

# OUTREACH & EVENTS MODULE

## The Important Role of Outreach and Events in a Green Office (GO)

Participation in the Green Office Program through outreach and events can result in far-reaching benefits by encouraging your co-workers to work together toward the goal of a more sustainable workplace. Intra-office events are a great way to apply knowledge from previous modules and educate co-workers on sustainable themes.

The Green Office Program needs your help to get the word out to the over 13,000 UNC employees spread between different divisions, schools, and departments. Events that include other departments can set an example for those outside your workspace on how to hold sustainable events. Together, we can make a difference and move the needle on the Sustainable Carolina goals of net zero water use, zero waste to landfills, and net zero greenhouse gas emissions.

## What are Sustainable Events?

From holidays to recognition events and birthdays to retirement parties, there are plenty of chances to spread the word about and make progress on sustainable office events. You may even choose to create a completely new event to highlight a specific sustainability theme or GO achievement. Either way, there are two key things to consider when hosting a sustainable event: sustainable themes and sustainable design elements.

### Sustainable Themes

Events may be considered sustainable if they aim to teach attendees about topics related to general, personal, or office sustainability. Within Sustainable Carolina, sustainable themed events around our goals of water, waste, and zero greenhouse gas emissions might look like: an educational water use event on Earth Day, kicking off a new compost program by demonstrating the process and what can be composted, or hosting a local, organic potluck.

It could also mean inviting a guest speaker to your next staff meeting or office lunch-'n-learn to teach your co-workers about some relevant sustainability topic, or incorporating sustainability-related service, such as volunteering at an edible campus garden workday, into your next team-building day, or going on a tour of on-campus or off-campus sustainability features.

### Sustainable Design Elements

Any event can incorporate sustainable design elements that help to reduce its impact. We have simplified the Office of Waste Reduction and Recycling's comprehensive [Green Events Program](#) into four categories: food, waste, decorations and giveaways, and advertisements and handouts. Many of the themes discussed below are further developed and additional resources are provided in the [Procurement Module](#).

### Food

- Purchase fair trade, local, and organic food.
- Offer vegetarian and vegan options. They require fewer environmental resources to produce.
- Label food to highlight its sustainability.
- Serve buffet style (rather than boxed lunches) to avoid packaging.

### Waste

- Arrange to donate any leftover food.
- Rent or purchase reusable dishware or make the event bring your own, "BYO."
- Compost food scraps and choose compostable utensils if reusables are not possible.
- Twin compost bins with recycling and if unavoidable, trash cans. Label clearly what should go into each.
- Make an announcement early in the event about limiting the amount of waste produced, and specify what is compostable, and where the bins are located.
- Staff compost bins to avoid contamination. Even a small amount of plastic can ruin the whole batch.

### Decorations & Giveaways

- Avoid disposable decorations and opt for things that can be used at multiple events or will serve another purpose.
- No balloons EVER.
- Choose giveaways that are made of sustainable materials or support sustainability efforts. For example, a reusable cup that you can drink out of at the event and take with you when you leave.
- Avoid plastic packaging.

### Advertisements & Handouts

- Go digital.
- Do not print dates or locations on posters for recurring events and laminate them so that they can be used multiple times.
- Print on recycled content paper and advertise this.
- If unavoidable, encourage people to recycle the handouts when they are finished using them.

## What is GO Outreach?

While intra-office events are a great way to get co-workers involved in your Green Office, outreach to spread information about your program beyond your office is also important. This outreach is what will enable our university to reach its sustainability goals. Please take the time to share your experiences with other offices and Sustainable Carolina so that we can all move forward together.

## Green Office Tasks

**To green your office and complete the Outreach and Events module:**

1. Complete the prerequisite.
2. Complete 8 out of 14 outreach and events tasks.
3. Host a Green Office Event.

## Meet with Stakeholders & Evaluate Your Current Events

**Prerequisite: Do this before tackling anything else!**

Before you begin, it is important that you know your sustainability options and to make sure everyone in your office is on board with making changes.

1. Meet with the people responsible for planning events like birthdays, holiday parties, and recognition and training events. Express appreciation for their work. Propose some new ideas and see what sustainable measures are feasible to incorporate. Make sure they are on board with greening office events.
2. Make a calendar of all the events your office hosts over the year. Think of ways that sustainability themes could be included and where there is room for new programming. (HINT: Consider designating months to discuss certain topics.)

## Outreach & Events Tasks

**Complete 8 out of the 14 tasks below!**

Task	Resources	Check
Go digital for all office event signage: send emails or display on digital screens.		
Encourage employees to BYO dishware for office events. Add the GO BYO graphic to any advertisements you may have.	<a href="#">BYO Display Logo</a>	
Implement composting at your office events.	<a href="#">UNC Facilities – Composting Composting Guide PDF</a>	

Incorporate sustainability considerations into food purchasing decisions for office events.	<a href="#">NC Botanical Gardens Approved Caterers</a>	
Give a Green Office Program update at a staff meeting.		
Double the size of your GO committee.	<a href="#">Cut, Paste, Send Join My GO Team!</a>	
Share a statement explaining how your office's mission relates to Sustainable Carolina's goals of net zero water use, zero waste to landfills, and net zero greenhouse gas emissions with your director. If appropriate, add to the mission section of your website.	<a href="#">Sustainable Carolina</a>	
Follow Sustainable Carolina on Facebook and Twitter.	<a href="#">Sustainable Carolina on Twitter</a> <a href="#">Sustainable Carolina on Facebook</a>	
Write a post about how your office has been taking part in the Green Office Program. Don't forget #SustainableCarolina.		
Create a Green Office bulletin board with info about eco-friendly practices and events.	<a href="#">Sustainability Tips</a> <a href="#">Recent Sustainable Carolina News</a>	
Refer another office to the GO program.	<a href="#">Sustainable Carolina</a>	
Send us a success story for the chance to be featured on the Sustainable Carolina website and/or social media.	<a href="#">Sustainable Carolina Contact</a>	
Hand out "Thanks for Leaving Your Green Heel Print" stickers to employees observed undertaking sustainable practices.	<a href="#">Thanks for Leaving a Green Heel Print</a>	
Wildcard: Have an idea for another task not listed? Reach out to Sustainable Carolina's Green Office Program to see if it will work! Hint: Purchasing reusable dishware and cutlery is a great idea if you have the space and a dishwasher.	<a href="#">Sustainable Carolina Contact</a>	

<b>TOTAL</b>	
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## GO Project

### Host a Green Office Event

Plan your own event that incorporates sustainable themes and design elements. A few ideas to get you thinking:

- Host a Scavenger Hunt.
- Have an event to advertise Produce Box.
- Have a staff workday in the Edible Campus Gardens.
- Set up a water tasting station for bottled versus water bottle refill station versus tap water and have people guess which is which throughout the day. Couple this with conversations about the waste generated by plastic bottles and the quality of [OWASA](#) water.

Describe event	
Outcomes (i.e. attendance, staff feedback, aha moments reported, etc...) Return to Sustainable Carolina.	

## Resources & Contacts

[Sustainable Carolina](#) | [Green Office Program](#)

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[NC Botanical Garden Green Event Policies](#)

[Office of Waste Reduction and Recycling](#)

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