

How to “Green” Your RSO Event

Compiled by Green Campus Initiative

Step 1: Room Reservations and Speaker/Panelist Solicitations

- When filling out the room reservation form, you can use the “alternate setup” section to notify ORCSA staff that you will need recycling containers as well as extra blue bags (this is crucial for outdoor events, as outdoor recycling on campus is rare). However, the most important time to ask for recycling support is when you receive the room reservation confirmation email. If ORCSA staff checks in at the beginning of your event, you may remind them of your recycling needs.
 - What can be recycled? CLEAN (i.e. no food waste or oils) paper, plastics 1&2, glass, aluminum cans, and aluminum takeout containers (if they are washed first).
- When thinking about potential speakers or panelists, try to focus on those who live and work in the region and can therefore travel to your event using modes of transportation that emit less carbon, such as by train or by car, rather than by plane, which burns more fuel.
- If your event requires seating and/or tables, hold your function in spaces where the University already owns tables and chairs (e.g. Ida Noyes, Hutch) instead of renting them. This cuts down on cost as well as energy needed to ship furniture.

Step 2: Publicity

- Reduce and recycle as much as possible!
- Emphasize advertising strategies that don’t use paper, such as stuff.uchicago.edu, Facebook advertisements, listhost e-mailing, and word of mouth
- If using table tents, carefully count how many are actually needed and make only that quantity. Be sure to obtain permission from dining hall managers in order to prevent them from being discarded early.
- Use 8.5” x 11” flyers when possible instead of larger ones.
- Print on regular paper instead of glossy poster paper or cardstock. Regular paper requires less tree pulp and less production, and is easier to recycle.
- Collect used paper or extra copies of old fliers and print on the clean side for new fliers.
- Be judicious! A few well-placed fliers are just as effective as 1000 fliers in every conceivable location on campus.
- Use Kinko’s instead of RC 001 for large jobs; not only is the ORSCA discount at Kinko’s very good (\$0.03/page when printing 100+ pages), but you can request 100% recycled paper for your job.
- Consider ordering t-shirts made with organic, unbleached cotton. Propaganda T-Shirts prints American Apparel t-shirts for about \$7 each. These are not only eco-friendly, but also super-soft!

Step 3: Food and Utensil Provision

- Buy less meat! If you must have meat, consider ordering chicken-based products instead of beef-based foods. It takes 2,400 gallons of water and 7 pounds of grain to produce 1 pound of feedlot beef.¹
- Go further and consider having all-vegetarian foods at your event. Chicken and pork production generates large amounts of pollution and greenhouse gases. Most Hyde Park restaurants have extensive vegetarian options. In addition, consider the fact that vegetarian items are typically less expensive, allowing your group to purchase more food or reallocate funding toward compostable or biodegradable plate and utensil options.
- Buy local foods when possible, and organic if local is not an option. Patronize Hyde Park restaurants for catering instead of having food delivered from several miles away. Consider caterers that specialize in green options (the first two listed already work with the Harris School):
 - Sunday Dinners (<http://www.sundaydinnerchicago.com>)
 - Eat Green Foods (<http://www.eatgreenfoods.com>)
 - Get Me Greg's (<http://www.getmegregs.com>)
 - The Balanced Kitchen (<http://www.gfreev.com/balancedkitchen.html>)
- Save extra plates, cups, utensils, and napkins and reuse them at future events.
- Buy compostable plates, cups, and utensils from www.worldcentric.com. SG will often provide the funding for these relatively more expensive goods if you explain why you want them. Barring that, buy paper plates instead of Styrofoam.
- Buy napkins made from recycled, unbleached paper (look for Seventh Generation products).
- For informal events, encourage attendees to bring their own plate and utensil. For motivation, consider allowing individuals with their own tableware to obtain food first, or use the Vegan Society's idea of holding a raffle for those who bring their own tableware.

Step 4: Clean Up

- Recyclables should all be placed in blue bags and taken to dumpsters next to the building where your event was held. Sometimes one dumpster will be unofficially designated for recycling, so if one contains only blue bags, separate your own waste accordingly.
- Make sure to check with Bartlett, Pierce, or BJ dining hall managers a couple of days prior to your event regarding how and where you may bring compost (whether it is food or also compostable plates, utensils, etc.).
- Ensure that leftover food does not go to waste. Bring reusable containers to take home any leftover food, or have a member of your group bring the extras back to their dorm.

Questions? Suggestions? Comments?

Please direct feedback to GCI Member Maritza Mallek (maritzam@uchicago.edu)

¹ Horrigan, Leo, Robert S. Lawrence, and Polly Walker. "How Sustainable Agriculture Can Address the Environmental and Human Health Harms of Industrial Agriculture." *Environmental Health Perspectives*.
<http://www.ehponline.org/members/2002/110p445-456horrigan/horrigan-full.html#sust>

