



6 WAYS EVENT OFFICES CAN HELP EVENTS REDUCE THEIR IMPACT

This year, many local government organizations will be welcoming new elected officials who will influence a new budget and a new set of strategic priorities. Along with housing, transportation, infrastructure, and technology priorities, we're also likely to see a continued uptake in climate change initiatives. Whether it's coined climate change, sustainability, going green, zero waste or healthy communities, there are endless ways Event Offices can support this strategic swing.

Efforts to reduce our impact on the environment and limit wastefulness are relatively easy to implement when it comes to special events and filming. In fact, several Event Offices have already taken steps towards encouraging and enforcing best practices to reduce the impact of events in their communities. A few years ago, the City of Vancouver, BC, introduced their Green Events Planning Guide in support of their Greenest City Action Plan that hopes to see Vancouver as the greenest city by 2020. The City of San Antonio, Texas, has also developed a guide, by the same name, that aims to reduce the amount of waste, energy and materials consumed during the lifecycle of an event in their city.

All Event Offices can play a role in shaping how events impact their community. If your Event Office is planning to create "green" event guidelines, consider these best practices and creative ways of reducing the impact of events.

During the planning, execution and tear down of an event, the following "green" best practices may be considered to reduce their impact:

1. Manage Waste Effectively

- Offer receptacles for all types of garbage and recycling expected at an event. People are more likely to respond to visual cues such as waste samples posted above each receptacle.
- Assign volunteers to each waste station to help reduce cross-contamination and build awareness with attendees.

2. Encourage Alternate Transportation

- Encourage the use of bikes, walking, public transit, and ride sharing for getting to and from the event.
- Set up a by-donation bike parking lot where event goers can securely store their bikes, scooters and other human-powered transportation. Invite a non-profit group to manage the storage in exchange for donations or event advertising opportunities.

- If accommodations are required, consider providers that embrace green management practices, and are close in proximity to the event or well served by public transport.

3. Use Energy Wisely

- Offer a solar cell phone charging station.
- Give preference to vendors and contractors that use electric vehicles and renewable power.
- For indoor or evening events, use LED lighting.

4. Consume Less, Waste Less

- Reduce waste output by encouraging vendors, contractors and attendees to use and bring their own reusable or recycled materials (e.g. cutlery, plates, cups and napkins).
- Ban the use and distribution of plastic promotional items.
- Reuse event signage, name tags, and event infrastructure.
- Give preference to food and beverage vendors that:
 - thoughtfully manage waste materials by planning how many people they will be feeding and finding creative ways to use any waste (e.g. donating scraps to community gardens for composting)
 - don't sell bottled water
 - use seasonal, organic and local ingredients whenever possible
 - use fair trade products
- Provide tap water stations and encourage attendees to BYO non-glass drinking vessels. If tap water isn't available, remember to recycle plastic bottles!

5. Give Back to the Community

- Donate a portion of event proceeds to non-profit organizations or towards causes that are meaningful to the community (e.g. donating trees to help green public spaces).
- Invite local non-profit groups to volunteer in exchange for benefits (e.g. youth sports club members collecting recyclables and keeping the proceeds to grow their programming).
- Use local staff, contractors, vendors, and suppliers where possible.

6. Go Digital

- Use websites, mobile apps and social media platforms for sharing information and updates – this is a win/win because cell phone use at events is on the rise, and it encourages attendees

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- to connect, share and spread the word about an event.
- Encourage event attendees to pre-purchase tickets and bring them on their phone versus receiving paper tickets.

Event Offices can also take steps to reduce their own environmental impact. Here are just a few internal initiatives to help you walk the talk as you support event organizers in their efforts.

- Implement a digitally-seamless event permit application and approval system that eliminates the use of paper and reduces the time and cost of issuing permits.
- Eliminate printed materials by sharing event best practices, maps, event management plan samples, and other helpful resources on your website and on social media platforms.
- Use online conferencing tools to meet with event organizers saving them from driving to your Event Office.
- Develop a digital evaluation tool for event organizers to measure their environmental impact, e.g. amount of waste generated, recycled, and redirected from landfills.

What is your Event Office doing to reduce the impact of events on your community? Share your suggestions by joining the conversation on Twitter and using the hashtag, #eventpermit.

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