# THE GREEN EVENT GUIDE

[Picture of people at the Sustainability Picnic on camps]

[Picture of Auburn University Office of Sustainability Logo]

## THE SUSTAINABILITY COMPASS

[Picture of Sustainability Compass]

The four points of the Sustainability Compass are nature, economy, society, and wellbeing.

Nature

Restore, protect and live in accord with the laws of nature

Wellbeing

Individual health, fulfilment, happiness, and wellbeing

Society

Social connectedness, caring, equity, and engagement

Economy

A prosperous economy that is viable, fair, and inclusive

Whether hosting a meeting with your co-workers or putting together a conference for international attendees, you can make the world a better place by doing things a little differently.

Making small changes to “business-as-usual” can allow the campus community to engage with Auburn University’s commitment to sustainability and result in positive impacts surrounding the Sustainability Compass.

## KEY PRINCIPLES

Green events strive to minimize the negative & maximize the positive impacts while promoting responsible stewardship around the Sustainability Compass. The principles shared here can apply in any setting. The more you can do, the better!

### Recruit & include diverse audiences.

* Plan to accommodate those with [accessibility needs](https://accessibility.auburn.edu/Home/CampusAccessibility).
* Minimize scheduling conflicts to include diverse audiences.
* Advertise through varied channels.

### Reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

* Connect to transportation options.
* Reduce energy use.
* Source locally.

### Aim for a zero-landfill event.

* Minimize printing.
* Use digital communication.
* Provide & encourage recycling & composting.
* Have a plan for food leftovers.
* Reuse supplies.
* Reduce single-use items.

Don’t forget to share successes to educate others!

If you have questions or need assistance, please contact the [Office of Sustainability](http://wp.auburn.edu/sustainability/connect/).

[Picture of Sustainability Compass]

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Feel free to explore all or part of the guide; you may go directly to a section by selecting it below.

TIME

LOCATION

Meetings

Conferences

COMMUNICATION

Meetings

Conferences

MATERIALS

FOOD SERVICE

WASTE

GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS

PARTIES & TAILGATES

DURING YOUR EVENT

Meetings

AFTER YOUR EVENT

APPENDICES

Purchasing to Minimize Waste

Purchasing Certifications

Digital Communications

Campus Resources

GLOSSARY

[Picture of wildflowers in the Davis Arboretum at Auburn University]

## TIME

* Account for attendees’ schedules to maximize attendance.
* Consider the university schedule & other events.
* Avoid having starting/ending times during rush hour.
* Consider holidays of various cultures.

## LOCATION

INSTANT IMPACT: Enable use of [sustainable transportation](http://wp.auburn.edu/sustainability/transport-guide/) options.

* Minimize travel to venue.
* Ensure access is ADA compliant.
* Use a [LEED](http://wp.auburn.edu/sustainability/transport-guide/) certified building.
* Check for [LED](#_GLOSSARY) or natural lighting.
* Offer access to outdoor space.
* Provide projector or dry erase board.
* Ensure all staff are aware of the location of accessible seating, restrooms, parking, & elevators.
* Develop an evacuation plan with Campus Safety & Security.

### MEETINGS

Consider holding conference calls or video chats.

### CONFERENCES

Choose a venue that:

* Trains employees on [sustainable practices.](#_GLOSSARY)
* Follows energy efficiency & water conservation practices.
* Minimizes landfill waste through recycling, compost, etc.
* Has outlets available for chargers.
* Offers video or teleconferencing for remote participants.
* Provides tablecloths only upon request.

Choose a hotel that:

* Offers a linen/ towel reuse option.
* Provides paperless check-in & check-out.
* Connects to transit, bike share, or is within two miles of venue.
* Places recycling bins in rooms.
* Uses Eco-friendly [cleaning & laundry products.](#_GLOSSARY)
* Follows [fair labor policies.](#_GLOSSARY)
* Received certification by a [green lodging program.](#_PURCHASING_CERTIFICATIONS)

If the venue or hotel doesn’t address sustainability, let them know your preferences so they can improve in the future.

## COMMUNICATION

### WHAT

Communicate [sustainability goals & practices](#_GLOSSARY).

Promote sustainability features of the venue.

Encourage attendees to:

* Use refillable water bottles & mugs.
* Use [sustainable transportation](http://wp.auburn.edu/sustainability/transport-guide/).
* Follow event sustainability practices.
* Share accessibility accommodations needed in advance.

Ask tablers & exhibitors to:

* Minimize giveaways & handouts.
* Give items that promote sustainable behaviors (e.g. - reusable water bottles or utensils).
* Advertise on useful items (e.g. - koozies, phone cases, T-shirts).
* Bring reusable or recyclable items.
* Recycle on-site & carry away items that can only be recycled off-site

For accessibility:

* Provide information on accessible parking, entrances, restrooms, & path of travel
* For sign language speakers, include directions to the best view

### MEETINGS

Use shared electronic documents for group editing.

### HOW

Advertise event [digitally.](#_DIGITAL_COMMUNICATIONS)

Promote with in-person invites, class visits, & tabling.

Collect RSVPs to ensure an accurate head count.

Ensure [accessibility](#_CAMPUS_RESOURCES) of information to all users.

* Contact the Office of Accessibility at 844-2096 if braille or other accessible materials are needed.
* All videos should be captioned & have them turned on.
* If providing sign language interpreting & captioning, request two interpreters, & include directions for participants to the best view.

If printing is necessary:

* Print double-sided.
* Reduce margins & font size.
* Use recycled-content paper.
* Use standard paper sizes, not custom.
* Have professional printers use soy-based inks.

For signs & banners:

* Design for reuse.
* Use non-specific dates (e.g. - Welcome Week vs. Aug 21st).
* Print on recyclable materials.

INSTANT IMPACT: Provide programs, agendas, presentations, & resources online.

### CONFERENCES

* Recruit key audiences digitally.
* Hold registration online.
* Encourage attendees to bring name tag lanyards.

## MATERIALS

### PURCHASING

INSTANT IMPACT: Make accurate headcount to avoid excess materials.

* Plan for a zero-landfill event.
* Borrow, reuse, or rent decor & equipment.
* Buy items made from recycled content.
* Look for minimal & recyclable packaging.
* Seek out certified items (e.g. - foods, facilities, cleaning products).
* Use rechargeable batteries.

### GIVEAWAYS

* Minimize or eliminate one-use giveaways.
* Choose practical, reusable, & healthy options.
* Promote sustainable behaviors.
* Use event decor as giveaways (e.g. - air-cleansing plants).

## FOOD SERVICE

### Consider offering

*INSTANT IMPACT:* [*Locally-grown.*](#_GLOSSARY)

* Allergen-free (e.g. - gluten, nuts, shellfish).
* Vegetarian or vegan.
* Healthy options (e.g. - fresh, unprocessed).
* [Certified foods](#_PURCHASING_CERTIFICATIONS) (e.g. - fair trade, organic, Rainforest Alliance).

### SHOPPING

* Calculate an accurate headcount.
* Create a list.
* Bring reusable bags.
* Look for minimal & recyclable packaging.

### SERVICE

*INSTANT IMPACT: Serve water in pitchers; avoid bottled water.*

* Use [Tiger Catering or AU Hotel & Conference Center,](#_CAMPUS_RESOURCES) if needed.
* Label food clearly.
* Choose reusable plates, napkins, silverware, glasses, & tablecloths.
* Serve buffet-style in reusable or recyclable serviceware.
* Avoid serving individually-packaged meals & beverages.
* Use bulk dispensers for food & beverage condiments.

Designate someone to assist with carrying meals & ensure straws are available upon request.

If disposables are used:

* Avoid Styrofoam, bottled water, straws, & coffee stirrers.
* Choose recyclable plates & utensils.
* Save extra items for future use.

Ask caterer to not idle vehicles.

### LEFTOVERS

* Bring containers for leftovers or request from caterer.
* Contact The Campus Kitchens Project to get unserved food.

[Picture of salad made of cucumbers, radishes, carrots, and peas]

[Picture of recycling bin]

## WASTE

### collection stations

Make bins available before, during, & after event.

Set up bins for landfill, compost, and recycling.

Locate stations conveniently with all bin types together.

Label with clear & simple signage.

Train volunteers to monitor stations, which includes:

* Instructing participants on properly sorting items.
* Pulling recycling out of trash.
* Taking trash out of the recycling bins.
* Following safety recommendations, such as wearing gloves.

### ON CAMPUS

Submit work order for recycling bins through Facilities Management.

Consult the [Waste Reduction & Recycling Department.](#_CAMPUS_RESOURCES)

Recycle:

* Plastic drink containers
* Aluminum & steel cans
* Cardboard
* Mixed paper

### OFF CAMPUS

Recycle all of the above at the [City of Auburn Recycling Center](https://www.google.com/maps/place/Auburn+City+Environmental+Services/@32.6119933,-85.4899218,15z/data=!4m5!3m4!1s0x0:0x2c25bb8d3273362a!8m2!3d32.6119933!4d-85.4899218) plus:

* Glass
* Batteries
* Cooking grease/oil
* Take plastic shopping bags to grocery stores.

### NOT RECYCLABLE

* Plastics without recycling symbol (e.g. - silverware, straws, stirrers, & wrap)
* Styrofoam
* Chip bags & candy wrappers
* Dirty aluminum foil, trays, and pizza boxes
* Food scraps & leftovers

## GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS

### FOOD

Purchase local to reduce [food miles.](#_GLOSSARY)

Serve vegetarian proteins.

### WASTE

Require an RSVP in order to reduce food waste.

Set a goal for a [zero-landfill e](#_GLOSSARY)vent.

Choose reusable, recyclable, or compostable items.

Arrange for [The Campus Kitchens Project](#_CAMPUS_RESOURCES) to pick up unserved food.

Coordinate composting with the [Organic Garden Club](https://auburn.collegiatelink.net/organization/organicgarden).

### TRANSPORTATION

Share [Auburn Sustainable Transportation Guide](http://wp.auburn.edu/sustainability/transport-guide/) before event.

Minimize distance between venue & hotels.

INSTANT IMPACT: Choose venues that connect to sustainable transportation.

Encourage attendees to:

Reduce [single-occupancy vehicle use.](#_GLOSSARY)

### BUILDINGS

Choose a venue that:

Holds a [LEED or Living Building](#_GLOSSARY) certification.

Practices [energy efficiency.](#_GLOSSARY)

Turn off equipment, lights, & water when not in use.

Shut down electronics.

[Picture of bus at bus stop]

[Picture of people at picnic]

## PARTIES AND TAILGATES

### PLANNING

Consider holidays from various cultures.

Opt for outdoors.

Avoid sensitive plants and exposed tree roots.

Provide shelter from sun or rain.

Consult the [Fire Safety Rules and Tips for Tailgaters.](https://cws.auburn.edu/shared/content/files/1498/tailgaters.pdf)

Plan for recycling and waste.

### COMMUNICATIONS

Send digital invites, RSVPs, & sign-up forms.

Create a Facebook event.

Share [event sustainability goals & practices.](#_GLOSSARY)

Minimize printing.

### DECORATIONS

INSTANT IMPACT: Borrow, reuse, rent, &/or make decor & equipment. Choose recyclable, reusable, &/or compostable decorations & signs. Design signs & banners for reuse (e.g. - use non-specific dates). Consider fruit arrangements or native potted flowers & plants.

Avoid balloons & confetti.

Seek out certified items.

Use [LED](#_GLOSSARY) lights.

Collect decor to reuse or donate after event.

## DURING YOUR EVENT

INSTANT IMPACT: Share sustainability goals & practices. Use computers or tablets for check-in.

Monitor waste stations.

Use verbal announcements to:

• Identify locations of water stations.

• Review procedures of waste stations.

• Cover emergency procedures.

MEETINGS Take notes digitally. Use shared documents for group editing.

## AFTER YOUR EVENT

INSTANT IMPACT: Collect name tags, supplies, & decor to reuse. Remove & dispose of waste & recycling accordingly.

Turn off equipment, lights, & water.

Use [green cleaners.](#_PURCHASING_CERTIFICATIONS)

COMMUNICATION Send electronic thank-yous to partners, volunteers, donors, & attendees.

[Share successes](#_DIGITAL_COMMUNICATIONS) using photos (e.g. - quantity of waste avoided, food donated, bikes ridden).

[Picture of bin full of reusable dishes]

## APPENDICES

### PURCHASING TO MINIMIZE WASTE

This pages shares options to purchase for events and categorizes them as best, good, or to avoid.

When purchasing Plates, Bowls, Cups, Glasses, & Mugs the best choice is Reusable, Washable, or to Bring Your Own, good choices include Recyclable or Compostable, and try to avoid Styrofoam.

When purchasing Utensils the best choice is Reusable or Bring Your Own, good choices include Reused plastic, Recyclable, or Compostable, and try to avoid Single-use landfill items.

When purchasing Napkins the best choice is Cloth, to Bring Your Own, or have None, good choices include Paper (smaller = better) that are Undyed & unbleached, and try to avoid Large, thick paper towels.

To avoid Leftover Food the best choice is getting an Accurate headcount to avoid leftovers, good choices include Donate, Take home, or Compost, and try to avoid Landfill.

When purchasing Serving Containers & Covers the best choice is Reusable containers, good choices include Aluminum or Recyclable plastic, and try to avoid Plastic wrap and Styrofoam.

When purchasing Beverages the best choice is Bulk serving in Pitchers or Carafes, good choices include Recyclable: Plastic, Glass, Aluminum, and try to avoid Single-serve items in unrecyclable packaging.

When purchasing Coffee & Tea the best choice is In-house brewed coffee and tea and Fair Trade products, good choices include Compostable bags and Individual coffee servings with paper packaging, and try to avoid Keurig or single-brew cups.

When purchasing Stirrers the best choice is Reusable, good choices include Wood or biobased, and try to avoid Plastic.

When purchasing Straws the best choice is have None or use Reusable, good choices include Biobased or Compostable, and try to avoid Plastic.

When purchasing Snacks (e.g. chips, bars, cookies, candy) the best choice is using a Serving bowl & tongs and Family-size bag/box, good choices include Paper-wrapped single servings, and try to avoid Plastic or foil wrapped single servings.

When purchasing Condiments (e.g. ketchup, butter, sugar) the best choice is Bulk product & reusable utensil and a Reusable pitcher or bottle, good choices include Individual servings in recyclable or compostable packaging, and try to avoid Non-recyclable, single-serve packets.

## PURCHASING CERTIFICATIONS

This page lists certifications and provides a description and examples.

[B-Corporation](https://www.bcorporation.net/en-us/) Certifies businesses based on social & environmental performance, transparency, & legal accountability. Examples include: Hotels, retailers, food & beverage companies, businesses in all sectors.

[Green Seal](https://greenseal.org/splash/) Certifies products & services to help manufacturers, purchasers, & consumers make responsible choices. Examples include: Hotels, restaurants, paper products, & cleaning products.

[Green Lodging Program](https://auduboninternational.org/green-lodging-program/) Verifies facilities have met environmental best practice standards. Examples include: Lodging facilities.

[Safer Choice](https://www.epa.gov/saferchoice) Helps consumers, businesses, & purchasers find products that perform well & are safer for human health & the environment. Examples include: Cleaning products.

[Energy Star](https://www.energystar.gov/) Helps businesses & individuals save money & protect our climate through superior energy efficiency. Examples include: Appliances, lighting, electronics, & building products.

[EPEAT](https://www.epeat.net/) Rates high-performance electronics that supports the IT & sustainability goals of an organization. Examples include: Electronic products (e.g. - TVs, computers, monitors).

[Rainforest Alliance](https://www.rainforest-alliance.org/) Provides training to farmers, foresters, and tourism entrepreneurs to minimize environmental impacts. Examples include: Agriculture, forestry, & tourism.

[Sustainable Forest Initiative](https://forests.org/) Promotes responsible forest management on all suppliers’ lands. Examples include: Wood, paper, & bioenergy manufacturers.

[Forest Stewardship Council](https://us.fsc.org/en-us) Promotes environmentally sound, socially beneficial, & economically prosperous management of the forests. Examples include: Building materials, paper, & printing.

[United States Green Building Council](https://www.usgbc.org/) Certifies buildings for LEED, (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) Examples include: Buildings, houses, & communities.

[International Living Future Institute](https://living-future.org/) Has Living Future challenges such as Living Buildings, transparency labels, & housing initiatives. Examples include: Living Building Challenge & Living Product Challenge.

## DIGITAL COMMUNICATIONS

The following are campus units with digital displays that take images in a 16:9 ratio:

Alabama Cooperative Extension System

Auburn University Bookstore

Auburn University Facilities Management

Auburn University Libraries

College of Agriculture College of Architecture, Design & Construction

Department of Art & Art History

Department of Human Resources

McWhorter School of Building Sciences

Office of Information Technology

Raymond J. Harbert College of Business

8.5 by 11 or Powerpoint slides can be sent to the College of Forestry, Wildlife and Environment.

Landscaped photos jpg can be sent to Auburn Abroad.

The College of Math and Science accepts jpgs that are a 21.5 by 15.5 ratio.

These Auburn University Press Outlets have the following Primary Audiences.

Academic Sustainability Program reaches Sustainability minor students.

Auburn News reaches Employees.

Auburn University Calendar reaches Students, employees, & community members

AU Involve Web Submission reaches Students

Honors Forum Calendar reaches Honors College students

Department Newsletters & Email Lists Differs by campus audience

Office of Communications and Marketing Press Release reaches Off-campus media

Office of Sustainability Calendar & Digest reaches Students, employees, & communities

The Plainsman reaches Students & employees

This Week @ AU reaches Students.

University Housing & Residence Life reaches Students living on-campus

There are a number of Online Resources to support various event needs, for example, for Event Programs you could use Guidebook.

Invitations can use Evites.

Registrations can use Google Forms, Qualtrics.

Surveys can use Qualtrics, Google Forms, Doodle Poll.

Volunteer forms can use GivePulse or Volunteer Hub.

Social Media commonly used includes Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, and Linked In.

## CAMPUS RESOURCES

The following are commonly used resources on campus for events.

Auburn Sustainability Transportation Guide

The Auburn University Map with Sustainability Placemarks

Donald E. Davis Arboretum

The Campus Kitchens Project at Auburn University

The Hotel at Auburn University and Dixon Conference Center

Local Resources in the Auburn/Opelika Community

Office of Accessibility

Office of Communications & Marketing Event Planning and Protocol

Office of Sustainability

Parking Services

Service Support, Facilities

Student Center

Tiger Catering

Tiger Dining

Tiger Transit

Waste Reduction & Recycling Department

[picture of compass]

## GLOSSARY

BIOBASED: ‘Use wood or biobased flatware.’ A material that is composed, in whole or in significant part, of biological products or renewable domestic agricultural or forestry materials.

CARBON OFFSETS: ‘Encourage attendees to buy carbon offsets.’ A carbon offset is a reduction in emissions of carbon dioxide & other greenhouse gases made in order to compensate for, or to offset, an emission made elsewhere. Many airline & car-rental companies have an option for travelers to purchase carbon offsets.

ENERGY EFFICIENCY: ‘Building practices with energy efficiency.’ The goal of energy efficiency is to reduce the amount of energy required to provide products & services.

FAIR LABOR POLICIES: ‘Hotel follows Fair Labor policies.’ Ideally, a hotel should pay at least a living wage. Fair labor practices identified by the Fair Labor Standards Act include the forty-hour work week, a national minimum wage, guaranteed “time-and-a-half” for overtime in certain jobs, & the prohibition of most employment of minors in “oppressive child labor.”

FOOD MILES: ‘Purchase locally to reduce food miles.’ Food miles refers to the distance food is transported from the time of its production until it reaches the consumer.

LED LIGHTS: ‘Location uses LED or natural lighting.’ LED stands for “Light-Emitting Diode.” LED light bulbs have many advantages over incandescent light sources, including lower energy consumption, longer lifetime, improved physical robustness, smaller size, & faster switching.

LEED CERTIFIED: ‘Location is a LEED certified building.’ LEED stands for “Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design.” The LEED certification is a third-party verification that the building meets a number of sustainability criteria, thus ensuring it uses less water & energy.

SINGLE OCCUPANCY VEHICLE USE: ‘Encourage attendees to reduce single-occupancy vehicle use.’ A single-occupancy vehicle is a privately-operated vehicle whose only occupant is the driver.

SUSTAINABLE BEHAVIORS: ‘Give items that promote sustainable behaviors.’ Sustainable behaviors are actions that minimize a person’s negative environmental impacts & maximize their ability to enhance personal or social wellbeing. Examples include reusable water bottles, shopping bags, utensils, & napkins; first aid kits; sunscreen; pens & pencils made with recycled materials; & sunglasses. For bigger giveaways, consider potted plants, gift certificates for experiences, or biking gear.

SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES: ‘Trains employees on sustainable practices.’ Sustainable practices for a hotel or event venue are numerous & may include offering recycling, drinking fountains, electric-vehicle charging station, & local food. Practices may also include connecting to public transit or offering a bike share on the premises. Examples within hotels include in-room recycling, offering a sheet-changing card, & installing motion sensors & low-flow water fixtures.

SUSTAINABILITY GOALS & PRACTICES: ‘Communicate event sustainability goals & practices.’ Sustainability goals & practices are a written commitment to specific actions & behaviors that the event will accomplish or take.

ZERO-LANDFILL EVENT: ‘Plan for a zero-landfill event.’ The goal of a zero-landfill event is that after the event everything will be either saved/ donated to be reused, recycled, or composted. Nothing goes in the trash. This even includes the small things, such as coffee stirrers & individual creamer containers.

## BACK PAGE OF GUIDE

The back page of the guide has the following:

Image of Sustainability Compass

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Images of social media icons: Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter and handle @AUsustain

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