

# *The Green Event Planning Guide for Communities and Schools, Ottawa, Ontario<sup>1</sup>*

## **Introduction**

Hello and Welcome! We are thrilled that you found us, and that you found this Guide.

This Guide was prepared by **Re-Creativity Ottawa** which started in 2019 as a local, community-based initiative geared towards greening the community of Leslie Park in Ottawa's West end. The information below was compiled by the Re-Creativity Team, from information from several online resources, and we have added and upgraded it based on our experience as local community organizers and long-time volunteers in Ottawa.

Re-creativity aims to gradually transform our community into a green community, through activities and services that include education, advocacy, awareness raising. Our team participates in the community, and at public and private events and programs in the West end of Ottawa. We connect green champions.

The *Green Event Planning Guide* is our first effort to create green events in the community, and it is intended for all individuals, organizations and institutions, involved in community- or event organizing, who wish to ensure that our planet, our community and environment stay healthy and clean after our events, or even better, that they are a better place after our event! We all share this beautiful home, and we can all become environmental stewards in our daily action, by taking small steps and thinking big.

We have compiled this information for you.

We invite you to use it as much as possible; **to share** it with your staff and volunteers; to make it your own and/or **improve it!** We encourage you to let us know if and how you have used this Guide, and whether you have recommended it to others, and if so, to whom.

Please send your ideas and feedback to: [recreativityottawa@gmail.com](mailto:recreativityottawa@gmail.com).

We would love to hear your Greening stories!

*The Re-Creativity Team*

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<sup>1</sup> Based on the Green Event Planning Guide of the City of Vancouver

## BEFORE THE EVENT

### Train the staff/volunteers on your Green Plan

Engaging and educating staff, vendors and volunteers about how to be environmentally conscious, is key to the overall success of greening your event.

- Recruit volunteers interested in environmental sustainability, and be sure they know, prior to event day, the types of tasks they may be required to perform.
- Distribute supplies (when required) to the volunteers who are responsible for collecting waste, recycling, and for gathering items for re-using them later.
- Identify locations of green equipment and services.

*The largest job for green volunteers on event day will likely be to support zero waste*

### Involve all stakeholders

Meet with your stakeholders, event owners, site owners, vendors and contractors to let them know about your green event goals. Invite their input and advise them of any green expectations and requirements.

- Coordinate with vendors and exhibitors.
- Select contractors and suppliers that have a commitment to and specialize in sustainable practices.

### Ask vendors, exhibitors and performers to:

- Ensure that items for sale/giveaway and containers are made from recyclable or reusable materials.
- Consider entertainment options that consume little or no energy, and leave no plastic and waste behind.
- Select items with less or no packaging.
- Encourage vendors, exhibitors and performers to distribute information using electronic methods.
- Avoid single-use giveaways and handouts such as balloons; they kill wildlife, pollute the Earth and waste Helium.

### Ask food vendors to:

- Select local and seasonal foods.
- Offer reusable containers for purchase and single-use containers that are recyclable or compostable. Avoid Styrofoam containers and cups.
- Discourage the use of unnecessary disposable items (e.g. straws and stir sticks). Use items that are made from recycled content (e.g. plates and napkins), or better yet, use reusable dinnerware, flatware, and/or linens, whenever possible.
- Use large containers for condiments and beverages instead of individual packets, cans or bottles.

- For smaller events, like community parties and picnics, consider a potluck as a sustainable option and bring your own utensils, cups and plates.

### **Develop a zero-waste plan**

*Litter and waste are the responsibility of the event organizer. Coordinate with your waste service provider to establish your waste management plan, including:*

- Location and numbers of waste, recycling, re-use and compost (food scraps) bins.
- Find out from your waste management service provider what materials they will accept and train staff and volunteers accordingly.
- Location and timing for container drop-off and pick up and logistics for waste removal, if applicable.
- Types of recyclables/reusables that will be collected during the event, such as plastic, glass, food scraps and paper.

### **Zero-waste stations**

**A properly managed zero waste station is one of the most important tools for a green event. There should be one zero waste station for every 500 attendees at peak attendance.**

***Each zero-waste station should:***

- Have at least one bin for each stream: garbage, recycling (paper and mixed containers) and organics (food scraps). Have a clearly marked, separate bin for collection of any reusables you intend to collect.
- Be easily identified in busy areas and within close walking distance from where waste is likely to be produced (e.g. near food vendors).
- Have trained staff or volunteers assigned to each station.

*For an event smaller in scale, or an event in nature or a public space such as a park, a block or park party or picnic, **please arrange to take your waste with you.***

***Identify water access at event grounds. For smaller parties and picnics, consider organizing water stations offering free tap water in jugs.***

### **Communicating your Green Event**

- **Develop a vision statement** and communicate your goals to staff, volunteers and participants.
- **Prepare green messaging** for announcers, staff, exhibitors, vendors, performers and other representatives, especially those who are the face of your event.
- **Promote your Green Event** and outline what attendees can do to help:
  - Encourage walking, cycling, carpooling and the use of public transportation.

- Bring a reusable water bottle or a mug, and, when required, cutlery to reduce the need for disposable cups and cutlery.
  - Let the participants and the public know if there will be water fountains for refills. *Find opportunities to share facts like: » Although plastic water bottles are recyclable, the bottling, packaging and shipping of billions of litres of bottled water leaves a large environmental burden worldwide.* Instead, opt to provide water in jugs or use a water cooler.
  - Support green menus offered by your vendors by listing sustainable choices.
  - Use web, email and social media to broadcast your event.
  - When printing, don't forget to print your materials on both sides if possible.
  - Use reusable/recyclable materials for signage, booths, displays and exhibits.
- **Educate the public through simple, reusable signage**
  - **Create contests to engage the visitors.**

## DURING THE EVENT

### Set up

- Ensure that green event banners and signs remain posted and are clearly visible at entrances and other strategic locations.

### Prepare zero waste stations – monitor on event day

- Monitor recycling and reusables stations to avoid contamination and help educate attendees on proper waste and reusables sorting.
- Ensure that garbage, recycling and reusables areas are clean (at all times!) and replace bags and bins when full.

NOTE: Signage for waste stations should be simple and clear; use graphics with minimal text.

### Event closing procedure

- Develop a check-out procedure that requires exhibitors to interact with event staff as well as with waste and recycling volunteers, prior to departure. Ensure that the area is clean and waste free.

## AFTER THE EVENT

### Post-event evaluation

- A post-event assessment is helpful to determine whether the event's goals were reached, in this case green goals, were met. This assessment acts as a guide for the planning of future events

### Involvement of stakeholders and staff and volunteers

Meet with your stakeholders, event owners, site owners, vendors, contractors and your in-house green committee to discuss the achievement of green event goals. Invite feedback on how targets can be better reached for subsequent years.

### How to take Greening Your Event to the next level:

- Find and include local companies that sell local food
- Find and include local companies that manage event waste, recycling and reusables.
  - *For smaller-scale events, the City of Ottawa offers a free loan program on recycling and garbage receptacles to support the collection of waste and recycling. Environmental Services department and Event Central unit is in the process to initiate a more formal process, to introduce a requirement to provide recycling and organic waste collection at all special events. Then the Recreation and Sports @ City of Ottawa will look into developing a waste reduction and diversion program.*
  - *Larger events are served by private contractors, such as Waste Management and Tomlinson.*
- Find and include local suppliers of reusable, recyclable and compostable food service supplies
- Find and Include local organizations that provide sustainability support services for events
- Find and include local organizations that provide green energy and offsets

**If you want to do more... contact the Re-Creativity Team!**