



CONFERENCES & VISITOR SERVICES

Grow a Green Meeting

Choosing a Venue

When choosing a venue, location is just as important as eco-friendly design. Make sure the place you choose is in close proximity to airports and public transportation for easy access. If possible, try to hold your event in a place where no one has to fly! Cutting out air travel is a great way to offset carbon. Here are some other tips:

- Look for USGBC's LEED Certification (Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design)
- Add an attendee list and ride share info to your conference website
- Use www.travelgree.org - a website to find green hotels, restaurants, conference centers, travel agencies, etc.

Did You Know? The College Park Marriott and Conference Center is the country's first LEED-Certified environmentally-friendly hotel and conference center. With 237 guest rooms and 39,000 square feet of meeting space, this facility makes a great meeting and conference venue!

Food & Beverage

Catering is a great opportunity to be friendly to the environment. Though some venues require use of an internal caterer, there are still lots of options for you to consider. If possible, have your caterer purchase and use local organic produce and meats. This may be a little tough, but it never hurts to ask. Also, be sure your caterer is using reusable dishware. Most will do this already. At the very least, try finding plate ware that is recycled/recyclable and/or compostable.

Ask your caterer about composting! Though it may not be a standard, it is not very difficult to set up. And if you can't find anyone to haul away the waste, try www.findacomposter.com or talk to local farmers in the area. They are always looking for compost and may even offer to haul it for free!

If your event is hosting a sit - down dinner, donate the uneaten food to a local soup kitchen (not allowed with buffet style meals).

Always choose canned beverages over plastic bottled beverages since they can be recycled over and over. A plastic bottle can only recycle once and then it reaches the end of its life cycle.

**** Fun tip!:** For giveaways at registration, hand out refillable water jugs (BPA free, of course) and have water filling stations around the venue. You save \$\$ on bottled water and the landfills are saved from a lot of trash!

Did You Know? Dining Services at Maryland has discontinued the use of Styrofoam brand products which are fabricated from a non-renewable resource. Styrofoam carryout trays have been replaced with bagasse, which is post-extraction sugarcane fiber. The Styrofoam cold beverage cups have been replaced with wax-coated paper and the hot beverage cups are manufactured with a corn-based coating. - Source: UM Newsdesk 4/22/09

Tours & Activities

Everyone likes to tour the local area while attending conferences and events in unfamiliar cities or towns. Why not add to this by showing off what the locals are doing to help Mother Earth?! Tour the local recycling plant, or find out what the area is doing to be green. Take your group to a homeless shelter or food kitchen to donate some time. Or head to a nearby park and spend the afternoon planting trees for carbon off-setting. Another fun option for team-building is helping needy children fix used bikes that have been donated for their use. Not only will you be helping young people, but you can pick up some basic skills and learn to work together in a new environment!

Did You Know? The University of Maryland College Park campus is an Arboretum and Botanical Garden. Ask about planning a tree walk or visit the Rain Gardens during your next meeting or conference held on campus!