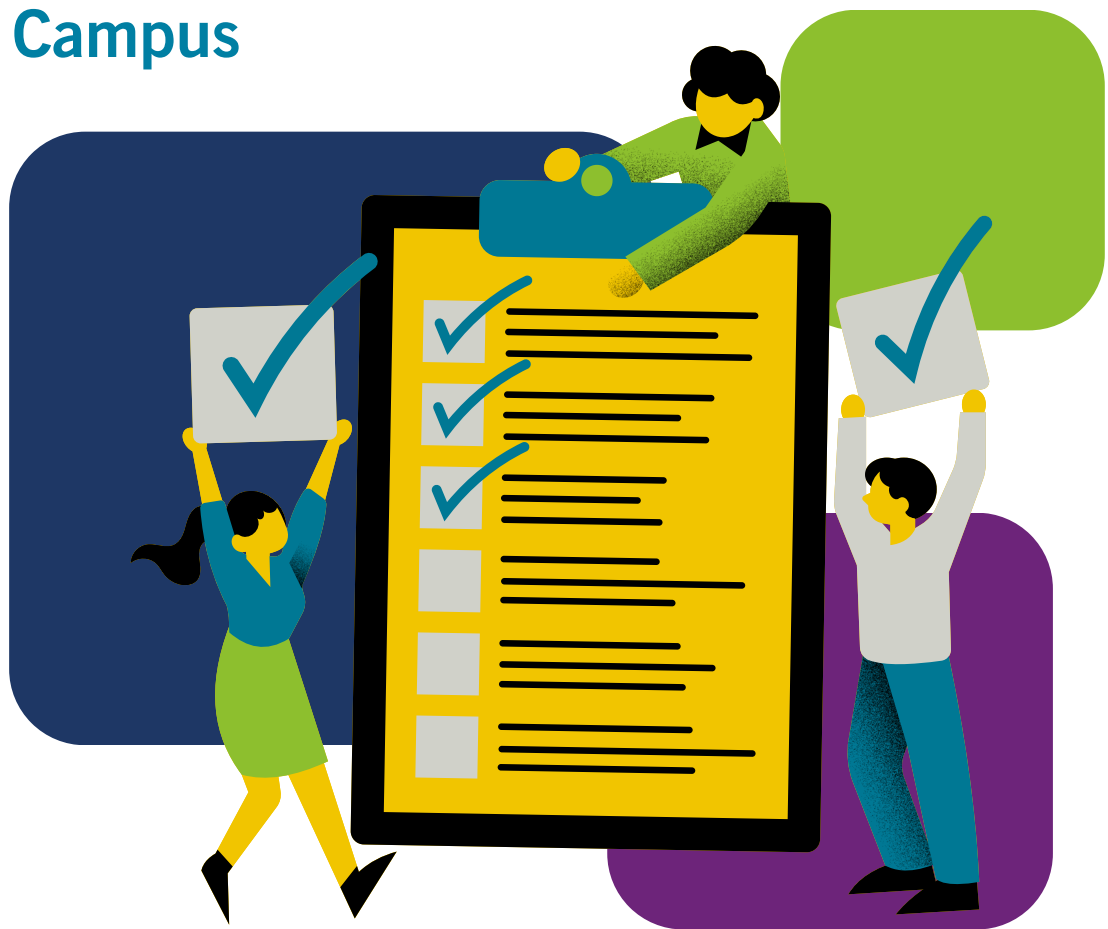




UNIVERSITY OF  
TORONTO

# Sustainable Events

A Best Practices Guide for the St.  
George Campus



U of T Partners

Committee on the Environment,  
Climate Change & Sustainability

Sustainability  
Office

2025 Edition

# About the Sustainable Events Best Practices Guide



The Sustainable Events Best Practices Guide, developed by the President’s Advisory Committee on the Environment, Climate Change, and Sustainability (CECCS), supports event organizers in clearly identifying key considerations at the event planning stage. In doing so, the Guide aims to make events as sustainable as possible.

This comprehensive Guide is informed by various resources across the University of Toronto, particularly the [Sustainable Events](#) certification process of the [Sustainable Change Programs](#). Once you’ve read and implemented the steps of this Guide, you can easily certify your event through the [Sustainable Events Program](#). Share your results with others and commit to improving your event’s sustainability in the future!

## Five Sections of the Guide

➤ Space, Accessibility & Travel	3-4
➤ Food Sourcing & Waste	4-5
➤ Material Waste Management	6-7
➤ Closing Your Event	7
➤ Miscellaneous	8

# 1.0 Space, Accessibility & Travel

## ➤ Always include a meaningful Land Acknowledgement Statement

- Learn about the [importance of acknowledging the Land](#)
- Land Acknowledgements are stated at the **beginning of the event**
- If your event involves smudging by Indigenous community members, [review these guidelines](#)



## ➤ Determine if your event will be held **virtually** or **in-person**

- Consider the various [resources U of T offers for hosting virtual events](#)
- Move eligible parts of your event online
- If you're hosting a large in-person event, contact U of T's Conference and Events Team on your campus



## ➤ Ensure venues are accessible to all persons

- Choose a venue equipped with accessible entrances and restrooms
- Encourage virtual attendance as an option for out-of-town attendees
- Consider religious holidays, weather, time and location to determine the best date and venue to host your event



An **alcohol free** event enhances accessibility

## ➤ Prioritize transit accessibility

- Choose a venue well serviced by public transit and pedestrian/cyclist paths
- Encourage car pooling and other sustainable modes of transportation
- Provide information about the [various ways to get around U of T campus](#)
- [Parking information and regulations are available here.](#)



# 1.0 Continued

## Opt for energy efficient venues

- Host indoor events during the day to utilize natural light, or choose energy efficient venues, such as recently renovated, newer construction or certified green buildings

### LEED-certified campus buildings:

- Munk School of Global Affairs – LEED Silver
- Lassonde Mining Building – LEED Gold
- Rotman School of Management – LEED Gold
- Exam Centre/255 McCaul Street – LEED Gold
- Try hosting your event outdoors!



# 2.0 Food Sourcing & Waste

## Choose local, small business, sustainability-focused caterers

- Source locally grown, seasonal, organic, **Fair Trade** foods and beverages
- Consider no-waste catering options, such as **Inwit**
- Consider ordering from Indigenous catering companies, such as:

Talk to your caterers about your **zero-waste** goal!



- Chat with **U of T Food Services** about sustainable catering options for your event
- Find sustainable catering vendors through the **Social Procurement Diverse Supplier Portal**

## 2.0 Continued

### ➤ Provide vegan, vegetarian, plant-based meal options

- Minimize or eliminate meat and dairy in catering orders
- If serving meat, avoid over-ordering quantities
- Opt for cold or room temperature plant-based food options over hot foods



### ➤ Request RSVPs to limit food waste

- Ask attendees to RSVP to ensure an appropriate amount of food is ordered
- Encourage attendees to bring empty containers for leftovers
- Donate leftovers to the [U of T chapter of MealCare](#) or an organization, such as [Second Harvest](#)



### ➤ Ensure compost bins are available and visible for food scraps



### ➤ Determine your menu impact using a “foodprint” calculator

### 3.0 Material Waste Management

Provide **reusable plates, cups, and utensils**, avoiding single-use plastic, biodegradable, compostable or bamboo products

- Partner with [Muuse](#) to rent reusable dish and drink wares, or order from waste-free caterers such as [Inwit](#)
- If using disposables, choose 100% paper plates or recyclable materials
- Eliminate individually packaged items, such as bottled beverages, disposable coffee creamers, and condiments
- Serve beverages in pitchers, and locate water re-fill stations at event grounds
- Plastic straws are available only upon request
- Cloth napkins or 100% recycled-content napkins are available



Encourage attendees to bring their own utensils, bottles and mugs

Black-coloured plastics and bioplastics are **not** recyclable or green-bin safe in the City of Toronto or on campus



U of T is a bottled water free campus!

Trash and recycling bins are well-labeled and visible

- Request a [Student Sustainable Ambassador](#) to help attendees sort waste
- Request additional bins if necessary by submitting a [service order](#)
- Provide specific waste sorting instructions using signage or an announcement



## 3.0 Continued

### ➤ Marketing materials are **digital** to limit printing

- Use e-invites, e-registration, digital tickets and agendas
- Print double-sided on recycled or FSC certified-paper, if needed



Communicate your **efforts** and **commitment** to a **green event!**

### ➤ Minimize decorations, or prioritize reusable or recyclable décor

- Reuse table linens, banners, posters, coat check numbers, and table numbers
- Avoid using glitter, plastic confetti, flowers and other single-use decorations
- Table linens, cloth napkins, chairs and equipment are **rented**

### ➤ Use the City of Toronto's [Waste Wizard](#) to learn about where your event waste can go

## 4.0 Closing Your Event

### ➤ Ask attendees to return table numbers, name tags and lanyards for future events

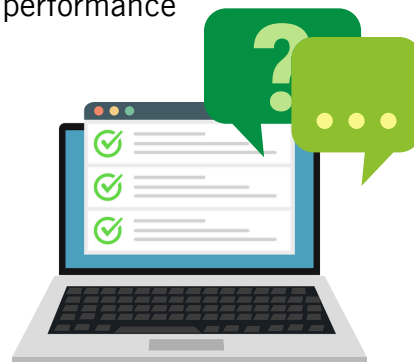
- Rent lanyards via the [Lanyard Lending Program](#)

**LANYARD  
LENDING** 

### ➤ Donate any raised funds to local organizations

### ➤ Ask attendees for feedback on event sustainability

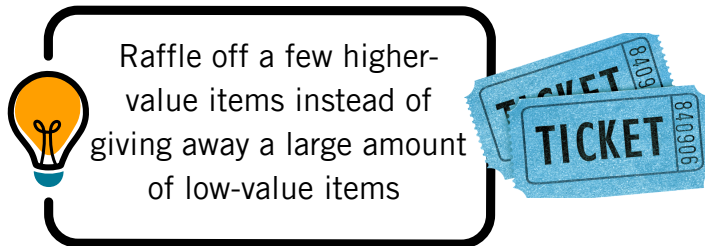
- Send out a digital survey or chat with attendees about how to improve your event's sustainability performance in the future



## 5.0 Miscellaneous

### ➤ *Ensure giveaway items are purposeful and their environmental impacts are considered*

- Items are minimally packaged and **not** destined for the landfill (i.e. single use)



### ➤ *Wellness and activity breaks are incorporated in your event*

- Ensure attendees can take breaks to stretch, hydrate, and take part in an activity to improve engagement

### ➤ *Entertainment is sourced locally to reduce travel and boost local economy*



### ➤ *Carbon offsets are considered to mitigate event impacts*

- The **Carbon Reduction Fund** directly supports greenhouse gas emission reduction efforts across all U of T campuses. All university-funded travel is subject to a fee that is used to implement carbon reduction projects at U of T.
- External carbon offset partners include:
  - **Ostrom Climate, Offsetters**
  - **Carbon Offsetting and Reduction Scheme for International Aviation**

## Reviewed the steps above?

Click the link below and get your event certified!

[Certify Your Event with the Sustainability Events Program](#)

