

CHICAGO SUSTAINABILITY TASK FORCE

The Chicago Sustainability Task Force has developed this set of recommendations based on our collective policies, procedures and experiences that have led to the success and ongoing improvement of our sustainability programs and initiatives.

Focus of 2015 collaboration: Solid Waste Diversion + Stakeholder Engagement

CHICAGO SUSTAINABILITY GUIDELINES

Communication

- 1) Identify and engage all stakeholders: Start by connecting and collaborating with all involved parties, such as:
 - a) Venue Operator
 - i) Personnel in each department that manage or execute practices that impact use of resources and/or disposal of material
 - b) Waste (Recycling, Composting, Baling) Hauler
 - i) Advising on right-sized containers and service schedule for each stream
 - ii) Accurate reporting, as expected, or required by contract
 - iii) Providing verifiable chain-of-custody for each stream
 - c) Maintenance Contractor
 - i) Account representatives AND on-the-ground managers of cleaning crews
 - ii) Bilingual education/training when necessary
 - iii) Finding efficiencies through improved practices, separate handling of each waste stream, incentivized sustainability goals
 - d) Vendors and Concessionaires
 - i) Align purchasing decisions (serviceware, supplies) with the program/goals
 - ii) Link to environmental initiatives & personnel of partner companies/brands
 - iii) Engage distributors and manufacturers with ample lead time
 - e) Employees
 - i) Schedule training sessions, reminders, lunch & learns; stay top-of-mind
 - ii) Explain **why** new initiatives are taking place (shared green benefits!)
 - iii) Bilingual signage with photos strengthens understanding
 - f) Public / Fans / Venue Population
 - i) Use visually appealing, directional signage to ensure they know "what goes where"
 - ii) Strengthen engagement using video monitors, public announcements and promotions involving players, artists or other cultural/venue leaders
- 2) Remind, Retain, Re-train, Recognize: Monitor activity to maintain sustainability standards. Communicate issues and strategize solutions. Retain great partners. Repeat and review expectations. Identify challenges and celebrate successes.

Strategic Planning

1) Set Long term and short term goals

- i) First, you must know where you are! Benchmark, with key data points, through a site assessment, waste audit and purchasing audit
- ii) Identify attainable milestones, and incremental steps to get there
- iii) Communicate goals to stakeholders

2) Designate sustainability leadership

- a) A point person to lead the initiative and be held accountable
 - i) Internal= Someone within the organization, with authority, desire and bandwidth to champion this effort
 - ii) External= A consultant or outside sustainability lead, reporting to an internal manager, bringing experience and accelerating the learning curve
- b) Develop a Green Team of environmentally conscious employees at all levels, to move initiatives forward and instill a culture of sustainability

3) Embed sustainability in operational protocol

- a) Update standard operating procedures to reflect environmental efficiency measures
- b) Provide ongoing training and reminders of what to do, and why. Remember:
 - i) Landfill is a cost to all
 - ii) Recycling creates a commodity that is valuable in the markets and that should lead to reduced Fees or rebates
 - iii) Composting can put valuable nutrients back into the soil

4) Responsible sourcing: Reusables / Single-use items aligned with infrastructure

- a) Eliminate waste with reusable serviceware and glasses/water bottles (at schools, institutions, catered events). Divert waste with compostable ware.
- b) Ensure you have access to a market for the recycling of single-use items: Identify what can be recycled/composted and what is considered contamination by the facilities receiving your recycling and compost streams

5) Track performance through required reporting and goal-oriented analysis

- a) Develop systems to receive specified data in a timely, simplified manner
- b) Incentivize partners through key performance indicators in a contract
- c) Use technology to advance speed and accuracy of data management

6) Simplify

- a) Start off simple and grow the program. Recognize each success, and build on it with every milestone / step / phase.
- b) Color code streams for visual communication front-of-house and easier sorting back-of-house (e.g. for labels and can liners - recycle in transparent blue or clear, compost in green, and landfill in black)
- c) Identify the "most attractive low hanging fruit" - those changes that are the easiest to implement, with the greatest impact (e.g. cardboard recycling - ideally separating, baling and marketing it)
- d) Back to Basics: Use your customized goals and sustainability plan as a handy

reference, communication and training tool.

Paving the Road to Zero Waste

- 1) Be Responsive
 - a) Identify changes and adapt program to optimize results.
- 2) Tracking
 - a) Manage key data reports monthly (e.g. attendance, sales, purchasing, weights by stream, transport/processing costs by stream, rebates)
 - b) Schedule quarterly meetings to analyze impacts, variances and trends
- 3) Auditing
 - a) Maintain awareness of changes in partners' management of material, recycling markets, composting infrastructure
 - b) Observe activities, talk to management, ensure adoption of new standard operating procedures
- 4) Promotion / Recognition / Education
 - a) Share your successes with local leaders, sponsors, vendors and fans
 - b) Publicize your efforts; attract and influence others
 - c) Share your thanks with the key partners that helped you get there
 - d) Apply for awards
 - e) Take the opportunity to **teach** the benefits of sustainable practices
 - f) Lead by example, align with broadening public environmental goals, communicate ideas to inspire new behavior, and foster change in the consciousness of the community at large!

CHICAGO SUSTAINABILITY GUIDELINES ARE AVAILABLE ONLINE AT:

<http://www.chicagosustainabilitytaskforce.org/resources/>

LEARN MORE ABOUT THE CHICAGO SUSTAINABILITY TASK FORCE AT:

<http://www.chicagosustainabilitytaskforce.org>

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