

GREEN EVENTS

A GUIDE TO A SUSTAINABLE EVENT



INTRODUCTION

Events at Colorado College can create community and help establish a sense of place. However, they can leave a significant environmental footprint - through consumption of energy and water, generating waste, and contributing to CC's overall greenhouse gas emissions. The purpose of this guide is to provide a tool to help incorporate sustainability considerations into planning an event. Such considerations not only lead to a lower environmental impact, but often come with financial advantages and social benefits for the community. Additionally, they may trigger other positive effects such as raising awareness and stimulating local businesses, that in turn could have long-term benefits to the greater Colorado Springs community.

In order to create a valuable guide to achieving a 'green event', the Office of Sustainability has partnered with the Colorado College Student Government Association (CCSGA). Both parties bring their specific functions, knowledge, and outreach to the CC community to support event planners.

This guide is for those who are interested in moving towards a more responsible 'norm' for integrating sustainability practices into all aspects of event planning at Colorado College.

This green event guide has three sections that cover the following:

Section 1 - Green Events For Positive Impact: Further discussion of what a green event is and a brief overview of the foundation of sustainability

Section 2 - Greening Your Event: Guidance on the overall considerations that a green event should address during the event planning process

Section 3 - The Flow Chart: Step-by-step process for your green event *This section is primarily designed for student planners who specifically are asking for over \$5,000 from CCSGA, however ALL campus is encouraged to use this flow chart as the information within should be helpful to anyone planning an event on campus

Section 4 - Green Event Criteria: A detailed list of sustainable recommendations: leadership, waste management, transportation, food & beverage, accessibility and social responsibility, and energy

Section 5 - Resources: Links to additional resources covered throughout the document

SECTION 1: GREEN EVENTS FOR POSITIVE CHANGE

What Is A Green Event?

A green event is one that is planned, organized, and implemented in a way that reduces the negative impacts to the physical environment and promotes an inclusive social environment.

Green events should be designed with the following in mind:

- An accessible and inclusive setting for all
- Minimizes negative impacts to the physical environment
- Encourages healthy living and well-being
- Promotes responsible sourcing
- Encourages sustainable behavior and thinking outside the context of the event

Balancing The Three E's of Sustainability

While the environment is heavily associated with sustainability, it is not central to sustainable development work. Defined in the report "Our Common Future" in 1987, also known as the *Brundtland Report*:

"Sustainable development is that which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."

It was in this document which coined, and defined the meaning of the most commonly quoted term 'sustainable development'. Additionally, "Our Common Future" highlighted three fundamental concepts to sustainable development: **environmental** protection, **economic** growth, and social **equity**. Sustainability recognizes the interdependence of these 'needs'. All three of which are necessary to meet needs now and into the future. It is important to note that each piece is equally important in pursuing sustainability issues - and a green event!

The United Nations Sustainable Goals [🔗](#)

Furthermore, the Office of Sustainability sees our work through the lens of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Adopted by world leaders at the UN Summit in 2015 (they went into effect Jan. 2016), the 17 SDGs represent a global partnership in mobilizing efforts to address issues and achieve a better and more sustainable future for all. The goals are listed on the next page. Think about how your green event is connected to these larger global goals.



SECTION 1: GREEN EVENTS FOR POSITIVE CHANGE



- 1** End poverty in all its forms everywhere.
- 2** End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture.
- 3** Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages.
- 4** Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.
- 5** Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.
- 6** Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all.
- 7** Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable, and modern energy for all.
- 8** Promote sustained, inclusive economic growth, full and productive employment, and decent work.
- 9** Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive industrialization, and foster innovation.
- 10** Reduce inequality within and among countries.
- 11** Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable.
- 12** Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns.
- 13** Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts.
- 14** Conserve the oceans, seas, and marine resources for sustainable development.
- 15** Protect, restore, and promote use of terrestrial ecosystems, manage forests, combat desertification, halt and reverse land degradation, and halt biodiversity loss.
- 16** Promote peaceful and inclusive societies, provide access to justice for all, and build effective, accountable, and inclusive institutions at all levels.
- 17** Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for development.

SECTION 2: GREENING YOUR EVENT

Organizing your green event starts way before the event takes place and can continue long after its conclusion. If you decide to integrate sustainability concepts into your event, make sure you start early as some items make take longer than others.

Consider the following:

- Efforts are taken to reduce event-related emissions of greenhouse gases and support offsetting unavoidable emissions.
- Actions are taken to reduce the consumption of water, energy, materials, and other resources.
- Measures are in place to reduce the generation of waste and proper diversion of waste into the correct streams: compost, recycle, and trash.
- When purchasing goods and services for the event, the environmental and social impacts of the life cycle are considered as a purchasing factor.
- Social and environmental principles are applied throughout the implementation of the event: to reduce the negative impacts to the environment and ensure accessibility, inclusion, and well-being of all involved.
- Efforts are made to increase awareness of, inform and involve relevant stakeholders, including the participants of green event actions taken to create a more sustainable event.
- A reporting system to CCSGA or the Office of Sustainability to assess and evaluate one's green event are in place.

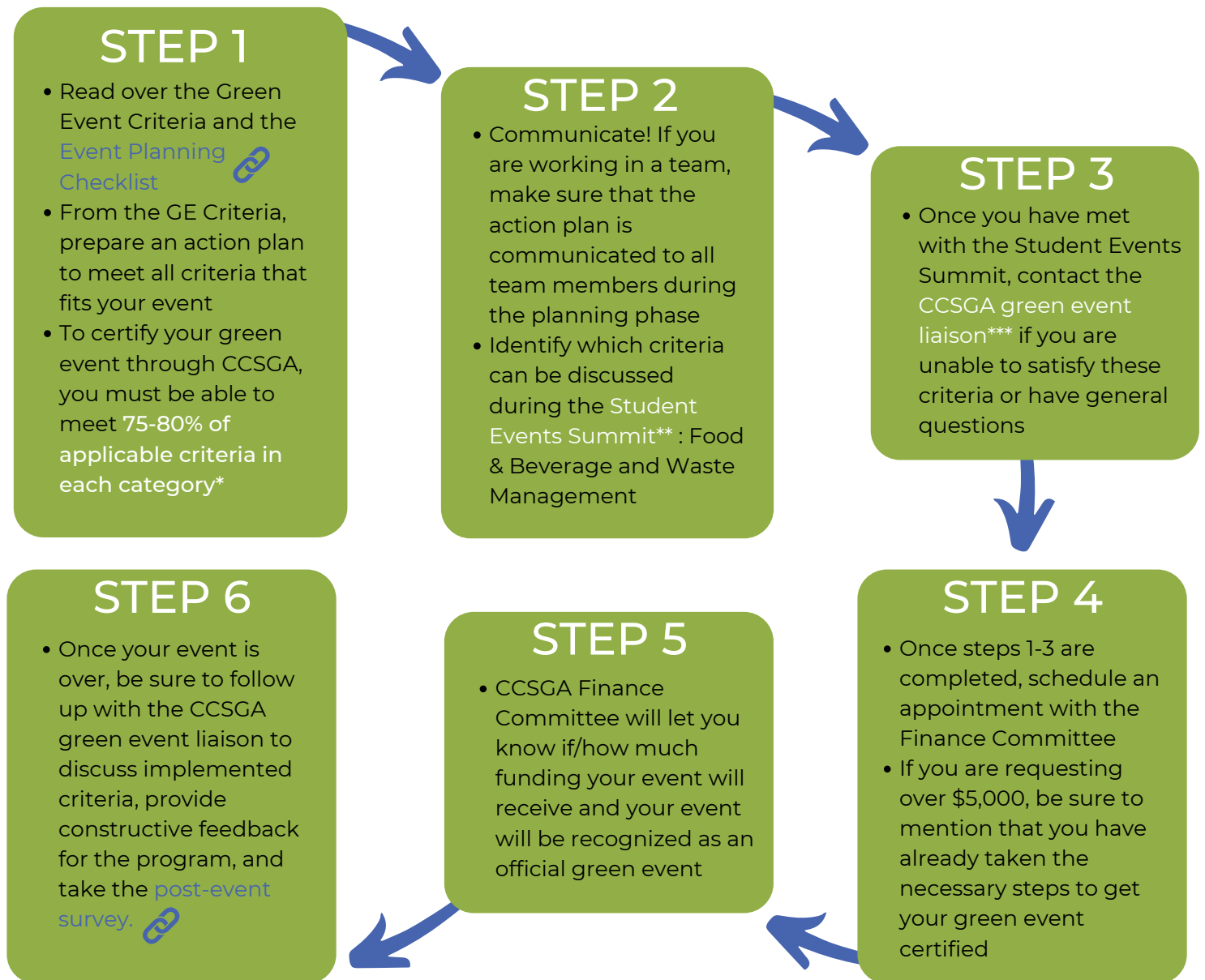
The following considerations have been developed specifically for events happening on the CC campus. They represent a broader view in creating a green event, and to make future events consistently more sustainable.



SECTION 3: THE FLOW CHART

If you are seeking over \$5,000 from the Special Events Funding through Colorado College Student Government Association (CCSGA), contents of this flow chart are required. Though this flow chart is intended primarily for student event planners, the information within can support ALL campus planners when planning an event and they are encouraged to use this.

Special Events Funding through CCSGA Flow Chart



* **Applicable Criteria:** For example, the Waste Management section has total of 10 recommendations listed. In order to reach the minimum 75%, 8/10 recommendations must be completed. However, if 2 of those do not apply to your event, then only 6/8 recommendations are required.

** **Student Events Summit:** In accordance to the Special Events Funding page, you must attend a Students Events Summit prior to meeting with the Finance Committee for a funding appointment. Summits are held each Tuesday from 1-3 pm in Worner 212. Email Antonio Soto or Amy Hill to book a spot.

*** **CCSGA green event liaison:** The liaison for each academic year will be a member of CCSGA. To reach the liaison, please email CCSGA@coloradocollege.edu.

SECTION 4: GREEN EVENT CRITERIA

The Checklist

The checklist provides a detailed set of recommendations that will support you in making your event a green event. Depending on the scope, resources, and parts to your event - not all criteria will be applicable. In this case, do your best to fulfill as many recommendations as possible.

Criteria Key

- Criteria/Recommendation
 - Suggestions/How-To/Commentary/Notes



Leadership and Communication

Leadership

- Designate at least one person to implement green event recommendations on this list
- Set defined environmental, economic, and equity performance outcomes for the event
- Identify which sustainable development goals your event is related to (SDG's - pg.4)

Communication

- Ask participants of any accessibility requirements, "dietary restrictions, spiritual or religious accommodations, etc." in advance of the event, especially if the event requires an RSVP or registration
- Reduce, as necessary, the use of paper in all communication and promotion of event by turning to electronic means or other innovative ways
 - The Communication Office email blasts
 - Today@CC
 - Emailing the CC community
 - Social media posts with events or announcements
 - Digital boards across campus
 - Word of mouth



Accessibility and Social Responsibility

Accessibility

- Hold events in accessible spaces to ensure inclusion for all
- Welcome people with disabilities by including an accommodation statement that invites participants to request accommodations in advance of the event
- Contact Accessibility Resources if assistance is needed to arrange for sign language interpreters, captioning, and other accommodation support
 - For more information, please refer to the Campus Accessibility Guide and the Accessible Events Guide in Section 5: Resources

Social Responsibility

- When setting up, especially the menu, considerations should be taken for: culture, religion, cost, and access.



Transportation



- Promote alternative transportation methods for getting to and from the event such as ride sharing, carpooling, Mountain Metro, PikeRide/bike riding, and walking
- If bringing in a speaker, specifically by plane - the participant or planner is required to offset their carbon emissions created by the trip
 - **CCSGA Requirement:** Before going to the Finance Committee, calculation of speaker's offset amount should be calculated and added to the budget proposal.
 - The Office of Sustainability has a carbon offset calculator to make offsetting travel easier.
 - Partnered with Facilities Services and Transportation, the Office of Sustainability implemented a \$0.01 per-mile surcharge to all vehicles in the CC fleet. This money is used to purchase regionally based carbon investments.



Food & Beverage

Product Waste Related To Food & Beverage

- Use reusable dishware and/or utensils
- Use non-dyed napkins that can be composted
 - The BLACK napkins that are served with Bon Appetit catering CANNOT be composted
- Eliminate styrofoam completely
- Avoid individually wrapped condiment packets or snacks, such as individual chip bags
- Avoid the use of unnecessary one-time use products: coffee stirrers, straws, toothpicks

Food Waste



- Address food waste by posting extras on CC's "[Food Finder](#)" page
- Provide smaller plates so that people do not take more food than they will eat
- Request leftover food items to be donated post event to a local nonprofit, if possible!
 - Must keep food safety and temperature in mind for donations after the event

Food & Beverage Selection

- Offer at least one vegan and one vegetarian option and make sure that they are well labelled
- Reduce or eliminate animal-based proteins, particularly beef
- Avoid excess packaging and food by:
 - Buying food in bulk
 - Providing condiments in bulk, avoiding individual packets
 - Providing water bottle filling stations instead of disposable plastic water bottles
- Avoid serving red meat or unsustainable-sourced seafood
- Minimize the quantity of dairy products offered
- Serve local food (within Colorado)
- Choose food items that can be consumed without utensils
- If using an offsite caterer, be aware of disposable items or containers that are made from styrofoam. Ask the catering company if they use styrofoam and request to avoid usage of it



Waste Management

Reduction Of Paper

- If used, ensure that paper materials are printed on post-consumer content recycled paper and/or are printed using the two-sided print option
 - Post-consumer content is made from waste that's been used by a consumer, disposed of, and diverted from landfills
- If used, reduce the size or number of paper flyers posted around campus or eliminate entirely from the event
- Adopt generic branding (non-dated) on larger signage (banners, posters, signs, place cards) so that they can be re-used for future events

Materials

- Reusable items should be used as much as possible. If disposable items are essential, they should be recyclable or compostable
 - Colorado College no longer takes compostable products that are made from bio plastics
- If used, rent reusable tablecloths
- If needed, invite guests to bring their own water bottle, mug, or utensils
- If used, collect and reuse lanyards post event

Waste

- Arrange for the appropriate bins to be placed during the event
 - If you are planning to include food, a compost bin will be needed
 - All events should include at least a recycle and landfill bin
- Ensure proper and consistent signage on the waste receptacles for easy waste diversion during your event
- During the event, remind participants where and what to recycle and/or compost
 - Have a volunteer stand by the bins to guide proper waste diversion



Energy

- Consider the timing of the event, we recommend a space that maximizes the use of daylight
- If in a room, make sure that all lights and electronics are turned off at the end of the event
 - Think of other innovative ways to generate energy for the event: solar-powered or bike-human powered energy



SECTION 5: RESOURCES



Links To Support Your Event



How To: Recycle, Compost, Landfill

- Since recycling isn't standardized throughout the U.S, many people have questions about what can and cannot be recycled and composted. Check out these specific guidelines on this topic from Green for Life.



Travel Offset Carbon Calculator

- Minimize the impacts of your travel or a guest traveling to your event . By purchasing offsets through CC's carbon offset fund, you are helping projects remove carbon from the atmosphere and lowering the college's footprint!



Event Planning Checklist

- Campus Activities put together this checklist to help event planner navigate the event planning process at CC.



CC Student Government Association

- For student club, groups, and organizations that are asking over \$5,000 in funding for an event, your event must be green event - certified. Please contact CCSGA for information about the process. More information can be found on the CCSGA website through the Special Events Funding page.



Accessibility Resources

- Learn more about Accessibility Resources and contact for sign language interpreters, captioning, and other accommodation support.
- More information can be found:



- Campus Accessibility Guide



- Accessible Events Guide



Office of Sustainability

- If you are interested in learning more about our office and programs, please check out our website. If you have further questions, please contact sustainability@coloradocollege.edu.

