vans, buses, or limo services. The attendees could meet somewhere central in their area or be picked up at their doorstep. When promoting your event online and in the media contact your local public transportation office and ask them to provide a custom link highlighting bus and train options for your event attendees. If air travel is involved, offer purchasing of carbon offset credits.



- 9. GRAPHIC DESIGN AND PRINTED MATERIALS** Instead of printing invitations and information sheets, try using E-vites and a website. If printing is necessary, use post consumer waste recycled paper with nontoxic soy inks and keep pages minimal. Many local print shops now offer these eco-friendly options. Remember to take care of any leftover materials by recycling or reusing, once the event has come to its completion.

- 10. MERCHANDISE** If your event includes printed merchandise; organic cotton, bamboo, and/or hemp are good choices for fabrics and nontoxic water-based inks work just as well as the traditional printing methods. Reusable water bottles, made of stainless steel, towels, and reusable tote bags are also great options. One fun way to "create" merchandise is by providing onsite eco-friendly screen-printing. Patrons can bring their own t-shirt, sweatshirt, etc and have it "up-cycled" with a custom event logo printed onsite.



- 11. GREEN POWER** Perhaps the venue you have chosen already uses LED bulbs and has a photovoltaic system in place, but if it doesn't, you may want to look into ways to curb your energy and CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by using green power. If you need the use of a generator, rent a diesel generator and use biodiesel for the duration of your event. There is no conversion needed and it will burn cleaner.



- 12. CARBON OFFSETS** Carbon offsetting is a way to compensate for the remaining emissions produced from your event. You can offset these emissions by purchasing renewable energy credits (REC's). There are carbon offset programs available that will help to calculate your carbon emissions, purchase REC's, and apply them to local energy projects.

- 13. DECOR** A large part of an event is the theme or decor. When planning your theme, decorate with items that can be used for another event or passed on. Consider giving live plants or seeds instead of cut flowers as favors. The plants and their vases can be given away at the end of the night.

- 14. COMPOST** If you have any paper at your event or you use biodegradable products, you can compost. Keep a separate container for your compostable items such as paper napkins, paper towels, cornstarch cups, sugar cane plates, and potato forks. Make sure to scrape all meat products off the plates before placing them in the compost bins. You can arrange with a large landowner or local farm to create a compost area for these items. You can also call a local green waste composting company and see if they would be interested in working with you.



- 15. RECYCLING** The suggestions above will minimize the amount of waste at your event. Recycling is an important step after reducing and reusing to further decrease your events trash! For effective recycling, be sure to be prepared with visible bins for each kind of recyclable: aluminum, glass, plastic, and cardboard. Contact a local recycle company to come and pick up the recyclables upon the completion of your event and donate the proceeds to a local school or charity.



- 16. TRASH** After all these steps have been followed, you will be surprised at how little trash you will have created. Be sure to follow the proper disposal steps for your event trash and take it to the appropriate transfer stations.

- 17. VOLUNTEERS** Rally your volunteers! This will help ensure your greening plan will fall into place. The water stations, composting, and recycling will flow smoothly if you have volunteers manning them to ensure proper placement and education of your patrons. Designate a volunteer coordinator to communicate with volunteers in advance and direct them on the day of the event. Make sure volunteer roles are clearly laid out in your greening plan.

