



Neighborhood festivals and other big events can generate a lot of waste, including food, cups, plates, plastic bottles, discarded brochures, souvenirs and so on. In addition, transportation of people and goods to and from the event uses fossil fuels and emits air pollutants and greenhouse gases, which contribute to climate change.

In this project, work with the organizers of your neighborhood festival or another local event to create and implement a plan for reducing the event's environmental impact. Then, estimate the environmental benefits of your project and complete a final report.

## **Things to Keep in Mind:**

We recommend that you decide which neighborhood event to green before you start this project. Depending on the size of the event, planning may start months in advance. Be sure to contact the event planners as soon as possible to see if they are interested in working with you. In addition to neighborhood festivals, possibilities include a block party, farmer's market, parade, or a local school, church or club event.

## **Timeline:**

**Project Proposal due online:** 1 week after the Community Organizing class

**Part I:** Groundwork: ~2-3 weeks

**Part II:** Create and Implement a Green Plan: ~1-2 months

**Part III:** Calculating Environmental Benefits: 1 hour

**Part IV: Final Report due online:** 2 weeks after your project is complete

## **Materials:**

- Biodegradable cups, plates and/or forks
- Reusable canvas bags
- Reusable water bottles
- CTA one-day transit cards
- Bicycle tools such as an air pump or patch kit
- Compact fluorescent light bulbs
- Spray bottles for green cleaning solutions
- Vinegar
- Dish detergent
- Green cleaning solution labels
- Bicycle lights (front and rear)
- Blue bags to collect recyclables
- Informational brochures, guides and maps
- Outdoor composter (to raffle off)
- Rain barrel (to raffle off)

## **Part I: Groundwork**

**~2-3 weeks**

1. **Find an event and contact the event's organizers.** Make sure the event's organizers are open to working with you. The earlier you start talking to the organizers, the better; planning may start months in advance for some events, and ideally you will want to be involved from the beginning. However, even if most of the planning is completed when you come in, you may still be able to make some changes – for example, improving recycling awareness, or adding a booth with information about what people can do to reduce their environmental impact. Here are some ideas for events you could green:
  - Neighborhood Festival
  - Local farmers' market
  - Block party
  - Event at a local school, church or other organization (e.g. graduation, annual volunteer dinner)
  - Local parade
2. **Become an expert.** Read through the following guide, and check out some of the **Additional Resources**. Ask your C3 liaison to answer questions about how the project will work.
3. **Define your project vision and goals.** What do you hope to achieve by doing this project? How many community members do you hope to educate? How much waste do you hope to divert from landfills?



4. **Gather a project team.** Refer to the **Building Your Project Team** worksheet in your **Project Development Workbook**. Your project team might include one or more of the event's organizers as well as other interested community members.

## **Part II: Create and Implement a Green Plan**

**~1-2 months**

1. **Working with your project team and the event's organizers, create a plan for greening the event.** Here are some ideas and resources to consult:
  - **Improve recycling.** Work with organizers to have more recycling bins, to place recycling bins next to every trash receptacle, or gather a team of volunteers to collect recyclable items from event participants. Some participants just need a little encouragement to recycle; by offering to collect their recyclables you are making them aware of the issue. Check out Keep Chicago Beautiful's *Guide to Recycling at Neighborhood Festivals* for more ideas: [www.kcb.org/kcb\\_festivals.html](http://www.kcb.org/kcb_festivals.html).
  - **Create a list of suggestions or requirements for vendors.** Provide sample biodegradable plates, forks or cups to event organizers and vendors to show them alternative options for food distribution. Work with local vendors to get bulk pricing on eco-friendly utensils and dishware. A Canadian music festival also offered these tips to its vendors (find more at [www.kaslojazzfest.com/v2/festival-info/vendors/zero-waste](http://www.kaslojazzfest.com/v2/festival-info/vendors/zero-waste)):
    - Sell food/beverages at the event in packaging that can be recycled or composted. Reduce use of disposables wherever possible.
    - Don't sell food/beverages packaged in non-recyclable or non-compostable materials such as polystyrene, waxed cardboard, or non-recyclable plastic (plastic code 6).
    - Avoid single serving items: instead, use large dispensers for items like sugar, cream, sauce, salad dressing, mustard, relish, etc.
    - Eliminate unnecessary waste items and products that are over-packaged. Reduce the use of plastic cutlery (use wooden stir sticks), plastic bags, and napkins.
    - Correctly sort and properly dispose of waste, recyclables, and compostables at the event.
    - Rinse clean all recyclable containers used in food preparation. Have a plan coordinated before the event.
    - Bring goods into the festival in cardboard or reusable boxes/containers.

There are several vendors for eco-friendly materials online, but here are some places to start. Event organizers and festival vendors are responsible for the bulk purchasing of materials; C3 is only able to provide those materials listed on the **Materials Checklist**.

- Excellent Packaging and Supply: [www.excellentpackaging.com](http://www.excellentpackaging.com). Product line includes 100% biodegradable SpudWare made from 80% potato or corn starch and 20% soy or other vegetable oils.
  - Eco-Products: [www.ecoproducts.com](http://www.ecoproducts.com). Food service, office supplies, household and building products.
  - World-Centric: [www.worldcentric.org](http://www.worldcentric.org).
  - Onyx Distribution: [www.onyxdistribution.com/index.html](http://www.onyxdistribution.com/index.html). Local Chicago-based business.
  - Green Chicago Restaurant Co-op: [www.buygreenchicago.org](http://www.buygreenchicago.org). Provides professional procurement services in support of increasing the type and volume of sustainable products purchased and used by restaurants and other businesses in the Chicago area.
- **Encourage attendees to bicycle, walk, carpool or take public transportation to the event.** Create incentives and include them in event advertising. For example, you might offer CTA passes or bicycle gear as prizes to those who take alternative transportation.
  - **Set up a booth to educate attendees** about Chicago's environment and what they can do. For example, you might do demonstrations of how to disconnect your downspout to conserve water, make green cleaning solutions, or hand out compact fluorescent light bulbs (CFLs) with information about their benefits.



2. **Order materials through your C3 Liaison.**
  - Refer to your **Material Checklist** in your **Project Proposal**.
  - Confirm with your C3 liaison final quantities of each material requested and the address where materials should be shipped. Note: Some materials will need to be picked up at the Chicago Center for Green Technology, 445 N. Sacramento Blvd.
  - Remember, materials can take up to 3 weeks to arrive after C3 orders them so **plan ahead!**
3. **Implement your plan.** Work with your team to implement your ideas. Make sure to publicize your green initiatives so that the community can get involved.

## **Part III: Calculating Environmental Benefits**

**1 hour**

1. **Calculate the environmental and community benefits of your project.** Once you have implemented your plan, estimate the benefits of your project by comparing how the event ran last year from how it ran this year (or how, hypothetically, it would have run without your project). For example, you might calculate:
  - How much waste you diverted from landfills (e.g., improved recycling program and collected and recycled 30 blue bags of water bottles).
  - How many instances of behavior change your project caused (e.g., 50 people biked to event instead of driving).
  - How many people participated in your project (e.g., people on project team, approximate number of attendees at event).
  - How much publicity you received (e.g., a write-up or blurb in your community paper).
  - How many participants pledged to take environmental action. This can be found by asking individuals to make a single **pledge** to reduce their environmental footprint. Collect pledges on a sign-in sheet with attendees' names and contact info listed, make pledge cards for participants to take home, or take photos of individuals with their written pledges and follow up by sending them a digital copy.
2. **Compare your results to your project's vision and goals (see Part I, Step 3 above).** Did you achieve the results that you hoped for?

## **Part IV: Turn in Final Report**

**Within 2 weeks of project completion**

As soon as you've calculated environmental benefits, please fill out your **Final Report** online. Corresponding materials such as digital photographs, outreach flyers or posters, press releases, or news clippings should be emailed to [conservation@cityofchicago.org](mailto:conservation@cityofchicago.org).

## **Additional Resources:**

The following guides to greening events are not all specific to Chicago. However, they include ideas and checklists that you can apply to your own project. Refer to them for inspiration!

- Keep Chicago Beautiful's *Guide to Recycling at Neighborhood Festivals*: [www.kcb.org/kcb\\_festivals.html](http://www.kcb.org/kcb_festivals.html)
- Greening Your Event at the University of Vermont:  
[www.uvm.edu/recycle/Students/Greening\\_Events\\_Thesis\\_Part2.pdf](http://www.uvm.edu/recycle/Students/Greening_Events_Thesis_Part2.pdf)
- Zero Waste Events in South Australia: <http://www.zerowaste.sa.gov.au/About.mvc/PublicPlaceRecycling>