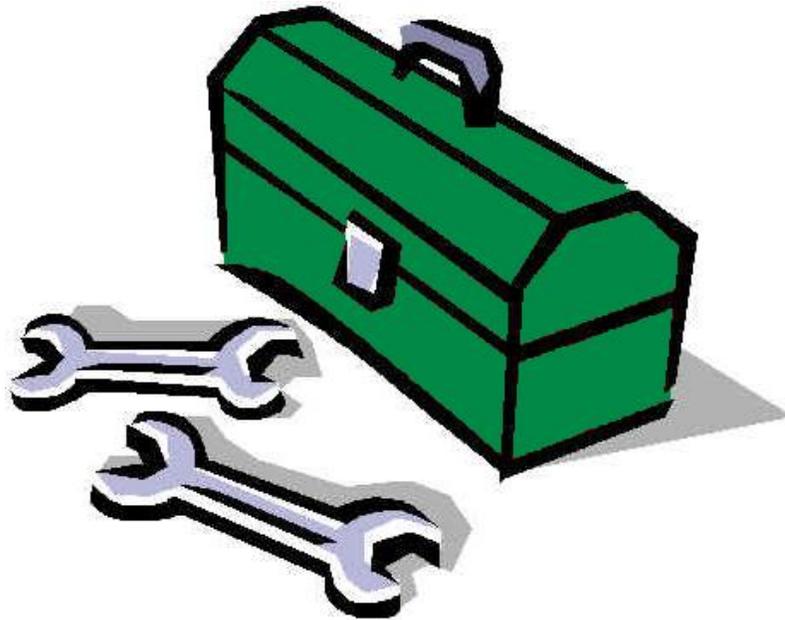




St. Louis Earth Day presents:

## The Green Event Tool Kit

*A guide to producing celebrations in all shades of green.*



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## Preface

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### **Our Mission:**

St. Louis Earth Day makes every day Earth Day, cultivating environmental stewardship and engaging individuals, governments, businesses, schools and the non-profit sector in celebration, education and action to support a healthy and sustainable future.

As a small, but effective 501c3 non-profit organization, we maximize our impact by acting as an educational catalyst, forming strategic alliances and providing credible environmental information to the region.

### **St. Louis Earth Day facilitates year-round programming and events:**

#### [St. Louis Earth Day Festival](#)

The St. Louis Earth Day Festival is the oldest and largest Earth Day Festival in the Midwest, and the third largest in the nation. Attracting 30,000+ attendees annually, the Festival is a premier destination for the public to learn about a wide-range of environmental issues in an engaging and entertaining setting.

#### [Recycling On the Go](#)

St. Louis Earth Day's Recycling On the Go is the region's first wide-scale event recycling program. Our goal is to reduce the negative environmental impact of events and festivals by reducing and recycling a portion of the waste they generate. Since 2007, we have managed 336 events, diverted nearly 250 tons of materials from the landfill and exposed 4.8 million people to recycling away from home. We offer a full range of services from managing and staffing event recycling and composting, to complete event greening and solid waste management, to our Do-It-Yourself Loans.

#### [The Green Dining Alliance](#)

The Green Dining Alliance is a program committed to working with St. Louis restaurants to reduce their environmental impact. By considering all areas of operations, the GDA puts strong emphasis on reducing, recycling and composting restaurant waste as well as sourcing sustainable food, to-go ware and cleaning supplies.

#### [St. Louis Earth Day Symposium](#)

This important educational and networking event for local governments and planning professionals gives tools for implementing sustainable considerations in new projects throughout the St. Louis area.

## Recycling On the Go

### In 2013...

- Our service was utilized on **101 event days** and experienced by over **650,000 event-goers** at **78 area events!** **30%** of our full service events achieved diversion rates **greater than 70%** which is excellent!
- Our recycling bins were utilized at **32 community events**, charity functions and celebrations through our Do-It-Yourself recycling loan program.

We diverted the following materials from area landfills, most of which were collected in just the summer and fall seasons:

- We diverted **53 tons** of mixed recyclables, organic waste and compostable food service items and spent cooking oil!

### Full Service Event Greening

We'll help you examine your event and identify areas where eco-friendly approaches can be applied. We specialize in waste diversion and can arrange waste haulers, on-site recycling/compost management and/or support vendor communications so that your green goals are realized.

### Do-It-Yourself Event Recycling

Allows access to our fleet of recycling and compost bins by small event organizers and community groups through our bin loan membership program. Perfect for fundraisers and church gatherings!

Organizations or individuals may join at any of the following annual membership levels. Annual Membership fees are based upon the initial registration date.

To begin, please visit our website to review the information regarding membership levels. Then, read the Loan Agreement Terms & Conditions before submitting a bin request form. We will contact you in a timely manner to confirm the loan details and to arrange pick up.

Level 1: \$25*	Includes: 5 or fewer recycling bins, 1 info sign and bag per bin
Level 2: \$50*	Includes: 10 or fewer bins, 1 info sign and bag per bin
Level 3: \$100*	Includes: 20 or fewer bins, 1 info sign and bag per bin
Level 4: \$150*	Includes: 30 or fewer bins, 1 info sign and bag per bin

*\*plus separate deposit.*

### Additional Information:

- Bin reservations are on a first-come/first-serve basis.
- Reservation will be held for one week without membership and will be cancelled thereafter.
- Bin-loan periods cannot exceed five consecutive days during the busy season.
- Bins can be loaned all at once or over a year (For example, Level 4 can receive 30 bins for one event or 10 bins at 3 events). Seasonal Loan and Unlimited Loan Memberships are also available – please contact for pricing.
- Inventory is LIMITED and availability cannot be guaranteed without reservation
- Participants MUST return bins ON or BEFORE the established return date to ensure availability for other participants.

**PROGRAM INQUIRIES:**

Please fill out the ROG Request Form found [HERE](#) first. You may also contact ROG Program Manager Bob Henkel at bob@stlouisearthday.org or call 314-282-7533. Complete details can be found on our website: <http://www.stlouisearthday.org/programs/rog/>.

**Introduction: Why go green?**

The fact that you are reading this guide is an indication that you already have an idea about why you should be inserting “the green question” into business-as-usual event planning. Thank you for that!



There is a long list of reasons justifying why we should be inserting the green question into all that we do: global climate change, habitat destruction, air pollution, water pollution, declining fossil fuel reserves, declining natural resources, ever-increasing fossil fuel costs, species extinction, loss of topsoil, the Dead Zone in the Gulf of Mexico, increasing impact of natural disasters, human and ecosystem health, and on and on.

If the bigger picture issues aren't influential enough, there are some economic drivers too: client satisfaction; pending legislation; cost savings; energy savings; stimulating the local economy; employee satisfaction, pride, and retention; positive public image; and greater resilience to long term market shifts.

Events represent a specific challenge to mitigating your environmental impact. There is often a huge amount of planning that goes into pulling off an event that will last a couple of hours or a couple of days. During that time, people will come together in an environment different from what they are accustomed to. Even if they regularly practice something

like recycling at home or in the office, in this new environment, they are focused on the task at hand, whether that is celebration, education, entertainment, or business. Unless truly committed, they are not likely to search out places to recycle. In that same vein, events are often a time for indulgence, abundance, and luxury. Hosts want to impress the guests and make them comfortable. Few people want to think about the amount of waste accumulating or the energy expense.

Therefore, it is the job of a green event planner to adhere to the following principles:

- The client is always right. As much as it may pain us to turn away from green opportunities, we must meet their demands. However, the client may be open to suggestion, especially if you are prepared with sound logic, cost savings or other benefits, and a matrix of options.
- High quality and environmental preference\* often go hand in hand. For example, local foods are often richer in flavor and lend themselves to both simple and elegant dishes. As the green product market grows in prominence, a wider variety of high quality items are available with little effort or sacrifice.
- Less effort equals greater participation. The easier it is for people to participate in greening measures (like sorting waste into compost and recycling), the more people will partake in the activity.

\*\* All asterisk symbols indicate that this word is defined in the glossary.

- Get all team members involved. The support of your staff, venue staff, caterers, and the rest of the production team is essential in green events. Good training and signage are essential for full participation of everyone involved.
- Support your staff members. Staff members are more likely to fully participate in green procedures if they are treated as stakeholders in the process. Ask for their feedback—and listen to it. As the people doing the legwork, they are in the best position for innovation.
- Get your vendors on board. Pressure your current vendors to provide the products and services you need to carry out a green event. Reward them with your business. If they are unable to comply, seek out alternatives.
- Showcase your greening efforts. Many event-goers prefer to attend sustainably sound events. Make the public aware of your green initiatives and you could see an increase in attendance and spending by them, along with a decrease in waste. Coordinate with the event for usable signage, outreach, etc.

As you read through this guide, please note that this was designed with the broadest audience in mind, so that anyone – whether they are a professional event organizer, a volunteer in an organization that hosts or organizes an event, or an individual planning a private event – can learn from these principles and apply the concepts.

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## Where to Start? Asking the Right Questions

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### Using the Green Lens

As with any event, planning starts with the basics: What does the client or organizing committee want? Where will the event be held? What purpose does the event have? What will occur during event hours? Who will come to the event? What are the technology requirements? Will food be served?

Green event planning is no different when it comes to the larger picture. The difference is in the details. In the section that follows, every event element has a set of “Green Lens Question” to help guide you through the questioning process. We hope you will be able to infuse the green lens perspective into all aspects of event planning.



For example, key product (food, handouts, giveaways, and decorations) questions are: Where does it come from? What is in it? Where will it go? Is it necessary? These questions help you gauge:

1. **Locality:** What resources are required to get the product here? How is it supporting the local economy? What is product’s the carbon footprint\*?
2. **Content:** Are there any hazardous materials or chemicals in the product (e.g. some painted toys from China have been reclaimed for lead paint; non-organic fresh fruits and vegetables, especially from countries with lax regulation, may contain pesticide residue)? What kinds of materials are in the product? Is it made from post-consumer\* or pre-consumer\* recycled content? Is the product healthy to consume?
3. **Disposal:** Is the product compostable or recyclable? Is it likely to be recycled or composted? Are we providing the necessary means for responsible disposal?
4. **Necessity:** Does the financial and environmental “price” earn enough benefit to make the cost (environmental and fiscal) worth it? Does this enhance the overall event experience in a positive and worthwhile way? Are there other more productive ways we can promote our sponsors?

By asking the right questions, you will be able to plan a green event anywhere for anyone.



As each event is different, it is important that your checklist remains flexible, rather than a ridged cut-and-paste formula.

Document your sources, vendors, and discoveries throughout the planning process. This will make it easier for you to plan similar events next time and to pass the resources on to your peers at your company and in your field.

## How to Use the Toolkit

When you start planning an event using your green lens, you can start to think of the process as similar to an ecosystem – that is, everything relates to other things the farther you zoom out. As you go through the toolkit that follows, we have broken down the components into sections. It is important for you to remember that all of these components are interconnected. In the Food section, we will discuss ways to reduce food waste and to compost wasted food, but these could just as easily fit into the Source Reduction section or the Waste Management section. The green lens encourages you to always look for ways to Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, and Rethink every component of your planning process.

## Elements of a Successful Green Event

The following section goes into depth on some of the key aspects of an event and provides suggestions for green approaches.

### a. Communication

Every client or organizing group provides both challenges and opportunities. It is important to gauge your client's level of interest in greening their event. Some clients will want to go the extra green mile. Others will only be interested if it doesn't cost them more. Some will be willing to spend money on green measures if they are able to realize cost savings elsewhere. Therefore, with every turn, try to gauge which aspects of the event are non-negotiable and which are more flexible. Determine where you can implement cost savings and where the savings are best reinvested.

For clients who have sought you out for your green event planning reputation, focus on two things:

1. How to make the event as green as possible.
2. How to market the green aspects as effectively as possible.

For clients that are uninterested or on-the-fence, simply offer options that are more environmentally friendly when you list the options. Have cost-competitive vendors, venues, and caterers on hand that you can offer as a recommendation.

#### Green Lens Questions:

What green event elements are "on the table" and which are "off the table?" In other words, what aspects of the event are potentially green and which are non-negotiable?

What is your client looking for that you can deliver through green means?

What are your client's values?

What is your client's budget?

(If YOU are the "client" simply insert "you" or "your" for "client.")



**Cost Saving Opportunities:** You should go into your first planning session with an understanding of which areas have potential cost savings and where that money can be reallocated.

## b. Location

The location that makes the most sense to your event relies on variables that will differ significantly based on the specifics of your event.

**Green Lens Questions:** Some attributes to look for in venues.

- LEED certification\*: LEED certification tells you that the building construction has already taken many green things into account like energy efficiency, environmentally friendly building materials, and day lighting. There are many benefits in LEED buildings, including increased productivity of those who work there, less exposure to allergens, and better concentration due to natural lighting.
- If the event is open to the public, is the venue in a location with a lot of pedestrian traffic? Is it already a destination area?
- Do you have control over the thermostat and lighting?
- Does a certain caterer or food service provider contract with the building?
- Is the building accessible from public transit?
- Is the building locally owned?
- Is the venue conducive to the activities we have planned?



If the event is a company meeting of mostly in-town employees, consider meeting on site or at a nearby venue. Encourage people to walk or carpool. Provide a shuttle if feasible and practical.

If the event is accommodating out of town guests, arrange for a venue that is near the airport or near a light rail stop.

If the event is a conference, select a venue that is near the conference hotel. Select a hotel and venue near public transportation for easy access to the airport, train station, and light rail. Make sure guests know how to access and utilize public transit.

If you are putting on a large public event, choose a venue near bus or light rail stops and advertise how to get to the event via public transit.

Also consider locations near parks or green space where people can go for a break in the day.



**Cost Saving Opportunities:** If transportation is part of your budget (including rental cars or shuttles) you can cut costs by encourage alternative transit (provide tickets, maps, and schedules) for short distances between venues or from the airport.

### c. Venue

**Green Lens Questions:**

- How can I encourage multi-modal transit?
- Is there any flexibility in location?
- How can the location complement the goal of the meeting?



Selecting a venue is often one of the first steps in planning the event. Often times, it is selected for you and is one of the “off the table” variables. As you plan events where you do have flexibility in location, start to compile a list of venues that are already green and easy to work with to accommodate your green requests. Be prepared with preferred locations so that you will be ready when asked to select a venue.



**Cost Saving Opportunities:** As you are looking for a specific kind of venue (one that is green), perhaps you can work out a special deal with the venue owner for regularly booking events or referrals.

### d. Transportation

If arranging transportation is in the scope of your planning, you have an opportunity to cut carbon emissions by offering guests greener ways of getting around.

Some car rental companies offer hybrid vehicles. Request these first. If not available, seek out the most fuel-efficient car available. (See Recommendations)

When feasible and practical, offer shuttles to transport guests from one activity to another. Avoid requiring transit by booking venues within easy walking distance.

Do not run shuttles if they will travel nearly empty. To avoid this, limit the availability of the shuttle to the times of highest likely demand.

Plan events at venues near light rail stations and encourage the use of the lines by providing guests with tickets and maps. Offer the unique experience of a bicycle taxi (pedicab) to transfer guests from place to place. This is a great way to support the local economy in a very green way. (See Recommendations)

For large public events, include information on your website detailing how people can arrive via bike or metro. Also give good parking directions so people don’t waste gas idling waiting for a spot or circling for a space.

**Green Lens Questions:**

- How can I keep the carbon footprint low?
- How can I mitigate the need for transportation in the first place?
- How can I publicize the opportunities to utilize public transit? How can unique transportation, biking, or walking opportunities enhance the guest experience?



**Cost Saving Opportunities:** Avoid shuttle costs by keeping venues within walking distance or in the same building. Hybrid rentals lower fuel expenses. Pedicab rides cost less than renting a bus.

### e. Printing

There are lots of opportunities to use paper at events. You use print flyers, posters, and mailing to promote the event. At the event, you might have programs, or place cards, or instructions for volunteers or vendor packets. Here are some tips for saving paper:

- Focus your promotion through electronic and online media. Target your printed materials very carefully.

- Programs – carefully record the number of boxes of programs that don’t get distributed and order fewer the following year.
- Print everything you can double sided. If you misprint or have extra single-side copies, use the back of the pages for printing in the office.
- Request recycled content paper or Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) paper. Post-consumer recycled paper is preferred over pre-consumer recycled paper. Request soy inks.
- Steer people to your website for more detailed information to keep publications simple.
- Use QR codes on signage or in programs to steer people to your website for more information. For example, St. Louis Earth Day includes a QR code on the back of the Festival program to send people to an evaluation survey, rather than having paper surveys on site.
- RECYCLE all paper when you are through with it!!

**Green Lens Consideration:** Make sure you walk the walk by sending your reports electronically or on double-sided paper.



**Cost Saving Opportunities:** Reduced printing of all kinds will end up saving you money. If recycled content paper or FSC posters end up costing more, you can cover the additional expense through strategic reduction in quantity.

### f. Décor

Green decorations are reusable, locally produced, compostable, recyclable, or made from eco-friendly materials.

Locally produced: Local florists can be a wonderful source for locally produced decorations. However, in order to be eco-friendly, make sure the flowers are grown locally (See text box below). Potted plants make good decorations that can be stored in your office when not in use at events, so long as you are prepared to tend them. Locally grown gourds and winter squash make excellent seasonal decorations. Perhaps enlist local artists to create artful centerpieces that guests can take home.

Compostable: Many of the options above are compostable (cut flowers, plants, squash) but anything made from natural materials is compostable.

**Did you know?** Most commercial flowers, especially those available out of season, are being farmed in places as far away as Columbia, Kenya and Israel. To arrive for our purchase, they are flown long distances, thus having a very high carbon footprint\*. They also require large amounts of pesticides\* and water to look as nice as they do.

**Green Lens Questions:**

- Where do the materials come from?
- What “look” is my client going for?
- Can anything serve as a decoration and a giveaway?



Reusable: If you have the space, you can store decoration materials for reuse. Fabrics are a great example of reusable decorations that can be laundered and reused. Table centerpieces can be modified for reuse to better suit the season or the event. Oil candles are easily refilled for reuse, unlike wax candles that must be thrown away or donated after light use. Vinyl signs can be reused if information that will be outdated in subsequent



years is taken off with heat soon after use (the longer the letters/images are on the sign, the harder it is to get them off). There are many options for renting supplies to cover most of your event needs, including linens, china, flatware, glassware, and vases.

**Recyclable:** Paper, metals, and some plastic decorations are all recyclable. Some glass is recyclable, but MRFs\* usually only accept glass bottles. Decorations made from recycled content are another good option.

**Afterwards:** Decorations can have a new life as art supplies at local schools. In St. Louis, The Teacher's Recycling Center accepts all sorts of materials to transform into student projects.



**Cost Saving Opportunities:** Reusing vinyl banners can save a lot of money, as the bulk of the cost goes towards the main material. Using potted plants repeatedly will save money on flower arrangements while beautifying your office and filtering the air when in "storage." Donating or giving away decorations to guests decreases trash disposal costs.

## g. Drinks

The most problematic aspect about drinks is their containers. Beverage containers often account for as much as 30-50% of the waste stream at events. The good news is that all of that is recyclable. Still, we always promote reducing and reusing before recycling because of the energy costs of producing and recycling materials.

Different events will have different ways of approaching beverage container reduction and collection. All events will benefit from having recycling receptacles. Large events can encourage people to bring their own water bottles and supply water refill stations or water fountains. Small events can provide people with glasses and ceramic mugs. Meetings can have water, juice, tea, and coffee in carafes instead of individual bottled servings.

When offering beer, serve from a tapped keg when possible instead of individually bottled servings. Use pint glasses when possible and encourage reusing glasses where feasible. With wine and cocktails, serve in glassware when possible. If disposable cups are the only option, go with recyclable cups (#6 is the plastic to avoid; many cups come in this number, so be careful! #1 and #2 are accepted at most recycling centers). If you are offering composting, you can source

compostable cups, but make sure your signs communicate to the public and/or wait staff that those cups go in the compost and NOT the recycling. Finally, recycle all of the bottles from the bar at the end of the night!

With drinks, the challenge to go local can be very easy or very hard. Water from the tap is about as local as you can get. With the microbrew movement, there is a large variety of high quality beer available virtually anywhere in the United States. Some states have a good local wine selection. If one looks hard enough, locally produced liquor can be found. However, finding locally produced juice and soft drinks is next to impossible. If you serve coffee or tea, organic, fair trade and shade-grown (coffee) are the socially and environmentally preferred choices.

For outdoor events, consider renting a water truck from the city or county municipality which connects to a fire hydrant. For venues, consider investing in a water bottle filling station which can track the number of water bottles saved from the landfill. See resources for options.

**Cost Saving Opportunities:** Switching from bottled water to filtered tap water represents a huge cost savings. In the United States, tap water quality, which is government regulated, is very high in most places. St. Louis is

### Green Lens Questions:

Where does it come from?

How can we reduce before we recycle?

What is feasible for the venue and audience?

How can we reclaim the greatest percentage of beverage containers sold or given out?



known for its great tasting tap water. Bottled water is not regulated, so consistent quality is uncertain. Waste disposal costs will be lower as well. Water trucks will be an additional cost. There may be grant funding to offset the installation of a water filling station.

## h. Food

Feeding people and accommodating dietary preference and restrictions will always be tricky. A diverse menu with healthy, wholesome options can accommodate both flexible and inflexible dietary needs while achieving

***Where does it come from?*** High fructose corn syrup is derived from corn. This is not the sweet corn you have on the 4<sup>th</sup> of July, but commodity corn that is inedible until processed. Commodity corn is grown in monocultures\* and requires large amounts of pesticides, fertilizers, and water. The introduction of corn syrup into the American diet is strongly linked to diabetes and other diet-related diseases in adults and children.

your goals for low environmental impact. When planning the meal, consider:

**Local Ingredients:** Can you or the food service provider, caterer, or food vendors access food produced or grown locally? As you develop a list of local resources, your job will become simple and enjoyable. In addition to local produce (berries in the spring and summer, apples in the fall!), consider value-added products like breads, cheeses, meats, beer, wine, spreads, and salsa as well. You may find it easiest to work with restaurants or caterers who are already accustomed to working with local producers.

**Organic Ingredients:** When choosing between local and organic, it may be difficult to know which option is better. From a carbon footprint\* perspective, local foods travel less than organic foods (which often come from California). However, organic foods are often easier to find in large quantities and are still better than the non-organic alternative. If available, foods that are both local and organic are recommended. However, it is important to remember that organic certification is an expensive process. Many small farmers and food producers have found that a direct relationship with customers and reputations are enough to assure consumers that their goods are as good as or better than organic certified foods.

**Vegetarian\*/Vegan\* Options:** While only 3% of adults in the United States report upholding a vegetarian diet, the demographic you are serving may have a greater percentage. A vegetarian option can also accommodate those on low-fat or heart-healthy diets. Vegetarian options contain no meat products (beef, poultry, pork, or meat-based stock); vegan diets additionally refrain from consuming eggs, dairy products, and honey.

**Low-meat/sustainable meat dishes:** It is simple to include tasty meals that have little or no meat. Because of the way meat is produced in America – primarily on factory farms\* – the carbon footprint of meat is significant. Because so much energy goes into corn production and so much of the corn produced goes toward meat production (roughly 1/3), we could all do our part to reduce the emissions of greenhouse gases by reducing meat consumption to 1-2 servings per week. This may or may not meet the needs of your client or be realistic for your event. One way to reduce meat is to incorporate it into a dish rather than have it on its own. For example, offer chicken salad instead of fried chicken, or spaghetti with meat sauce instead of hamburgers. This will create a healthier, more environmentally friendly meal without sacrificing the presence of meat. Whenever possible, select meat from local producers who don't use hormones or antibiotics.

**Seasonal Menu:** A seasonal menu captures the succulent tastes of foods grown in their natural season. Out of season foods require shipment from warm places like California and Central and South America, often at the expense of flavor and nutrition (think winter tomatoes). Utilize chefs who understand seasonal availability and pairing.

**Non-endangered Seafood:** In response to severely depleted fisheries worldwide, programs have been developed to help consumers consider the environmental impact of their seafood choices. The Monterey Bay Aquarium publishes a Seafood Watch guide and the Virginia Aquarium & Marine Science Center has published a guide called "Sensible Seafood." Best Choices: US farmed catfish, Alaska wild Salmon, US farmed Tilapia,

Albacore tuna (BC, US troll/pole). Good Alternatives: Black Sea Bass (Atlantic, trapped), American/Maine lobster, Swordfish (US longline). Avoid: Shrimp (imported), Groupers, Mahi mahi, Orange Roughy, Salmon (farmed, including Atlantic). For downloadable guides, see the Resource section.

**Cost Saving Opportunities:** Cost saving opportunities vary with food selection. More often than not, good food that is ethically produced will cost more than mainstream options. If you are planning on spending more on quality anyway, you may not see a dent in your budget. Sometimes more eco-friendly alternatives are the same amount. Plan on spending money saved elsewhere on this part of your budget and try to control other areas like decreasing waste to cut down on additional or unnecessary costs.



### i. Meals & Snacks

Feeding and satisfying a group of people is a challenging task. Adding the green lens to planning meals shouldn't be too much harder, if you know what to look for.

#### Green Lens Questions:

Where did the ingredients come from?  
Are there local alternatives?  
Is the food in season?



In order to reduce your environmental impact and support local businesses and farmers, consider what you can source locally as you plan food arrangements for your events. Or better yet, utilize a local restaurant or caterer who sources local foods for seasonal dishes to cater your meal. If you are arranging a meal for a meeting, consider asking for a RSVP with a meal request so that you will have a better idea of how many people to plan for and which kinds of food they prefer, instead of overbuying to accommodate the occasion when everyone wants a turkey sandwich.

Buffets are a great way to feed a crowd but can often lead to overloaded plates and a lot of waste. To minimize this, post a full menu at the beginning of the line so people can plan what they would like to take. Also, display the ingredients and description of the individual dishes, so people can anticipate whether or not they will like the dish. Offering smaller plates limits the portion sizes; guests can always come back for seconds. Finally, posting signs that leftover food will be donated to area food banks may deter over-serving and over-indulgence. These are all small changes that may enhance the overall enjoyment of the guests as they make more informed decisions. It may also make for a happier host, as guests may be more attentive and less sleepy after the meal.

When selecting a restaurant for an event-related meal (for a meeting or a conference), ask if they have a sustainability plan or if they are doing anything to reduce their environmental impact. Award preference to restaurants that can answer your questions confidently and who are willing to work with you in planning a sustainably sourced meal.

For snacks, select healthy options with little waste. For example, instead of providing individually wrapped snack bars, consider whole grain rolls with hummus spread or perhaps some fresh, in season fruits or vegetables. Serve on reusable dishes when possible.

When planning any kind of a meal, consider the "Where did it come from?" green lens question. For more food tips, see the Food section.

**Cost Saving Opportunities:** Time spent planning can result in cost savings through better estimates of what and how much people will consume. Some set-up strategies may decrease wasted food and disposal costs. Donating leftover food to an area food bank can earn tax credit.



## j. Waste

Though waste is usually dealt with last, don't let it be an afterthought! There are many proactive things you can do to reduce waste at your event.

**Source Reduction:** Reducing waste at the source is a powerful way to cut down your overall disposal costs. You can reduce meal waste by using renewable products wherever possible: plates, cutlery, glassware, tablecloths, and napkins. These items have the added benefit of the elegance they impart. Serving beer on draft and soft drinks through a soda machine reduces the number of individual serving size beverage containers you have at the end of the event.

**Buying in Bulk:** Most restaurants and caterers you work with will already be buying things in bulk. If you find yourself using the same or similar materials or ingredients at many events, consider buying in bulk to save money and packaging. Also, avoid single serving items like sugar packets, condiment packets, and chips. Have containers of each available for use.

**Donations:** After the event is over, if you have any food or non-perishable items left over, consider donating to an area food bank, school, charity, or some other organization who can use the items that you have no use for. Your donation is often tax deductible and it can prolong the trip to the landfill. You may be able to arrange for pick up at the end of the event. See Recommendations for donation suggestions.

**Compost:** Food and disposable waste collection can be an easy way to reduce your trash, if the circumstances are right. In St. Louis, there is currently only one facility certified to take food scraps. Blue Skies Recycling and St. Louis Earth Day work together to offer events composting services. Composting requires collection bins and clear signage. If busing dishes, it is essential to train staff and have signage in the dish station. There are plastics made from corn-based compounds that can be added to the compost. Paper napkins are compostable and can go directly into the compost (non-bleach paper is preferred). Collect compost in compostable bags. As the compost stream needs to be clean, we recommend contacting St. Louis Earth Day for specific instructions and developing the waste sorting strategy.

**Recycling:** Every green event should have recycling. Recycling containers are very visible and recognizable as a way to communicate to the public that your event is environmentally conscious. Single stream, if available, is the easiest way to collect large amounts of recycling. Clear signage that outlines which materials are accepted is critical to recycling success. Work with event staff to collect recycling and trash separately. Clearly mark the dumpsters.

**Cost Saving Opportunities:** Recycling materials is often less expensive than dumpster fees. You can work with your waste hauler to have two smaller dumpsters rather than one large one to accommodate recycling, often at no additional cost. Having recycling collection bins and the labor force to monitor them may be a cost sink that can be subsidized by other savings or paid for by a specific sponsor.

A discovery that your trash dumpster was only half full means that you can reduce the size of the dumpster or get fewer trash dumpsters and save money next year. Trash is more expensive to haul than recycling.

### Green Lens Questions:

How can I reduce waste while still meeting the needs of guests and hosts?

How can I reduce before I recycle?

What are the best methods for capturing the most pure compost and recycling?

Are there any layout restrictions that will inhibit recycling?

What area organizations could benefit from our leftover food and products?



## k. Energy

Depending on the type of event, energy requirements can be quite high. Regardless of the scale of energy use, it is important to cut energy consumption whenever possible. Energy has direct correlations with global climate change\*. As 84% of Missouri's energy comes from burning coal (the average nationally is 52%), you can be fairly certain that your event energy use is putting a significant amount of CO<sub>2</sub> (as well as mercury and other pollutants) into the atmosphere.

### Green Lens Questions:

Is this product energy star certified?

What is the greatest energy savings for the least sacrifice of comfort?

How can energy signage (like signs reminding to turn off the light) fit into the education plan?



The greenest – and cheapest – kilowatt hour (kwh)\* is the one that is not used. Energy efficiency and conservation behaviors are the best ways to reduce your energy use in your home, office, and for your clients.

For events, you can start with the venue. Do you have the flexibility to select a venue that has energy efficient light fixtures, light sensors, and other energy-saving features? (All LEED certified\* buildings are equipped with many energy efficient and energy saving features.) If the event is outside and requires generators, could the generators be run on biofuels or provided by portable solar stations? Consider modifying your layout so that you can arrange for fewer generators.

For indoor events, try to select a green venue to reduce your energy impact. If you are renting or buying any appliances, seek out the Energy Star Label, which will tell you that the item you are selecting has met the EPA requirements for energy efficiency.

Laptops are more energy efficient than desktops, so use those when giving presentations or as part of a display. Turn off computers and projectors or put them into sleep mode during long breaks to conserve energy. Place signs on each door or above the light switch reminding the last person to turn off the lights.

For outdoor festivals, work with your contractor to make sure all night lighting and stage lighting is provided by CFL or LED light bulbs. Also, make sure those lights are turned off during the day!

Try to lower the thermostat a couple degrees in the winter and raise it a couple of degrees in the summer. This adjustment usually goes unnoticed, but can save 2-3% on your energy bill for every degree you adjust.

Another possibility is to offset the energy use of your event. You can do this through the Pure Power program by Ameren Missouri. Their staff can calculate how much energy your event will use, based on the electricity bill of the venue. Through the program, you can buy wind energy credits from wind farms in Missouri. With this option, you support local renewable energy projects. You can also buy carbon offsets through many Internet vendors. Just be sure to look for third party certification to ensure that your money is going where you think it is. (See Recommendations)



**Cost Saving Opportunities:** Energy savings equals major cost savings, especially as the cost of energy goes up. Reducing your energy needs is a safe way to reduce your overall costs and prevent energy price spikes from cutting into your budget.

## l. Education

As the coordinator of a green event, and if your client/organization is supportive, you have a wonderful opportunity to directly and indirectly educate the guests. Signage is essential at any point where you are asking

the guests to do something, like recycle a can or sort food from trash. Signage is also useful in communicating the green efforts without printing something for every person as a hand out. Keep it simple.

If the event has a program or anything that is already printed, green efforts should be an integral part of the message. If your client only wants the green items to be a side note, you can scale back the message to some key points.

Public announcements are another good way to explain greening efforts to a captive audience, especially at the beginning of an address or periodically throughout the day.

If possible, reaching guests ahead of time can be advantageous. You can encourage people to bring their own water bottle or coffee cup to use at filling stations. Or perhaps you can arrange carpools through social media.

Reaching out to event vendors and exhibitors is essential. Without alerting them about the green goals, they could unintentionally sabotage zero waste efforts by bringing in something that is neither recyclable nor compostable. On the other hand, they may enhance the event by bringing and promoting products that are eco-friendly.

#### Green Lens Questions:

What are creative ways of getting the green message out?

Are there any publicity opportunities here?

Where will signage be most effective?

What are the branding and sponsorship opportunities?

What do the guests/public care about the most?

How can I make the message simple, yet effective?

Who is the audience?

How can this reinforce the values of the client?



**Cost Saving Opportunities:** Getting the public/guests to participate in the greening program, especially in waste recovery and sorting, will save time and money if they are able to participate successfully.

#### m. Giveaways

The “wow” factor often overshadows simplicity in showing people a good time. However in planning green events, there are opportunities to trim down superfluous items that earn little in your “green budget.” Just as you have a monetary budget, think of your environmental impact in terms of a budget as well. If you provide guests with a lot of “trinkets and trash,” how much of that will end up in the landfill? Is it worth it? Will guests get enough use or enjoyment out of the giveaway to make it worth the environmental impact?

There are other opportunities to impress your guests. Instead of something cheap for all guests to take away, consider having a few high-quality, useful door prizes that guests can win. Or give a donation to a non-profit or charity organization that works in a field relevant to your guests on their behalf. Use signage to bring attention to the donation. Better yet, have a representative from the organization publicly thank the guests.

In line with the environmental message, you could pay for a carbon offset\* for each guest’s travel to the event. (See Recommendations)

Instead of having candy available at exhibition tables, have healthy treats that are locally produced.

If you have pens available for guests at exhibition tables, in a registration packet, or in conference rooms, purchase ones made from post-consumer recycled content\*.

If you do decide to do any giveaways, (1) donate extra items to an area school, charity, etc. that can use the items AND (2) have collection boxes for unwanted items for people to leave things behind that they do not want to travel with (right next to a recycling bin for paper, cans, and bottles). Include signage to explain what you are doing and where the items will go.

**Case Study:**

At a large outdoor event in the St. Louis area, employees of a major sponsor stood at entrances to give every person who walked in a plastic-wrapped packet of “Mardi Gras” beads with the company name and logo on it. Many people walked several steps then dropped the beads on the ground. Others held onto the beads until they passed a trash can. Others took the necklace out of the plastic wrapper (which they either threw on the ground, in a trash can, or pocketed) and put it around their neck for the duration of their stay at the event. Few, if any, held onto the necklace for use in the future.

The event drew 250,000 people. If only half of the people received one necklace each at \$.03, it would cost \$3,750. With the money spent on the beads (which were plastic, non-recyclable, and produced overseas), perhaps the sponsor

could have had a greater impact: (1) only handing out the beads to those who expressed interest (2) offer several high quality door prizes that any person could register for upon entry (3) sponsored the recycling efforts of the event (which cost about the same amount). Possible results: positive PR, decreased cost of trash pick up, decreased cost of trash disposal, less waste to the landfill, locally sourced labor for recycling efforts.

**Green Lens Questions:**

- What could the audience use?
- What does the audience expect?
- Is a giveaway necessary?
- What are creative alternatives to promote our sponsors? Is it an effective way to get the brand out?
- What is the item made of?
- Is it made from post-consumer or pre-consumer recyclable materials?
- Is the material organic (like cotton) or recycled (like some polyester products) or naturally compostable (like fruit or seeds)?
- Is this item made in the USA or overseas or locally?
- Can this item be easily recycled or composted once it is no longer needed/wanted?
- How long will the recipient want/use this item?
- Is the Item useful?
- Are the items individually wrapped?

**Cost Saving Opportunities:**

- Eliminating the giveaway items can save you/your client money. With strategic PR, you can gain more positive perception than you gain with branding on insignificant giveaways.
- Changing the content of the items may slightly increase the cost; fewer higher quality giveaways can offset the cost of more inexpensive ones.
- A donation on behalf of the guests can save money through tax deductions.
- Carbon offsets are inexpensive but can earn significant points in positive perception.

**n. Merchandise**

See Giveaways for guidance on Merchandise. In a green event, anything that you are buying to resell should be bought in consideration with the environmental impact. Event shirts are a great example. You are buying a large quantity, so you want it to be cheap. But consider the impact of the fabric and screen printing. Can you take pre-orders to better estimate the sizes and number you will need? Seek out local printers to avoid shipping cost and delays – and the environmental impact. If you want to sell branded items as a fundraiser for your organization, perhaps you could sell mugs, reusable water bottles, or nice fans that people will use at your event AND after the event. Make sure items are good quality so they will not break easily.

## o. Evaluation & Follow up

In order to show your client the impact they made through their green decisions, some kind of post-event report, perhaps included with the invoicing, can reinforce their decision and encourage them to duplicate or enhance their efforts in the future. This will create the opportunity to send a release to the press for some positive publicity. Additionally, at the end of the year your company can submit a final report of your environmental impact through the events you carried out. This will provide positive publicity for your clients, potential clients, vendors, employees, and other stakeholders. The information from your report can be included in a sustainability statement on your company/organization website or other appropriate venues.

If you are part of the organization planning the event, make sure that you track your numbers. You want to know, at minimum, how many dumpsters of each material you had onsite and how full they were. It is better to contact your waste hauler and get the weights of each dumpster as well. Tracking variables like crowd size and weather might help account for variations from year to year. If you have a way of tracking your energy use, like how many generators were running, then you can compare that from year to year too.



**Cost Saving Opportunities:** By documenting your success and sharing it with your clients, employees, and other stakeholders, you gain greater credibility and draw new clients who are interested in utilizing your unique, environmentally sensitive services. If you are a non-profit organization, the sponsors, vendors and volunteers who supported the effort, perhaps with additional time or money sacrifices, will be pleased to know the impact of their actions.

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## Going all the way: Zero Waste Events

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### Taking the Plunge

In essence, everything that you do to “green” your event is working towards the goal of zero waste. In the most specific terms, zero waste as branded by the Zero Waste International Alliance ([www.zwia.org](http://www.zwia.org)) means that all discarded materials are destined to be resources for others to use and absolutely nothing is destined for the landfill or to an incinerator. However, the current understanding of Zero Waste events includes events that achieve and document diverting 90% or more of the event waste. Event waste is the accumulation of what is in the dumpster at the end of the event.

### Philosophy

Full circle waste handling: from composting to recycling, strive to circulate resources through regenerative cycles, creating new things from old, rather than depositing them in landfills.

A cradle-to-cradle approach to everything for every aspect of the event: consider the product life cycle when making choices about what to source for events.

Sourcing responsibly produced products that can be responsibly disposed of: With many options for recyclable, compostable, and eco-friendly products, it has never been easier to make responsible purchasing decisions. Sourcing from local producers and wholesalers whenever possible decreases the event’s carbon footprint and supports the local economy.

Holistic consideration of waste: In a culture of consumption, we are surrounded by different forms of waste. Venue location, like the proximity to public transit, can minimize energy wasted in transportation. Event organizers can minimize energy waste through energy efficiency and saving measures as well as by using renewable forms of energy, like biofuels to run generators or solar generators.

## Elements of Zero Waste Events

- Local, Local, Local! Support locally owned establishments, local artists, local farmers, and on and on!
- Food Preparation: Locally sourced, locally produced foods.
- Serving the Food: Use reusable dishes whenever possible (glasses, china, silverware, napkins, tablecloths). Next best is using products made from compostable or recyclable materials (disposable dishes, cups, cutlery, etc. made from specific materials).
- Décor: Locally sourced, reusable, natural, and/or generally eco-friendly materials.
- Leftover Food: Donate to area food banks or send leftovers home with guests or staff.
- Composting: Provide containers to collect food and any compostable service ware. Collection bins can either be in the front of the house for the guests to use or in the back of the house for wait staff and kitchen staff to use. (Materials: All food waste, napkins, and compostable plastics (cutlery, plates, cups, etc. as indicated by signage)
- Recycling: Place distinctive bins 1:1 with trashcans and compost bins. Acceptable materials include: Glass, Plastic # 1-5 and 7, Paper (anything that tears, no wax), Cardboard, Aluminum, Steel.
- Energy: Efforts made to decrease energy; varies by venue. Offset energy use by purchasing RECs\*.
- Transportation: Efforts made to encourage walking, biking, or using public transit.
- Education: Teach your guests about your Zero Waste goals and how they can help you achieve them. Use signage to guide waste sorting and disposal.

These are the minimum requirements to achieve a Zero Waste Event. As each event is different, there will be challenges and opportunities specific to the event. Just remember to approach each planning decision with “the green lens.” Ask: “How can this decision be a green one?”

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## Green-washing: Proceed with caution!

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Green-washing Defined: Disinformation disseminated by an organization so as to present an environmentally responsible public image.

As individual and company consumers increase their influence on the market for green products and services, a two-edged sword has emerged. On one end, companies are producing more high quality and diverse products and services than ever before – through innovative sustainable and ethical means. On the other, companies wanting to get in on the “green” without being “green” have created a muddled message through advertising schemes. The result is a confused public who wants to buy sustainable and ethical products but feels less and less confident in green claims. This could have a significant impact on green markets; green-washing destroys the market that it seeks to exploit by undermining consumer confidence.

**In order to protect yourself from unfounded or misleading product claims, look out for the following red flags<sup>^</sup>:**

- Fluffy language: Words or terms with no clear meaning (e.g. ‘eco-friendly’)

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<sup>^^</sup> Adapted from “The Greenwashing Guide,” a production of Futerra Sustainability Communications. <http://www.futerra.co.uk/services/greenwash-guide>. Available in PDF format. Page 3.

- Green Products, Dirty Company: Such as efficient light bulbs made in a factory that pollutes rivers
- Suggestive pictures: Green images that indicate an un-justified green impact (e.g. flowers blooming from exhaust pipes)
- Irrelevant claims: Emphasizing one tiny green attribute when everything else is not green.
- Best in Class? Declaring you are slightly greener than the rest, even if the rest are pretty terrible
- Not credible: “Greening” a dangerous product doesn’t make it safe (e.g. ‘eco-friendly’ pesticide)
- Gobbledygook: Jargon and information that only a scientist could check or understand
- Misleading labels: A ‘label’ that looks like third party endorsement, only it is made up.
- No proof: A statement with no accessible evidence to back it up
- Out-right lying: Totally fabricated claims or data



### Green Lens Questions:

- Is there a recognized certification seal on the package? These are the highest in their categories:
  - USDA organic (food and beauty products)
  - Energy Star (appliances); LEED (buildings)
  - Fair Trade (food and imported products)
  - Marine Stewardship Council (seafood)
  - Forest Stewardship Council (forest products like paper and wood furniture)
  - ASTM-D6400 certified compostable plastic products
  - While there still may be greenwashing going on, with certifications you are at least assured that a third party inspection verified minimum claims.
- Does the packaging back up claims with data? Legitimate claims should be backed up by data or links connecting to more information.
- Is the “lesser of two evils” taking place? (Organic food isn’t necessarily healthy food.)
- Do benefits outweigh the negatives? (Organic ingredients or carbon offsets don’t negate hazardous materials, pollution, or negative community impacts.)

Just as it is important to look out for green-washing claims, it is equally important that you avoid imparting unfounded or misleading information as you report and promote your work. Most green-washing claims do not originate from malice, but from ignorance, sloppiness, or miscommunication between product development and marketing teams. You can avoid making green-wash claims through the following best practices<sup>7</sup>:

#### 1. Knowing Yourself

Before you plan your marketing strategy or design a press release, determine how green you really are.

#### 2. Be green by design, not luck

<sup>7</sup> Adapted from “The Greenwashing Guide,” a production of Futerra Sustainability Communications. <http://www.futerra.co.uk/services/greenwash-guide>. Available in PDF format. Page 28-29.

If your baseline analysis reveals that you are not as green as you originally thought, it’s time to walk more of the walk. When creating a strategic sustainability plan or designing/re-designing a product or service, start with sustainability goals. You will find that the green marketing will fall into place when the product or service is a manifestation of your guiding principles.

**3. Check and check again**

Once you have something worth marketing, it is important to do some double-checking. Consider both internal and external experts who can give their opinion before you go public.

**4. Seek a stamp of approval**

If it is within your means and practical for your field, invite third parties to endorse your product or service. Don’t be dissuaded if their certification is difficult to obtain. This is exactly the reason the logo has consumer trust: it is an indicator of your credibility. If you cannot reach certification immediately, set it as a goal for the near future.

**5. Select words and images with care.**

Words and images can give a misleading impression. Some words, like organic, carry legal definitions. The following list consists of words that are popular examples that have lost some of their meaning through overuse and misuse in recent years. If you use them, be sure to justify what you mean:

Eco-friendly	Natural	Non-toxic
Green	Pollutant-free	Carbon neutral
Not tested on animals	Ethical	Fair
Low-impact	Clean	Recyclable
Environmentally friendly	Energy efficient	Zero Waste
Zero carbon	Low Carbon	Biodegradable

Your attentiveness to green-washing (on both ends) has an impact on the sustainability of the green market. It is essential that all stakeholders (consumers, advertisement agencies, businesses, and sellers of advertising space) work to preserve consumer confidence, so that those interested in influencing the market with their buying power can do so. This will be better for all stakeholders in the long run, as it encourages innovation, protects consumer confidence, and lowers the environmental impact.

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## Recommended Local Product & Service Providers and Sustainable Options

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This list is compiled as a starting place. It is by no means exhaustive. Please contact us with additional products or services that are local and environmentally preferable. Check out our Green Dining Alliance website for resources which help our GDA certified restaurants: <http://www.greendiningalliance.org/for-restaurants/restaurant-resources/>

### Drinks

- Beer – bottled or keg
  - Schlafly Beer – St. Louis, MO: <http://schlafly.com/bottleworks/>
  - O’Fallon Brewery – O’Fallon, MO: <http://www.ofallonbrewery.com/>
  - Civil Life – St. Louis, MO: <http://www.thecivillife.com>
- Wine
  - Too many to list. For where to buy: <http://missouriwine.org/>
  - Wendwood Farm Winery, Gascony Vineyards 1<sup>st</sup> certified organic vineyard in MO: <http://www.wenwoodfarmwinery.com/wenwoodisgreen.html>
  - Fetzer Winery – California: <http://www.fetzer.com/>
  - Benzinger Winery – California: <http://www.benziger.com/>
- Liquor
  - 360 Vodka – produced in Weston, MO outside of Kansas City; local and green: <http://vodka360.com/index.php>
- Soft Drinks
  - Fitz’s Root Beer – St. Louis, MO: <http://www.fitzsrootbeer.com/>
  - Blue Sky Soda – Organic and Natural Sodas, no high fructose corn syrup: <http://www.blueskysoda.com/#>
- Water
  - City of St. Louis – fee for water truck to connect to fire hydrant; call the Water Department (314-633-9029)
  - St. Louis County – fee for water truck to connect to fire hydrant - [Missouri American Water](#)
  - Elkay Water Bottle Filling Station: <http://www.elkayezh2o.com>

### Energy

PURE Power – Offset your event’s energy impact (and carbon foot print) with Missouri wind power through this local energy offset program: <http://mypurepower.com/>

Voss Lighting – energy and lighting analysis; LED retrofits and energy rebates: 1840 Fenpark Drive, Fenton, MO 63026 636-660-0088 <http://www.vosslighting.com>

### Event Planners

Lucky You – Green Event and Wedding Planner and Florist: <http://luckyyoustl.com/>

## Food

- Find a local “green” restaurant through St. Louis Earth Day’s Green Dining Alliance: <http://www.greendiningalliance.org/>
- Missouri Harvest: A Guide to Growers and Producers in the Show-Me State by Maddie Earnest & Liz Fathman, Reedy Press, 2012. <http://missouri-harvest.com/index.html>
- Catering St. Louis: [cateringstlouis.com/](http://cateringstlouis.com/)
- Michele C Catering and Events: <http://mccateringandevents.com/>
- Companion Bread: <http://www.companionstl.com>
- Local Harvest Catering: [localharvestcafe.com/](http://localharvestcafe.com/)
- Monterey Bay Aquarium Seafood Watch: <http://www.seafoodwatch.org/cr/seafoodwatch.aspx>
- Virginia Aquarium Sensible Seafood Program: [Sensible Seafood](http://www.virginiaseafood.com/)

## Giveaways

- Get Green with Geiger: green promotional products (a better alternative to mainstream options). Local Representative: (314) 432-4703, <https://www.geiger.com/geiger-eco-friendly.aspx>
- Resource Revival makes promotional products and awards from recycled bicycle parts. Click this link to see their unique Earth Day giveaways: <http://www.resourcerevival.com/>
- Considering handing out seed packets from an organic and heirloom seed saver. Try Peaceful Valley: <http://www.groworganic.com/> or Seed Savers: <http://www.seedsavers.org/>

## Grant Funding

- Dr. Pepper is contributing \$300,000 to help fund public-space recycling efforts across the nation. The soda giant, officially known as Dr. Pepper Snapple Group, is for the second year in a row partnering with Keep America Beautiful to offer grants that will fund recycling bins in city, regional and state parks. KAB affiliates as well as government agencies can apply for funding on the program's [website](http://www.drpepper.com/keepamericabeautiful/), and applications will be accepted until Feb. 11.

## Transportation

- St. Louis 3Wheel Taxi (Pedicab): [http://www.3wheeltaxi.com/documents/34\\_ezgedit.php](http://www.3wheeltaxi.com/documents/34_ezgedit.php)
- Metro Transit St. Louis – Plan your trip or find the closest Metro stations and bus stops: <http://www.metrostlouis.org/PlanYourTrip/Overview.aspx>
- Bike Rentals: <http://bigshark.com/articles/rent-a-bike-pg766.htm>, <http://www.mikesbikesstl.com/rentals.html>
- Bike Map and Safe Routes: <http://www.bikestlouis.org/>, <http://trailnet.org/>

## Venues

- Schlafly Tap Room (Downtown) and Bottleworks (Maplewood): <http://schlafly.com/events/private-parties/>
- America's Center (now composting and recycling): <http://www.explorestlouis.com/americasCenter/public.asp>
- Missouri Botanical Garden (and the Restaurant Sassafras): <http://www.mobot.org/default.asp>
- Tarlton, LEED Certified, meeting rooms available: <http://www.tarltoncorp.com/AboutTarlton/Sustainability.aspx>
- Mungenast Dealership of St. Louis, LEED Certified Building; open space for reception-style event: <http://www.mungenastlexusofstlouis.com/AboutUs>
- Third Degree Glass Factory, great for parties: <http://www.thirddegreeglassfactory.com/>
- 21 O'Fallon, William Kerr Foundation, primarily available for non-profit organizations: [www.wakfoundation.org](http://www.wakfoundation.org)
- Alberici, meeting rooms available: <http://www.alberici.com/>

## Waste

- Compost Hauling
  - Blue Skies Recycling – compost and recycling hauling: <http://www.blueskiesrecycling.com/>
- Recyclables Hauling – most waste haulers who rent roll off event dumpsters have the option to haul recycling as well. The rate for hauling recycling should be less than for the same amount of trash.
- Compost and Recycling Containers – contact St. Louis Earth Day about loaning containers through our DIY program: <http://www.stlouisearthday.org/programs/recycling-on-the-go/do-it-yourself-event-recycling/>
- Full service event composting, recycling and event greening – Recycling On the Go, a program of St. Louis Earth Day: <http://www.stlouisearthday.org/programs/recycling-on-the-go/>
- Leftover Food Donations – Operation Food Search: Package to maintain freshness and OFS will arrange a timely pick up, benefiting local food pantries: <http://www.operationfoodsearch.org>
- Decorations, Giveaways, T-shirts for Donations & Second Life
  - Leftover's Etc., takes all kinds of "leftover" supplies that becomes non-traditional learning tools and school supplies: <http://www.leftoversetc.com/>
  - Teachers Recycling Center, takes all kinds of items for art and exploration: <http://stlouisteachersrecycle.homestead.com/Material.html>
  - St. Vincent de Paul: <http://www.svdpstlouis.org/thrift-stores/>
- Banners
- Sew Sack Sew – This small, family-owned company makes bags from upcycled\* vinyl banners, supplied by local companies and organizations: <http://sewsacksew.com/> Contact them for how to recycle your outdated event banners.

## Glossary\*

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### A

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**Alternative Energy:** Energy from a source other than the conventional fossil fuels, nuclear power, and large-scale hydroelectric power; e.g. solar, wind, geothermal, biomass.

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### B

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**Big Five Energy Sources:** Coal, oil, natural gas, large-scale hydroelectric, and nuclear power.

**Bioaccumulants:** Substances that increase in concentration in living organisms as they take in contaminate air, water or food because the substances are very slowly metabolized or excreted.

**Biocide:** Product typically used to kill microorganisms.

**Bio-based materials:** In contrast to the model that relies on materials photosynthesized millions of years ago, bio-based manufacturing processes use photosynthesis that occurred in the past decade. Bio-based processes use naturally occurring enzymes or organisms.

**Biodegradable:** A material, which can serve as a nutrient source for bacteria or fungi, and in the process is decomposed into basic molecular building blocks (e.g. carbon dioxide, water, and nitrogen oxides). This term is OFTEN misused to describe something that will break down into very small parts. For example, petroleum-based plastics will degrade over time, but they will never return to elements of carbon dioxide, water, and nitrogen oxides.

**Biodegradable Product Claims:** “Reliable scientific evidence that the entire product or package will completely break down” (by living organisms) “and return to nature, i.e., decompose into elements found in nature within a reasonably short period of time after customary disposal” (16 C.F.R. § 260.7 (b)).”

**Biodiversity:** The totality of living animals, plants, fungi, and microorganisms in a region. According to the World Conservation Union (IUCN), it is “the variety of life in all forms, levels and combinations. Includes ecosystem diversity, species diversity, and genetic diversity.”

**Bioengineering:** Creation of new organisms with specific attributes through the insertion of the appropriate genetic material into the original organisms genome.

**Biomass:** Plant matter such as trees, grasses, agricultural crops, or other biological matter. It can provide a renewable source of electric power, fuel, or chemical feedstocks. All materials of recent plant or animal origin.

**Biosphere:** (1) The part of the earth and its atmosphere in which living organisms exist or that is capable of supporting life. (2) The ecosystem composed of the earth and the living organisms inhabiting it.

**Black Water:** Waste water from toilets and urinals, which contains pathogens that must be neutralized before the water can be safely reused. After neutralization, black water is typically used for non-portable purposes, such as flushing or irrigation.

**By-Product:** Materials, other than the principal product, generated as a consequence of an industrial process or as a breakdown of product in a living system.

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\*\* Many thanks to the Anton® and International Facility Management Association® promotional material that compiled the glossary from which many of these definitions were derived.

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## C

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**Carbon Footprint:** A representation of the effect human activities have on the climate in terms of the total amount of greenhouse gases produced (measured in units of carbon dioxide). A carbon footprint, usually expressed in metric tons of carbon, can be calculated for products, companies, or entire societies.

**Carbon Neutral:** The term “carbon-neutral” refers to products having a balance of zero between the amount of carbon absorbed and the amount of carbon released from/to the atmosphere during the production of the product.

**Carbon Offset:** Carbon offset is the process of reducing the net carbon emissions to an individual or organization, either by their own actions, or through arrangements with a carbon-offset provider.

**Carbon Dioxide:** Odorless gas commonly produced by respiration, and has been widely used as a measure of the ventilation adequacy of a space. A principle greenhouse gas. It is the result of the oxidation (including active combustion and respiration) of carbon-based substances.

**Carbon Tax:** A charge on fossil fuels (coal, oil, natural gas) based on their carbon content. When burned, the carbon in these fuels becomes carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, a chief green house gas (GHG).

**Carrying Capacity:** The maximum population size of a given species that an area can support without reducing its ability to support the same species in the future.

**CFL:** Compact fluorescent lamp. CFLs use between 1/5 and 1/3 of the power equivalent of traditional incandescent light bulbs. Widespread use of CFLs could save as much as 7% of total US household usage. CFLs also reduce the amount of heat energy produced by light fixtures, thereby reducing cooling system loads in the summer.

**Climate Change:** The term “climate change” is sometimes used to refer to all forms of climatic inconsistency, but because the earth’s climate is never static, the term is more properly used to imply a significant change from one climatic condition to another. In some cases, “climate change” has been used synonymously with the term “global warming”; scientists, however, tend to use the terms in the wider sense to also include natural changes in climate. Also referred to as “global climate change.” Also see “Global Warming.”

**Closed-loop Process:** Part of an industrial production process; not part of a waste management process. Materials reclaimed and returned in a closed-loop process are neither classified as, defined as, nor operate as, a waste, i.e., any discarded material. Materials in a closed-loop process are treated as commodities in a manner designed to avoid loss or release to the environment.

**Compost:** Process whereby organic wastes, including food wastes, paper and yard wastes, decompose naturally, resulting in a product rich in minerals and ideal for gardening and farming as a soil conditioner, mulch, resurfacing material, or land cover.

**Compostable Product Claims:** “Competent and reliable scientific evidence that all materials in the product or package will break down into, or otherwise become a part of, usable compost (e.g., soil conditioning material, mulch) in a save and timely manner in an appropriate composting program or facility, or in a come compost pile or device (16 C. F. R § 260.7 ©).”

**Conservation:** Preserving and renewing, when possible, human and natural resources. The use, protection and improvement of natural resources according to principles that will ensure their highest economic or social benefits.

**Consumption:** The use of goods and services, materials and energy, by humans.

**Cradle-to-Cradle:** Derived from the “Cradle-to-Grave” design methodology but ensures that end-of-life will result in materials that will become nutrients of feedstock for recycling into other valuable products.

**Cradle-to-Grave:** Design methodology that take into account all stages of the life cycle (raw material extraction through end-of-life disposal) of a product, service, or building early in the design process.

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## D

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**Disposal:** Final placement of destruction of toxic, radioactive or other wastes; surplus or banned pesticides or other chemicals; polluted soils; and drums containing hazardous materials from removal actions or accidental releases. Disposal may be accomplished through use of approved secure landfills, surface impoundments, land farming, deep-well injection, ocean dumping, or incineration.

**Downstream Impacts:** Environmental impacts caused by consumer use and product disposal.

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## E

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**Ecodesign:** A design process that considers the environmental impacts associated with a product throughout its entire life: from acquisition of raw materials through production/manufacturing and use to end of life. Ecodesign seeks to improve the aesthetic and functional aspects of the product with due consideration to social and ethical needs while simultaneously reducing environmental impacts.

**Ecology, first law of:** Garrett Hardin's concept that "we can never do merely one thing; sometimes referred to as the 'Law of Unintended Consequences.'"

**Embodied Energy:** Energy that is used during the entire life cycle of the commodity for manufacturing, transporting and disposing of the commodity as well as the inherent energy captured within the product itself. This term does not always correlate to life cycle environmental impact.

**Emissions Offsets:** An approach to local emissions control by reduction of existing sources to allow for the addition of new sources.

**Emissions Trading:** The creation of surplus emission reductions at certain emissions sources and the use of surplus to meet or redefine pollution requirements applicable to other emission sources and the use of this surplus to meet or redefine pollution requirements applicable to other emission sources. This allows one source to increase emissions when another source reduces them, maintaining an overall constant emissions level. Facilities that reduce emissions substantially may "bank" their "credits" or sell them to other industries or individuals.

**Energy Conservation:** Decreasing the demand for use of energy.

**Energy Efficiency:** The ration of energy output of a conversion process or a system to its energy input.

**Environmental Footprint:** Or ecological footprint, is the land (and water) area that would be required to support a defined human population and material standard indefinitely. For an industrial setting, this is also a company's environmental impact determined by the amount of depletable raw materials and non-renewable resources it consumes to make its products, and the quantity of wastes and emissions that are generated in the process. Traditionally, for a company to grow, the footprint had to get larger. Today, finding ways to reduce the environmental footprint is a priority for leading companies.

**Environmental Impact:** Any change to the environment, whether adverse or beneficial, wholly or partially resulting from human activity, industry, or natural disaster.

**Environmental Preference:** To revise product specifications, policies, and/or purchasing contract terms to request or give preference to products or services that minimize impacts on the environment throughout the process of manufacture, distribution, use, reuse and recycling, and disposal.

**Environmentally Preferable Products (EPP):** Established by Executive Order 13101, and replaced by EO 13423 on January 24, 2007, environmentally preferable products are products identified as having a lesser or reduced effect on health and the environment when compared with competing products that serve the same purpose.

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## F

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**Factory Farm:** A method of raising animals in confined buildings at high stock density. Antibiotic and pesticides are required to mitigate the spread of disease and pestilence that result from confined conditions.

**Forest Stewardship Council (FSC):** A widely used certification of timber and forest products that enables consumer confidence through assurance that the source is sustainably managed and does not contribute to global forest destruction.

**Fossil Fuel:** A fuel, such as coal, crude oil, and natural gas, produced by the decomposition of ancient (fossilized) plants and animals; compared to “Alternative Energy.”

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## G

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**Global Warming:** A process that raises the air temperature in the lower atmosphere due to heat trapped by greenhouse gases (GHG), such as carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide, CFCs, and ozone. It can occur as the result of natural influences, but the term is most often applied to the warming predicted to occur as a result of human activities (i.e. emissions of GHG).

**Gray Water:** Untreated or partially treated wastewater that is used for such purposes as watering lawns or flushing toilets (rather than using cleaner water of drinkable quality).

**Green:** A practice that works with nature instead of against it.

**Green Accounting:** An informal term referring to management accounting systems that specifically delineate the environmental costs of business activities rather than including those costs in overhead accounts.

**Green Buildings:** Buildings in which environmental considerations are given to design, construction and operation.

**Green-washing:** Disinformation disseminated by an organization so as to present an environmentally responsible public image.

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## H

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**Holistic:** A wide-reaching approach to a theory, a task, or a problem that encompasses all the elements of the system because of the interdependency of those elements.

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## K

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**Kilowatt Hour (kWh):** a unit of energy equal to 1000 watt hours or 3.6 megajoules.

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## L

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**Landfill:** In the simplest sense, an area where solid waste is deposited. In a sanitary facility, a hole in the ground is lined so that materials will not escape, and it is covered with layers of dirt as it is progressively filled. When completely filled, it is capped and sealed with more dirt and topsoil.

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**LEED™ Rating System:** LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) is a self-assessing system designed for rating new and existing commercial, institutional, and high-rise residential buildings. It evaluates environmental performance from a “whole building” perspective over a building’s life cycle, providing a definitive standard for what constitutes a green building.

**Life Cycle of a Product:** All phases associated with the life of a product (i.e. creation, distribution, sale, installation, end use, care and disposal/reuse/recycle).

**Lifecycle Analysis (LCA):** An evaluation of the environmental effects of a product or activity holistically, by analyzing the entire life cycle of a particular material, process, product, technology, service, or activity. The live cycle assessment consists of three complimentary components – inventory analysis, impact analysis, and improvement analysis – together with an integrative procedure known as scoping.

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## M

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**Materials Recovery Facility:** Commonly called a MRF (pronounced “murf”). A processing facility that removes recyclables from the waste stream. A “dirty MRF” removes reusable materials from unseparated trash; a “clean MRF” separates commingled recyclables.

**Monoculture:** The agricultural land use practice of producing or growing one crop over a wide area. This practice depletes soil nutrients, encourages the propagation of insect pests, and utilizes large equipment for cultivation and harvest. To counter the effects, farmers must use larger amounts of fertilizer and pesticides, most of which are petroleum-based and have adverse effects on the environment.

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## N

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**Nonrenewable Energy:** Energy derived from depletable fuels (oil, gas, coal) created through lengthy geological processes and existing in limited quantities on the earth.

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## O

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**Off-gassing:** The emission of volatile organic compounds from synthetic and natural products.

**Open-loop Process:** Any process that does not fit the definition of “closed-loop process.”

**Organic Farming:** Avoiding the use of synthetic chemicals as fertilizers, pesticides, and herbicides, when farming.

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## P

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**Pesticide:** Any chemical used for killing insects, weeds, etc.

**Petroleum:** Crude oil or any fraction thereof that is liquid under normal conditions of temperature and pressure. The term includes petroleum-based substances comprising a complex blend of hydrocarbons derived from crude oil through a process of separation, conversion, upgrading and finishing, such as motor fuel, jet oil, lubricants, petroleum solvents and used oil.

**Photovoltaic (PV):** The use of semiconductor technology to generate electricity directly from sunlight.

**Poly-lactic Acid (PLA):** A biodegradable, thermoplastic derived from renewable resources, such as cornstarch or sugarcane. Visually indistinguishable from other clear plastics. Signage recommend for proper disposal.

**Post-consumer Material:** Any household or commercial product that has served its original, intended use.

**Post-consumer Recycled Content:** A product composition that contains some percentage of material that has been reclaimed from the same or another use at the end of its former, useful life.

**Post-industrial Material:** Industrial manufacturing scrap or waste; also called pre-consumer material.

**Post-industrial Recycle Content:** A product composition that contains some percentage of manufacturing waste materials that has been reclaimed from a process generating the same or a similar product. Also called pre-consumer recycle content.

**Pre-consumer Waste:** See “Post-industrial material.”

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## R

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**Recyclable:** Commonly referred to as the ability of a product or material to be recovered from, or otherwise diverted from, the solid waste stream for the purposes of recycling. FTC guidelines indicate that a product may not be advertised as “recyclable” unless a viable, active reclamation system exists, that is available to a majority of end users, and collects and processes the product for recycling.

**Recycled Content:** Materials that have been recovered or otherwise diverted from the solid waste stream, either during the manufacturing process (pre-consumer), or after consumer use (post-consumer). Pre-consumer materials do not include materials normally reused by industry within the original manufacturing process.

**Recycling:** Process, by which materials that would otherwise become solid waste are collected, separated or processed and returned to the economic mainstream to be reused in the form of raw materials or finished goods.

**Renewable Energy:** An energy source that, from an Earth perspective, is continually replenished.

**Renewable Energy Certificates (REC):** represents the property rights to the environmental, social, and other nonpower qualities of renewable electricity generation. A REC, and its associated attributes and benefits, can be sold separately from the underlying physical electricity associated with a renewable-based generation source. Enables residents, companies, and other entities to purchase and offset regular “non-green” energy use.

**Renewable Resources:** A resource that can be replenished at a rate equal or greater than its rate of depletion (i.e. solar, wind, geothermal and biomass resources).

**Reuse:** Using a product or component of municipal solid waste in its original form more than once.

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## S

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**Source Reduction:** As applied to solid waste, reducing the generation of waste in the first place (as opposed to the later reusing or recycling waste.)

**Sustainable:** Meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs.

**Sustainability:** Practices that would ensure the continued viability of a product or practice well into the future.

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## T

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**Tree-Free Paper:** Paper made with alternative resources such as kenaf and hemp, without using virgin tree pulp.

**Triple Bottom Line Reporting:** New form of corporate disclosure, which integrates financial, environmental, and social, reporting.

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## U

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**Upcycling:** A subjective term used to describe the creation of a product with higher intrinsic value, manufactured from a material at the end of its service life, which had a lower initial end use value. It is important to note that the term does not provide insight into environmental benefit to “upcycling” if the creation of the higher value product requires more energy than recycling into an alternative product.

**USGBC (U.S. Green Building Council):** The United States foremost coalition of leaders from across the building industry working to promote buildings that is environmentally responsible, profitable, and healthy places to live and work.

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## V

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**Vegan:** A strict vegan diet abstains from the consumption of dairy products (milk, cheese, yogurt, cream), eggs, meat products (including meat-based broths), and honey. There are also a number of additives, preservatives, and animal by-products that are avoided (e.g. gelatin, lanolin, rennet, whey, casein, and Isinglass).

**Vegetarian:** A diet that avoids animal products such as beef, pork, poultry, and fish, though some vegetarians vary in the scope of what they will eat.

**Volatile Organic Compounds (VOC):** Organic substances capable of entering the gas phase from either a liquid or solid form.

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## Z

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**Zero Waste Event:** An event or meeting in which less than 10% of used materials end up in a landfill or incinerator. Waste is diverted through source reduction (electronic copies available, reusable dinnerware), recycling, repurposing and composting. Other areas of waste, such as embodied energy, can be reduced and offset as well.