



## Small Event Sustainability Recommendations

Thank you for taking the first step toward making your event more sustainable! Below are a list of guidelines, tips, and suggestions to reduce your impact on the environment through waste and energy reduction, and responsible sourcing and management. None are required, but one can make a difference!

### Plastics reduction, recycling, and Sustainability

1. Designate a "Green Team"
  - a. Implementing a green team results in effective planning to reduce or eliminate single use plastics and helps ensure sustainable practices are being followed.
2. Develop and implement a plan to reduce single use plastic water bottles.
  - a. Some ways to do this could include ensuring staff only use re-useable water bottles, encourage and market attendees to do the same. Make sure to provide water refilling stations or 5-gallon jugs of water with pumps to assist with this in both staff areas and public areas.
3. Eliminate single-use plastics like bags, straws, etc. and other special wastes.
  - a. Recycle films and bags – ([TREX](#)) [TREX Drop off Locations](#)
  - b. Other materials (ie. Oils, HW) – [Rhode Island Resource Recovery Center/Eco Depot](#)
4. Provide Ample Opportunity for comprehensive recycling.
  - a. Be sure to provide separate labeled bins for trash, recycling, and composting. These bins should be placed in convenient locations throughout the event. It may be helpful to designate someone from the "green team" to monitor bins and make sure they are not overflowing. Trash, recycling, and compost bins should ALWAYS be located next to each other at all locations.
  - b. Post environmentally responsible signage – These could include waste labeling, bring in and take out policy, or educational information on sustainability and proper waste management.  
-Rhode Island Resource Recovery: <https://www.rirrc.org/>  
-Free Labels: <https://www.recycleacrossamerica.org/labels/mixed-labels.html>
5. Do not have balloons, glitter, or paper lantern releases.
  - a. These items cause pollution in rivers, streams and oceans causing irreversible damage to marine and aquatic life via ingestion and entanglement.
6. Strive to be 100% paper-free
  - a. Promote event and send out invites online. Use QR codes for schedules and other event materials.
  - b. If paper is a necessity, use post-consumer recycled content (>30%) and/or FSC certified.
7. Provide Responsible Dinnerware
  - a. Avoid polystyrene cups, plastic utensils, non-bleached napkins, and plastic containers.
  - b. Responsible dinnerware includes items that can be recycled or composted.  
-BPI certified products: <https://products.bpiworld.org/>
8. Procure reusable items that can be reused in future events.
9. Procure **items made in the USA** vs. overseas to the greatest extent possible to reduce shipping/transportation impacts (reducing carbon emissions)

### Food Sources and Food Waste Management

1. Choose locally based Food Vendors
  - a. Choose vendors located in RI or Southern New England when hiring a food provider.
2. Serve food that was grown, landed or made within RI
  - a. Support local farmers, fishermen, or makers by sourcing locally

-Distributors: ([Farm Fresh RI's Market Mobile Program](#)) ([Hope & Main](#)) ([What's Good](#)) ([Seafood Marketing Collaborative](#))

3. Select food that was sustainably/humanely grown, raised, and/or handled.
  - a. Certified humanely raised and handled meat such as: Certified Humane, Animal Welfare Approved, American Grass-fed, American Humane Certified, Global Animal Partnership 4, 5 and 5+
  - b. Plant-based meat alternatives
  - c. USDA Certified Organic
  - d. Cage-free eggs
  - e. Sustainable Seafood: Favorably listed by Monterey Bay Aquarium, ASC, OceanWise, or MSC Certified
  - f. Fairtrade coffee and tea
  - g. Milk and Yogurt free from artificial growth hormones
4. Prevent excessive food production and waste through meal preparation (only make what will be eaten) and made to order management.
  - a. Limit plastic container usage by using reusable/recyclable products within food preparation
5. Donation of excess food.
  - Means database: <https://meansdatabase.org/ri/>
  - Rhode to end hunger: [https://health.ri.gov/programs/detail.php?pgm\\_id=1118](https://health.ri.gov/programs/detail.php?pgm_id=1118)
6. Compost Food waste that cannot be donated
  - Food waste resources: ([The Compost Plant](#)) ([Black Earth Compost](#)) ([Center for EcoTechnology](#)) ([Groundwork RI](#)), ([Epic Renewal](#))
7. Recycle grease at vendors.
  - a. Grease can be recycled at food vendors into biodiesel.
    - Newport Biodiesel/Mahoney Environmental: <https://www.mahoneyes.com/newport-biodiesel/>

#### **Energy & Water Use**

1. Event is held in sustainable venue or outside.
2. Encourage carpooling, public transportation, biking, and walking to event through event promotion.
3. Low flow toilets, faucets, and smart sensor lighting in restrooms.

The Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management Green Events checklist provides a menu of best management practices that event organizers can use to achieve a reduction in environmental impact at events and festivals. RIDEM encourages you to certify your next event as a green event by checking off 12 of the 27 best management practices. Please see the following links to get started on planning your green event!

[Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management Green Events Certification](#)