

# Iowa Green Meetings & Events

**A Best Practices Manual  
For Iowa meetings and events  
of all sizes and types**



By the Iowa Recycling Association  
with funding from the Iowa  
Department of Natural Resources

# Welcome!

Great things happen when Iowans gather: collaboration, celebration, innovation, learning, sharing and more. The Iowa Green Events and Meetings Guide was specifically designed to help Iowans plan events and meetings in a way that supports these great outcomes while minimizing the unintended consequences and side effects, such as waste, pollution and CO<sub>2</sub>.

We recognize that each event serves a different purpose and has different needs, so we've created a comprehensive guide that gives events of all sizes the flexibility to choose which elements are important and relevant.

Above all, the purpose of this guide is to help events and meetings reduce waste, encourage local purchasing, contribute to healthy people and communities and maintain a healthy environment. We hope you find it valuable.

Reduce, reuse, recycle,



Teresa Kurtz



The Iowa Recycling Association (IRA) is a non-profit organization with more than 375 members from across Iowa, representing individuals, businesses and industries, local governments, institutions, and organizations dedicated to a healthy environment and a healthy economy by promoting waste reduction, reuse, recycling and composting.

IRA believes waste reduction, reuse, recycling and composting contribute to Iowa's sustainability. By sharing information, educating ourselves and others, and cooperating IRA's members bring about positive change through recycling.

This guide was prepared with the support of the Iowa Department of Natural Resources Contract Number 09-G550-19. However, any opinions, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed herein are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of IDNR.

## INTRODUCTION

What do we mean by “Green?” . . . . .	4
Green Event stakeholders and goals. . . . .	6

## GREEN MEETING CHECKLISTS

Initial Event Planning. . . . .	8
Green Purchasing . . . . .	10
Green Venues. . . . .	11
Greening the Registration Process. . . . .	12
Minimizing the Effects of Transportation . . . . .	13
Green Food Choices . . . . .	14
Communicating the Green Message. . . . .	16
Follow-Up to a Green Event. . . . .	17

## RESOURCES

Green Products . . . . .	18
Other Resources . . . . .	20

## APPENDIX

A – Sample Policy for Green Events	
B – Sample Policy for Green Purchasing	
C – Sample Checklist for Venue Selection	
D – Sample RFP for Green Venue	
E – Iowa Food Banks	
F – Iowa Recycling by Location	

# What do we Mean by “Green?”

Green means making choices that are healthier, safer, less wasteful and less damaging to the environment and the community. It means striving to leave a positive impact instead of a negative one. Green – sometimes called sustainability – is a way of doing things that take the present and the future into account. You’re probably already familiar with basic green ideas, such as:

- Reduce, reuse, recycle
- Energy- and water-efficiency
- Toxics and pollution reduction
- Buying locally

Adopting green practices has many benefits, both tangible and intangible, to you, your community and your business or organization. Benefits include greater efficiency and reduced expenses, reduced health risks, stimulation of the local economy, and a healthy, vibrant community.

Organizations and businesses can leverage their green actions to build their reputation and differentiate themselves from competitors. Improving their reputation and brand value in this way attracts new members and customers and more easily recruits engaged, motivated staff.

## Greenwashing

You deserve credit for your green efforts, so don’t be afraid to talk about your successes! Be honest about your efforts to go green, but don’t claim more credit than you deserve. Misleading or exaggerated green claims (called “greenwashing”) can ultimately be more risky than beneficial to your organization.

## What is a green event?

A green event is one that strives for efficiency, waste reduction, and a positive effect on the community. More specifically, a green event:

- Minimizes single-use, “throw away” products by choosing reusable and multiple-use options
- Provides opportunities for participants to recycle or compost used materials
- Favors recyclable and compostable materials over non-recyclable
- Takes steps to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from travel
- Supports the local economy by purchasing locally
- Serves healthy, local and seasonal food
- Contributes in positive ways to the community
- Purchases products and services that support these goals

## It's OK to Start Slow

If you're not sure how well a green program will work for you, design a pilot project to test the waters and show success before rolling out larger changes.

### Are green meetings expensive?

Green meetings seek to do more, using less. Whether it is energy, water or materials, cutting waste almost always reduces expenses.

Many of the suggestions in this guide can be implemented with little or no up-front cost, and most will lead to long-term savings. Eliminating individually bottled water and providing bulk water in pitchers, for example, will reduce expenses and waste.

Other choices may in fact include an up-front cost. When this is the case, consider the entire life cycle of the product to determine if you will experience net savings over time. For example, compostable dishes may cost more than traditional, but paired with a composting program, can offset trash removal expenses.

## Green is here to stay

Green is not a fad – it's a long-term trend. Because sustainability is built on solid principles that contribute to better business practices, strong communities and a healthy environment, the green movement will continue to influence decision-making. Consider these supporting facts:

- Incinerating 10,000 tons of solid waste creates one job; landfilling 10,000 tons creates six jobs; recycling 10,000 tons of solid waste creates 36 jobs.<sup>1</sup>
- Recycling an aluminum can saves enough energy to run your computer or TV for two hours.<sup>1</sup>
- Americans send enough metal to the landfill to rebuild our nation's commercial air fleet every three months.<sup>2</sup>
- Recycling one ton of paper saves:
  - 17 mature trees
  - 7,000 gallons of water
  - 3 cubic yards of landfill space
  - 2 barrels of oil
  - 4,100 kilowatt hours of electricity (enough to power an average American home for five months)<sup>1</sup>
- Bottled water costs 500 to 4,000 times as much as tap water, and eight out of ten bottles end up as litter or in a landfill.<sup>1</sup>

### Why green events?

**Venues** – As events increasingly look to reduce their impact, having green meeting practices in place will set your facility apart from (and ahead of) the competition. Not only will this help drive sales, but efficient operations that reduce energy and water use will cut costs and raise profit margins. Other benefits include creating a safer and healthier space for guests and staff, reducing risks of injury and sickness, and increasing productivity.

**Planners** – For event planners, producing and promoting green meetings can help reduce overall expenses, attract media attention, increase and maintain sponsorships, and attract a larger base of participants.

<sup>1</sup>Source: US EPA

<sup>2</sup>Source: Clean Air Council

# Green Event Stakeholders and Goals

## Stakeholders

Stakeholders are a critical part of producing a successful green meeting. Event organizers will set the green policy but meeting the goals will require the help of almost everyone involved. The venue, for example, will be a partner in facilitating the collection of recyclables and the caterer may need to source food locally. Communicating green goals with stakeholders early and often is important in gaining their support.

Who are your stakeholders? Stakeholders will vary by meeting type but generally include the event organizers, sponsors, venue, attendees, exhibitors, partner organizations, suppliers, the community at large and possibly government agencies. Each stakeholder group will respond to different messages and have different motivations.

Consistently engaging each group in green goals is essential.



## Green Event Goals

The most successful green initiatives are those that address issues that are relevant to your organization and your stakeholders. These might include reducing energy consumption or increasing local purchasing. Use the list of common goals on page 7 to create a customized set of green goals for your event.

GOAL	GREEN EVENTS SEEK TO...	ABBREV.
Community Improvement	...eliminate harmful effects of the conference to the local community and/or improve the community in some way. This can include the natural environment, built environment and social aspects of the community.	C
Education	...facilitate learning and awareness of environmental or social issues and engage attendees to participate in green actions.	ED
Energy	...reduce greenhouse gas emissions by improving energy efficiency and reducing energy use from travel, electric and gas.	E
Financial	...improve cost-effectiveness through reducing expenses by cutting or eliminating waste.	F
Healthy Environment	...maintain or improve the environment's ability to perform its natural functions.	ENV
Health and Wellness	...reduce use of toxic or harmful materials, providing nutritious food and drink and promoting physical activity.	HW
Water	...conserve water as a limited natural resource; protect and improve water quality.	W
Local Economy	...support local businesses and vendors whenever possible.	LE
Social Responsibility	...support the fair and humane treatment of people and communities locally and worldwide.	SR
Waste Reduction	...eliminate or reduce the amount of landfilled material by reducing consumption, reusing materials, recycling and composting.	WR

Use the abbreviations listed on the right hand side of the table above to find corresponding items on the following checklists. For example, actions items to help meet Energy goals are identified with an E in the following checklists.

## How to Plan a Green Meeting

Meetings of any size and type – from internal office meetings to weddings to regional festivals and national conferences – share the same basic principles for going green. **The bottom line is to increase positive impacts and reduce negative impacts of your event.**

Checklists on the following pages are designed to be an easy-to-use framework to guide the green meeting process from start to finish. Although the timeline for each type of event will greatly vary, the checklists are presented in roughly chronological order. For example, adopting first a green event policy and green office practices will lay the groundwork for other decisions, such as venue selection and planning for participant transportation.

# Initial Event Planning

It is never too soon to begin addressing the green elements of a meeting. In fact, integrating green elements into the entire planning process – as opposed to afterthoughts – can save time and money, and increase success of the effort.

The following checklist includes actions that should be considered during the early stages of event planning. Use this checklist as a guide, selecting the items that are most relevant to meeting the green goals you have set.

✓	EVENT ORGANIZERS – LAYING THE GROUNDWORK	GOALS
	Formally adopt a green event policy, stating the organization’s commitment to reducing negative impacts and improving environmental performance (see Appendix A.)	All
	Set specific and attainable goals for waste minimization, reduced energy use, reduced travel and environmentally preferable purchasing.	All
	Share environmental policy and goals with planning team, presenters, sponsors, exhibitors and contractors and explain what this means. Emphasize their role in helping meet these goals, and explicitly ask for their participation and assistance.	All
	Actively seek sponsors and donors that reflect positive environmental values and practices. (Consider rejecting contributions from corporations that are known for environmentally destructive practices.)	All
	Track progress toward green goals. Share results with all stakeholders (planning team, venue representative, attendees, sponsors, exhibitors, etc), and include your successes in event communications, including press releases.	All

✓	EXHIBITORS – EVENT PLANNING	GOALS
	Limit distribution of brochures and handouts to those with a genuine need or interest (e.g., by providing a sign-up sheet or collecting business cards for subsequent mailings).	WR
	Provide materials via PDF downloads; print handout materials on double-sided, post-consumer content, recycled paper using vegetable-based inks; bring only what is needed for the event, and take back unused materials for future events.	WR
	Reuse boxes and packing materials for shipping materials and displays.	WR
	Ensure that promotional items are made from recyclable, compostable, and non-toxic materials.	WR
	Seek to re-use display materials.	WR



✓	EVENT ORGANIZERS – OFFICE PRACTICES	GOALS
	Use email and voicemail instead of paper memos and mailings.	WR
	Use a minimum of 30% post-consumer recycled content paper products, such as office paper and toilet paper.	WR
	Use office paper products that are certified by the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC).	ENV
	Edit documents on-screen, rather than printing drafts. Produce paper documents only when necessary. Reduce margins to minimize document length.	WR
	Use both sides when printing or photocopying.	WR
	For outgoing mail, regularly update mailing and circulation lists to avoid unnecessary mailings.	WR
	For incoming mail, unsubscribe to catalogs and other mail you do not wish to receive by calling the customer service number lists.	WR
	In the planning office, collect paper, cardboard, metals, glass, and plastics for recycling, and food scraps for composting.	WR
	Recycle toner and printer cartridges as well as office paper.	WR
	Avoid single-use disposable items and opt for durable, reusable products.	WR
	Turn off appliances and electronics when not in use.	E
	Unplug power adapters (such as cell phone chargers) when not in use, as these draw energy even when the device is not turned on.	E
	Properly dispose of hazardous materials (electronics, paints, batteries, fluorescent lamps/ bulbs, etc.)	ENV, HW

✓	EVENT ORGANIZERS – GENERAL EVENT PLANNING	GOALS
	Encourage speakers to provide electronic copies of handouts and any visual presentations and make them available on the event website, by email, or on a re-usable flash drive.	WR
	Recruit volunteers to monitor each “trash station” to ensure that recyclables and compostables are placed in the proper bins.	WR
	Choose gifts for participants that are durable, minimally packaged and made from non-toxic materials.	WR
	Ask exhibitors to adhere to a green policy for promotional items, including preference for recycled, recyclable, compostable, and non-toxic materials.	WR
	Offer exhibitors re-use opportunities for their decorations and display materials. These items may be in demand by local schools or nonprofit organizations.	WR
	Develop criteria for special recognition of green exhibitors. Send criteria to exhibitors in advance. Provide visual (i.e. a medal or badge) and verbal recognition of exhibitors that meet the criteria throughout the event.	ED
	Arrange for use of reusable dry erase markers, marker boards or blackboards, overheads, computer projectors and slides instead of paper flip charts. (If paper flip charts must be provided, they should be made of recyclable newsprint, with recycled content.)	WR

# Green Purchasing

The materials that enter the organization through purchasing practices have many effects, both short- and long-term. “Environmentally preferable purchasing” recognizes the human and environmental health impacts of products, including how they are made and the materials used. Considerations include recycled content, energy consumption, toxicity, air and water pollution impact, materials efficiency (such as packaging), and the disposal impact (or recyclability) at the end of its useful life.



✓	EVENT ORGANIZERS – PURCHASING	GOALS
	Establish a purchasing policy stating that for all goods procured for the meeting, preference is given to the most environmentally appropriate alternatives that are available at a reasonable price and are locally produced. This may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Energy Star certified equipment</li> <li>• Post-consumer recycled content paper</li> <li>• Durable, non-disposable products</li> <li>• Safe, non-toxic products</li> <li>• Compostable and locally recyclable products</li> <li>• Minimally packaged products</li> <li>• Sweatshop-free products</li> </ul> (See Appendix B: Sample Policy for Green Purchasing.)	All
	Give preference to contractors and suppliers who adhere to the event’s green criteria as routine practice.	All
	Choose suppliers and products that minimize packaging and use recyclable packaging materials.	WR
	Partner and combine purchases with other organizations in order to reach economies of scale and reduce costs through bulk discounts.	F
	Consider purchasing multi-purpose office equipment (i.e., all-in-one fax, printer, scanner, copier), which generally consumes less energy than several single-purpose machines.	ES
	Design event banners that are reusable by not including dates, and have them printed on recycled materials.	WR
	Use reusable name badge holders and collect them after the event for reuse. Consider holding a prize drawing from the collected badges.	WR

# Green Venues

A green meeting venue could be an office, a church, a community hall, a park, a convention center, a stadium, etc. As you choose the right place for your event, consider how the space will help or hinder your green goals. For example, is the venue easily accessible for participants to walk, bike or take public transit? Does the facility have adequate recycling practices? If the venue provides food, do they purchase locally when possible?

Use this checklist below, as well as Appendix C: Sample Checklist for Venue Selection and Appendix D: Sample RFP for Green Venue to help choose the location that will work best for your event.

✓	EXHIBITORS – VENUE	GOALS
	Choose a venue giving consideration to the criteria listed in the Green Venue Checklist in Appendix C.	All
	Communicate green goals to venue representatives.	All
	Work with the venue to set up or expand their recycling program to collect and recycle: paper, cardboard, metals, glass, plastics, organic materials for composting.	WR
	Work with the venue to ensure that recycling collection containers will be placed next to every trash in (at least) the following areas: registration, general session/plenary, breakout sessions, exposition hall, food and beverage areas.	WR
	Ensure that exhibitors have access to recycling receptacles during the event.	WR
	During the event, visually ensure that recyclables are not in the trash. If they are, remove them and provide additional announcements or signage regarding recyclables.	WR
	Reduce energy use by turning off lights and equipment when they are not in use.	E

✓	VENUES	GOALS
	Work to meet guidelines for green venues outlined in Appendix C.	All
	Provide well-marked recycling receptacles for paper, cardboard, metals, glass, plastics, and other recyclable materials. See Appendix F for information about materials that are accepted locally in your area.	WR
	Provide access to electrical outlets so attendees may take notes electronically rather than on paper.	WR

# Greening the Registration Process

The registration process holds several opportunities to lay the foundation for achieving green goals, such as reducing paper use. Use this checklist to help design the event registration process.

✓	EVENT ORGANIZERS – REGISTRATION	GOALS
	Use a paperless registration process for participants and exhibitors. Depending on the size and complexity of your event, this can be done by asking registrants to respond via email or survey websites such as SurveyMonkey.com, electronic documents such as editable PDF files or a form on the event’s website.	WR
	If the event is ticketed, use electronic or paperless tickets in order to reduce paper use and save on mailing costs.	WR
	Include meal choice (if applicable) as part of the registration process in order to reduce food waste and costs.	WR
	During registration, allow attendees the option to offset a portion of their travel or the event’s carbon footprint. (See “What is a Carbon Footprint?” below.)	CR
	Reduce or eliminate paper waste at check-in by using electronic systems the day of the event.	WR
	Offer reduced price or complimentary admission to students, nonprofit organizations or others with limited ability to pay full admission.	C
	Provide registration packet materials electronically before the conference, as opposed to printing hard copies for each guest. If attendees receive a registration packet, provide this in a reusable or reused holder.	WR

## What is a Carbon Footprint?

When fossil fuels are burned (for transportation, electricity or heat) a greenhouse gas called carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) is released. The amount of CO<sub>2</sub> released can be calculated based on the quantity of fossil fuel consumed. This is a carbon footprint.

Burning one gallon of gasoline produces about 19.4 lbs. of CO<sub>2</sub>. So a trip that consumes 10 gallons of gas has a carbon footprint of 194 lbs. of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.

# Minimizing the Effects of Transportation

Transportation to and from events is a major contributor to the carbon footprint, due to the use of fossil fuels. The negative effects of travel can be minimized by planning ahead, strategically choosing the event location, and facilitating the use of public transit or carpools.

✓	EVENT ORGANIZERS – TRANSPORTATION	GOALS
	Encourage organizers to walk, bicycle, carpool or use public transit to attend meetings and events whenever possible.	E, HW
	Encourage attendees to offset CO <sub>2</sub> emissions from air travel or transportation. To facilitate this process, make offsets available through the conference website by partnering with an organization. (See “The Carbon Market” below.)	E
	Choose a venue accessible by public transportation and where walking is feasible to lodging and entertainment.	E
	Provide attendees with free public transit passes and transit route maps.	E
	Facilitate carpooling and encourage the use of high-efficiency rental vehicles to and from the event.	E
	Provide maps of walking trails and local parks and suggest off-site events in the area’s natural environment with minimal impact.	C
	Provide/recommend SmartWay-certified hauling options for exhibitor freight.	E
	Suggest after-hours entertainment within walking distance from the event or facilitate carpooling.	E, HW
	For off-site sessions, walk, shuttle or carpool.	E
	Instead of presenters traveling to the site, consider streaming their presentation live and broadcasting it to attendees.	E

## The Carbon Market

The carbon market allows carbon emitters to offset their impact by purchasing the right to claim the verified carbon reductions made by others. Many organizations verify and sell these carbon offsets. Look for a reputable carbon accounting organization such as CarbonFund.org or TerraPass.org.

# Green Food Choices

When food and other organic matter decay, methane (CH<sub>4</sub>) is produced. This greenhouse gas is at least 11 times more potent than carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>). Therefore, keeping food waste out of the landfill is an important element of any green strategy. In order of preference, below are three ways to achieve this:

1. Reduce food excess by ordering only what you will need. If possible, ask attendees to register for meals ahead of time to help forecast demand. Reducing excess food will also reduce your food expenses!
2. Donate leftover food items to local food banks that will distribute the food to those in need. A list of Iowa food banks that accept and distribute food to those in need is listed in Appendix E.
3. Compost food scraps and food that you are not able to donate. Composting turns organic waste into a nutrient rich soil that can be used for gardening. If your solid waste agency or municipality does not accept food scraps, consider asking event stakeholders (such as staff or volunteers) to add it to their backyard composters, if available.

## Is Donating Food a Liability Risk?

### **Bill Emerson Good Samaritan Food Donation Act**

Signed by President Bill Clinton in 1996, this law creates a level of protection from liability in order to encourage the donation of food and grocery products to nonprofit organizations and churches for distribution to needy individuals.

A list of Iowa food banks that accept and distribute food to those in need is listed in Appendix E.

✓	EVENT ORGANIZERS & VENUE – FOOD	GOALS
	Plan meal and snack menus around locally grown, fresh, in season, and/or organic food.	H, LE
	If serving coffee, tea or chocolate, ensure it is certified fair trade.	SR
	Make vegetarian or vegan options available at each meal.	H
	If serving seafood, ensure that it is sustainably harvested. See the Monterey Bay Aquarium Seafood Watch program for guidelines.	ENV
	Eliminate box lunches and serve food buffet style to reduce waste. If meals must be served from a box, ensure that compostable food containers are used in conjunction with a compost program.	WR
	Purchase and serve water, beverages, condiments and other food items in bulk to minimize packaging. Avoid single use packaging.	WR
	Provide attendees with reusable mugs (either ceramic or travel mugs) for coffee and water service. Post reminders on water coolers. After the event, donate unwanted mugs to a local organization or school.	WR
	Adopt a “polystyrene free” policy for the event. Serve meals and snacks on reusable dishware, cutlery and napkins. If single-use items must be used, ensure that compostable or recyclable materials are used and properly collected.	WR
	Require or suggest that concessionaires use compostable or recyclable food service items. (Include recognition in conference materials.)	WR
	Staff the trash/recycling stations with volunteers to monitor and ensure that compost and recycling end up in the proper bins.	WR
	Collect food scraps (and compostable dishware) for composting, if available (see Appendix F.) At events where only small amounts of food scraps are generated, volunteers may be able to take organic materials home for composting.	WR
	Use or give away leftover food (see Appendix E.)	C
	Use the event program and announcements to explain the sustainable and local food choices.	ED

✓	VENDORS – FOOD	GOALS
	Include signage at concessions stations showing which items are compostable or recyclable.	WR
	Provide compost bins for food scraps.	WR

# Communicating the Green Message

Every stakeholder will have a role to play in meeting the green goals, and many will be happy to do so. Communicating your green initiative to stakeholders both allows them to join your effort and helps build a positive reputation for your event.

Nearly every aspect of the event can serve as an opportunity to help participants learn about related environmental and social issues. Share the green message creatively, because this markets your commitment to green issues and raises awareness!

✓	EVENT ORGANIZERS – COMMUNICATIONS	GOALS
	Share environmental policy and goals with planning team, presenters, sponsors, exhibitors and contractors and explain what this means. Emphasize their role in helping meet these goals, and explicitly ask for their help.	ALL
	Remind attendees of waste reduction and other environmental opportunities through a variety of different modes of communication, such as when registering, in conference materials, and during conference announcements.	ED
	Include information about what can be recycled in signage, frequent announcements, and in the event schedule.	WR
	Include education about local environmental issues as a part of the program.	ED, C
	Plan a booth or display explaining green meeting efforts.	ED
	Clearly mark recycling bins with pictures showing which items are recyclable and which are not.	WR



# Follow-Up to a Green Event

After an event, step back and identify the many things that have gone well and the opportunities for improvement. Measure your success at going green by determining how many of your green goals were met. Share these results and find ways to improve your performance for future events using the checklist below.

✓	EVENT ORGANIZERS – FOLLOW-UP	GOALS
	Send a letter of thanks to venue representatives for their cooperation. Encourage them to continue to offer green services.	ED
	On the conference evaluation form, include a space for participants to comment on the environmentally friendly practices of the conference and provide suggestions for improvement.	ED
	In follow-up communication with attendees, recognize and highlight cooperation from event venues, contractors and exhibitors in working toward green goals.	ED
	In follow-up communication, let attendees know how their actions helped contribute toward meeting green goals, such as recycling and composting.	ED
	Send a letter of thanks to exhibitors for their cooperation. Encourage them to continue green practices at other events.	ED
	Save directional, food and beverage and other generic signs for reuse.	ED

# Green Products

(What to look for and where to find them)

## Office Paper

Recycled paper comes in a wide variety of quality, brightness, thickness, gloss, and colors. Many manufacturers now offer guarantees that recycled office paper will work as well as paper made from virgin fiber in printers and copiers.

### Look for:

- Recycled paper with the highest post-consumer content available
- Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certification
- Chlorine-free paper, when possible

**Find paper:** For a list of merchants who sell FSC certified papers, visit [www.fscus.org/paper](http://www.fscus.org/paper).

## Green Printers

### Look for printers that:

- Use FSC certified, 100% post-consumer content paper
- Use low VOC toner or vegetable-based inks
- Use water-based solvents
- Recycle scrap paper
- Use Energy Star certified equipment
- Use online proofing of files, when possible

**Find printers:** For a list of FSC chain of custody certified printers, visit [www.fscus.org/paper](http://www.fscus.org/paper).

## Office and Cleaning Supplies

Ask your locally-owned office supply store to carry green office supplies that meet the guidelines below. To facilitate ordering, most office supply catalogs use an icon to denote green products.

### Look for:

- Durable, reusable items; avoid single use and disposable
- Recycled and natural content
- Recyclable or compostable
- Low- or no-toxicity
- Minimal packaging
- Bulk supplies

**Find supplies:** GreenSeal certifies cleaning products for industrial and institutional use. Visit [www.greenseal.org](http://www.greenseal.org).



The **Forest Stewardship Council** is a third party certifier of products from sustainably managed forests. Principles for certification include both social and environmental issues, such as legal compliance, upholding indigenous peoples' rights, positive community relations and workers' rights, conservation of biological diversity, forest monitoring and assessment, and others.

[www.fscus.org](http://www.fscus.org)



The non-profit TransFair USA is an independent, third-party certifier of coffee, tea and herbs, cocoa and chocolate, fresh fruit, sugar, rice, and vanilla. The **Fair Trade** certification indicates that working farmers earn a living wage, work under fair labor conditions, are able to trade as directly as possible into the world market, and decide democratically how to invest Fair Trade profits, among other things.

Look for the black and white Fair Trade Certified logo.

## Sustainable Food

### Look for:

- Locally grown and produced foods
- Organic certified or pesticide free
- Fair Trade and rainforest certified coffees, teas and chocolates (as well as some fruits, such as bananas)
- Free range eggs and chicken
- Meat from animals not treated with growth hormones or antibiotics
- Sustainably harvested seafood

### Find food:

**Local Harvest** lists locally grown eggs, meat and produce as well as cheeses and dairy products – [www.localharvest.org](http://www.localharvest.org)

Retailers that sell **Rainforest Certified** – [rainforest-alliance.org/green-living/marketplace](http://rainforest-alliance.org/green-living/marketplace)

Resources to find **Fair Trade-certified** products – [www.transfairusa.org/products-partners](http://www.transfairusa.org/products-partners)

The Monterey Bay Aquarium's **Seafood Watch** program lists seafood products to look for and which to avoid – [www.montereybayaquarium.org/cr/seafoodwatch](http://www.montereybayaquarium.org/cr/seafoodwatch)

## Food Service Supplies

### Look for:

- Reusable dishes and cutlery, napkins and tablecloths whenever possible
- Made with natural or recycled content
- Recyclable, biodegradable or compostable items

**Find supplies:** Ask your retailers and vendors to carry reusable and compostable food service supplies.

## Promotional Items

### Look for items that are:

- Made with natural or recycled content
- Fully recyclable or compostable
- Minimally packaged
- Reusable; avoid single use and disposable items
- Safe, non-toxic and healthy
- Useful – less likely to be discarded

**Find promotional items:** Ask your retailers and vendors to carry green options promotional items.

# Other Resources for Green Meetings

## The Green Meeting Industry Council (GMIC)

A professional meetings association with member representation in over 20 countries. The GMIC is 100% focused on advancing sustainability in the meetings industry and is a member of the Convention Industry Council.

[www.greenmeetings.info](http://www.greenmeetings.info)

[www.bluegreenmeetings.org](http://www.bluegreenmeetings.org)

## EPA Green Meetings

For additional information on green meetings from the US Environmental Protection Agency, visit:

[www.epa.gov/opptintr/greenmeetings](http://www.epa.gov/opptintr/greenmeetings)

## EPA Environmentally Preferable Purchasing (EPP)

Helps consumers find green products and services at

[www.epa.gov/opptintr/epp](http://www.epa.gov/opptintr/epp)

## Iowa Recycling Association (IRA)

Non-profit organization with more than 375 members from across Iowa. By sharing information, educating ourselves and others, and cooperating, IRA's members bring about positive change through recycling.

[www.iowarecycles.org](http://www.iowarecycles.org)

## Iowa Department of Natural Resources Waste Management Program

Assists Iowa citizens, businesses and communities with waste management and pollution prevention activities.

[www.iowadnr.gov/waste](http://www.iowadnr.gov/waste)



The **EPA SmartWay** logo identifies products and services that reduce transportation-related emissions. When choosing shipping options, ask for EPA SmartWay certification.

For certified Iowa-based haulers, visit:

[www.epa.gov/smartway/transport/where-you-work/region7.htm](http://www.epa.gov/smartway/transport/where-you-work/region7.htm)

