




Sustainability and Corporate Social Responsibility GUIDELINES



With a mission to be an economic engine for the state of Georgia and city of Atlanta, and to enhance the quality of life for every Georgian, GWCCA is built on the idea that events can benefit people, the planet, and the economy. Events at GWCCA have taken the first step in that journey by taking advantage of its existing LEED certified facilities and many sustainability efforts. As a result, we have developed this guide to help event planners, exhibitors, and attendees further their environmental sustainability and corporate social responsibility (CSR) goals.

HOW TO BE SUCCESSFUL:



1

Communicate early and often:

Ask staff, attendees, decorators, exhibitors, and general service contractors what is important to them and what they're already capable of or willing to do.

2

Plan with the end in mind:

Work with GWCCA's Sustainability and CSR team to ensure your event leaves a positive legacy by minimizing waste and supporting Georgia-based groups.

3

Set goals and expectations for your event:

Supports engagement, community, sponsorships, and ultimately a great public relations opportunity.

4

Design for reusability and recyclability:

Choose signage, sets, booths, and décor that can be reused, donated, or recycled.

5

Take it one step at a time:

Focus on improvement and gradually add suggestions from the following lists to your event planning process.

For additional industry-led sustainability guidelines, please refer to the U.S. Green Building Council's Guide to Green Meetings and the Event Industry Council's Sustainable Event Standards for meeting organizers, exhibitors, food and beverage, audio visual, lodging, and destinations.

WHAT WASTE STREAMS ARE AVAILABLE AT GWCCA?



Single-stream recycling: Clean paper (brochures, fliers, programs), cardboard boxes and signs, aluminum, plastic and glass bottles and cans



Landfill-bound trash: Styrofoam, soiled visqueen/plastic film, plastic utensils and wrappers, straws, condiment packages, and others as applicable



Organics: Coordinate for collection of non-donatable food product, food scraps, organic materials, plant trimmings, BPI certified compostable packaging and product in front-of-house event spaces



Material donations: Books, clothing, office/school supplies, décor/decorations, furniture, potted plants, tools, building supplies and materials, equipment, electronics, trinkets, reusable bags, lanyards, utensils and serveware, etc.



Food donations: Dry goods, canned food, prepared foods, perishable and non-perishable food, frozen food, pet food



Construction and Demolition (C&D): Coordinate to have an open-top container specifically for collection of these materials only (wood, metal, porcelain, concrete, etc.)



Metal: Coordinate to have an open-top container specifically for collection of metals only



Wood: Coordinate to have an open-top container specifically for collection of wood only



Plastic film/sheeting: Coordinate to have a separate collection for baling (must not be reinforced and must have all tape and stickers removed)



The following items cannot be left at GWCCA following an event: Foam core signage, vinyl or PVC plastic signage, hazardous waste/substances, carpet, carpet padding, helium-filled balloons, chemicals, flammable liquids, pallets, furniture, electronics



TO HOST A GREENER EVENT, CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING:

Communicate sustainability and CSR objectives early and often

Develop a written sustainability policy and plan

Designate one or more staff members to implement sustainability initiatives

Request and track event metrics from your suppliers year to year

Replace conference programs with a mobile application

Give attendees the option to choose event swag rather than pre-stuffing bags

Collect and re-use or donate lanyards each year

Provide bulk water filling stations and encourage attendees to use personal, reusable water bottles instead of plastic disposables water bottles

Instruct all vendors, exhibitors, and transportation service providers to adhere to an anti-idling policy

Promote alternative transportation methods for getting to and from GWCC including walking, biking, MARTA, the Atlanta Streetcar, and carpooling

Partner with a Georgia-based non-profit or social enterprise to create an opportunity to give back to the local community (see GWCCA's Voluntourism suggestions)

Mark merchandise, leftover literature, and other materials that can be donated or recycled for event organizers and general service contractors to recover and donate through GWCCA

Utilize digital signage instead of printed material for signage, sponsorships, and announcements

Avoid putting dates and locations on signage and product in order to reuse at future events

Skip the aisle and/or booth carpeting and go "au naturale"

If aisle and/or booth carpeting is needed, choose black or another dark color as they generally have a longer lifespan than lighter colored floorings

Request an in-booth recycling bin(s) from the general services contractor

Discuss local, seasonal, organic, and/or vegetarian/vegan food options with food services

Offer gender-neutral restrooms

