

Guidance for Planning and Conducting Environmentally Conscious In-Person Meetings

From the League of Women Voters of South Carolina's Environmental Policy Working Group
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When planning in-person meetings, local and state Leagues are encouraged to conduct environmentally conscious meetings that minimize adverse consequences to the environment and future generations. When practical, please consider the following recommendations for planning and conducting environmentally conscious in-person meetings:

1) Attendance/Transportation

- Provide an option to attend meetings virtually.
- Encourage carpooling among in-person attendees.
- Encourage use of public transportation, walking, and cycling as applicable.

2) Meeting Venue

- Select a meeting venue that minimizes the collective distance traveled by potential attendees.
- Consider the availability of public transportation and electric vehicle (EV) charging stations when selecting a meeting venue.
- Consider venues that utilize renewable energy.

3) Meeting Supplies

- Minimize use of single-use decorations (balloons, banners, streamers, ribbons).
- Use paper name tags; avoid plastic name tags unless reusable.
- Use paper or reusable tablecloths.
- Minimize use of single-use and plastic mementos for meeting attendees.
- Minimize use of program handouts:
 - Offer access to E-versions (electronic versions) of handouts.
 - Use double-sided printing.
 - Minimize production of an oversupply of handouts.
 - It is better to undersupply some handouts and ask attendees to share.

4) Food and Beverage

- Eliminate or minimize the use of single-use plastics. Avoid the use of:
 - Plastic or Styrofoam plates and/or cups
 - Plastic straws
 - Plastic utensils
 - Plastic tablecloths
 - Bottled water

4) Food and Beverage (Continued)

- Request caterers to:
 - Forego the supply of plastic utensils (meeting organizers ensure that adequate utensils are available)
 - Avoid the use of individual plastic or Styrofoam food containers to the extent possible through menu planning
 - Consider bundling same foods (e.g., specific or similar sandwich types, salads, desserts) in a single container (e.g., large biodegradable box, large compostable bowls) to be distributed at the meeting
- Encourage use of:
 - Paper or reusable plates
 - Paper or reusable cups/mugs (suggest attendees bring their own as able)
 - Reusable utensils
 - Consider asking attendees to bring a mug or their own beverage container and their own silverware to gatherings.
- Review food and drink choices:
 - Prioritize fruits and vegetables over meats.
 - When offering meat, prioritize fish, chicken, eggs, and pork as lower carbon meat choices.
 - Minimize offerings of beef and beef byproducts (e.g., milk, ice cream, cheese).
- Buy from local and/or sustainable sources.
- Buy only as much food and drink as is needed to accommodate anticipated meeting attendees.
- Identify someone in advance of the meeting who will be responsible for managing excess food and beverages. Unspoiled food and beverages should be taken home for consumption by 1 or more attendee(s) or arrangements should be made to give unused food and beverages to an organization that feeds the underserved.
- Preserve unused foods as appropriate until used (optimal food preservation will encourage later consumption of leftovers).
 - Avoid opening packaged foods and beverages that may not be used
 - Keep refrigerated foods cool (in refrigerator or on ice) until ready to be served

5) Post-Meeting Waste Management

- Recycle as much waste as possible. Arrange in advance for someone to take responsibility for recycling waste.
- Provide separate disposal options to segregate waste for recycle, as applicable:
 - Plastics
 - Metals/aluminum
 - Paper
 - Extra food – donate to someone or an organization
 - Food waste: avoid sending to landfill; have attendees take home for composting or using a garbage disposal.