

American Nurses Association
Green Meeting
Guide



Acknowledgements

This work was developed by Novella Jackson based on the work of the Health Care Without Harm nurses work group. Reviewers included Anne Hulick, Susan Wilburn, and Ann Melamed.

Special thanks to the Health Care Without Harm (HCWH) nurses work group and HCWH for support of this work.

ANA Green Meetings Guide

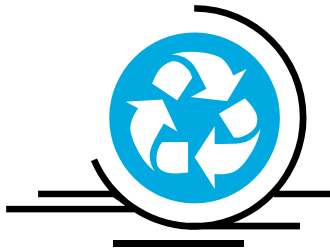
Introduction

In 1997, The American Nurses Association (ANA) House of Delegates resolved to reduce the production of toxic pollution by the health care industry, and as a result reduce environmental carcinogens and other toxins (ANA 1997). ANA is at work on initiatives and processes to protect and preserve the environment. This guide for green meetings outlines key steps for organizing and conducting a meeting or conference in an environmentally responsible way and is a planning tool for American Nurses Association and Constituent Member Association (CMA) event planners.

During the planning for an environmentally aware event or meeting, it is key is to set environmental priorities at the beginning and incorporate them into as many facets of the event as possible. The goal of a “Green” meeting is to reduce or eliminate the use of toxic materials, to reduce the amount of solid waste generated by the meeting, and to save water, energy, and money. The event planner must include or consult with key people such as the venue planner, exhibit coordinator, and caterer, to identify whether the venue has environmental policies and whether they are willing and able to initiate environmentally friendly meetings. As a first step ask the meeting venue to place recycling bins and signage; the food service vendors and caterers to use reusable dishware, utensils, and napkins; and food bank or composting companies-to collect food and food contaminated paper waste for composting; and the exhibitors to bring the correct amounts of materials for distribution, thereby avoiding waste. These key people and companies will make the task much smoother if they are included in the planning process and all will share the benefits of a green meeting.

The benefits of greener meetings include: decreasing the environmental impact to landfills by diverting thousands of tons of waste from the waste stream

(recycling); decreasing the cost of hauling away trash (financial); and leaving a community better off after the convention comes to town by reuse of leftover food and products to benefit charities, homeless shelters, soup kitchens, and schools (community outreach). Adopting just one or two environmentally responsible strategies such as recycling and on-line registration reduces the waste stream and saves developing, printing and mailing costs thus saving the environment. Meeting planners can take incremental, high-impact steps to consume less, reuse products and food, and recycle much of the waste that conventions produce while saving money for the organization in the process. ANA and CMAs, as leaders in the health care community, can demonstrate their commitment to the environment leading by example to set the standard that other nursing organizations and the community will follow.



STEPS TO A GREENER MEETING

According to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the four major steps to greening meetings are:

1. Gain Management or Sponsor Support

By emphasizing the range of environmental benefits, public image enhancement, and potential cost savings, management and sponsors will be more apt to consider going green. The organization may also obtain new or additional funding and sponsorship because of being green. For example, talk with local public utilities, waste management firms, and environmental organizations for support.

2. Set Your Environmental Priorities

Identify environmental issues that are significant to your organization or the region. By defining the particular issues you can identify specific actions to take to meet these objectives.

- Prevent or reduce waste - determine what materials are needed at the meeting and consider ways to reduce the amount of materials
- Recycle and manage waste - work with the recycling vendor and arrange for the collection of as many recyclables as possible such as paper, glass, beverage cans, and plastic water bottles
- Protect the health and safety of meeting participants who may be allergic to Natural Rubber Latex products or sensitive to chemicals or fragrances
- Other environmental issues - community environmental issues might include water conservation, air quality or a natural resources issue and occupational health.

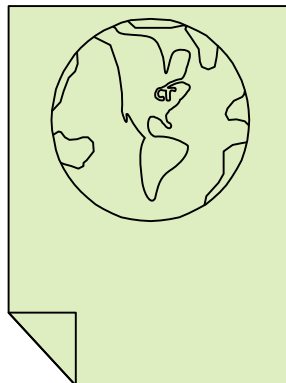
Don't expect everyone to do the same thing. Goals and Priorities will vary from community to community.

3. Translate Your Priorities into Action

- Selecting a site- confirm that the site will accommodate your environmental priorities
- Promote the event's environmental features: provide written announcements and include information in the opening remarks (see example in appendix A)
- Arrange for food service using reusable service ware
- Buying products- encourage meeting planner to look for products that:
 1. are reusable
 2. have recycled content
 3. use little to no packaging
- Collect recyclables- encourage attendee to recycle
- Strategically place recycling containers throughout the site with clear signage and announce their placement

4. Evaluate the Event and Celebrate its Success

- Measure recycling collections and waste generation
- Survey the attendees for comments about the green meeting
- Promote environmental achievements



Greening Meetings Checklist

This checklist is for ANA and CMA meeting planners to use to reduce the environmental impact of the meetings they organize. The tool will assist organizations to take incremental steps and use their own creative thinking and experience to win change. The checklist is divided into three categories starting with basic steps to greening, then intermediate steps (inclusive of the basic steps), followed by the ultimate steps (inclusive of basic and intermediate). The list is not all-inclusive; please feel free to add to any of the steps.

Basic Greening Steps

- Check when complete**
- Use online registration – include sending confirmations by e-mail
- Communicate and conduct initial deliberations on resolutions via e-mail
- Make two sided copies when hard copies are needed
- Use paper with a recycled content at least 50% recycled material
- Recycle name badges – or use badge holders that are re-usable by the attendee
- Limit speaker handouts and post speaker presentations online
- Provide water in pitchers or large bottle water station
- Implement recycling with the placement of well-marked recycling bins
- Eliminate the use of disposable items such as paper plates and cups
- Educate attendees about public transportation

- Provide latex free gloves (synthetic, e.g. nitrile, etc) for food handlers
- No latex balloons or gloves in exhibit hall
- Fragrance-free event: participants advised to avoid wearing perfumes, fragrances or using perfumed soaps
- Off-gas new carpet in all areas by running high exhaust at least 24 hours prior to opening

Environmental Facts:

Providing water in pitchers instead of plastic bottles, for 1300 participants, at a rate of one bottle per participant per day will save \$12,187.

Using on-line registration eliminates paper, printing, and postage. Saving approximate \$3.00 per registrant for a total savings of \$3900 based on 1300 registrants.

Intermediate Greening Steps—Don't forget, you should have the Basic steps in place as well.

When completed

- Serve cream and sugar in bulk containers
- Use cloth instead of paper napkins
- Use PVC-free (polyvinyl chloride) name badges
- Request linen reuse in hotels
- Donate consumable food to a food bank, shelter, soup kitchen
- Collect and donate unused portions of amenities to women shelter
- Request bulk amenities in hotel rooms
- Turn off lights, heat, air conditioning while not in hotel room

Environmental Facts:

One ton of virgin paper kills about 24 trees.

Using recycled paper decreases air and water pollution.

Considerable electricity is wasted each day as a result of leaving the lights on, therefore saving one hour of wasted lighting daily will decrease the amount of carbon dioxide greenhouse gas emissions.

Ultimate Greening Steps- You should have the Basic and Intermediate

Steps in place as well.

When completed

- Choose hotel or convention center at the airport or within walking distance
- Request a green room which includes refillable pump dispensers for soap, body lotion, shampoo and conditioner; low-flow shower heads and faucet aerators, low-flow toilets, energy-saving light fixture and heating system
- Eat green. Have meals planned using local, seasonal, organic produce
- No scented products or pesticides used by the hotel
- Compost discarded food in a worm composting bin
- Use reusable or carpet with lowest emission of volatile organic compounds (VOCs) and backing or use no carpet
- Close the recycling loop. Have all printed material published on recycled paper, using vegetable-based inks

Environmental Facts:

New carpets release a chemical odor commonly known as off-gassing. These emissions can be harmful for those who may have allergies, asthma or sensitivities to chemical products.

Allergy to natural rubber latex is common (8-12%) among healthcare workers resulting in dermatitis, asthma, and in rare cases, anaphylaxis. No contact with latex is safe for a latex-allergic individual including eating food prepared by food handlers wearing latex gloves, which may transfer latex proteins onto the food. Vegetable based ink significantly reduces the amount of VOC released into the air during printing. This helps prevent air and water pollution.

As part of session introductions each day, remind attendees of the waste reduction, recycling, and other environmental opportunities. Environmentally responsible planning is good for business and health. Please join us in our efforts to help protect and improve the fragile eco-system upon which we are so dependent.

Web Resources

Convention Industry Council's Green Meetings Report, April 6, 2004.
www.conventionindustry.org/projects/green_report_pdf

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). *It's Easy Being Green! A Guide To Planning And Conducting Environmentally Aware Meetings And Events.*
www.epa.gov/oppt/greenmeetings/tool.htm

Blue Green Meetings Guide
www.bluegreenmeetings.org