



BOULDERWISE SUSTAINABILITY GUIDANCE FOR MEETINGS AND EVENTS IN BOULDER



Hosting sustainable events in Boulder isn't just good practice, it's part of the city's DNA. Surrounded by open space, mountain views, and a community that deeply values environmental stewardship, Boulder makes it easier than ever to plan events that reflect those values. From robust zero-waste services and alternative transportation options to Leave No Trace guidance tailored for urban and outdoor venues alike, organizers can minimize impact while celebrating what makes Boulder special. Together, we can ensure that every event protects the natural beauty and community spirit that define Boulder.

1. Select Sustainable Venues

Choose venues that emphasize efficiency in energy, water, and waste; use sustainable landscaping and cleaning; are transit-accessible; provide staff training; and hold certifications like LEED or Green Seal. Favor venues with efficient lighting, sensors, hand dryers and laundry practices.

2. Promote Sustainable Travel

Encourage transit, carpooling, walking and biking to reduce emissions associated with event travel. Share [Boulder's transit routes](#), bike racks, and EV charging info. [Boulder BCycle](#), a local electric bike-share organization, provides a convenient, zero-emission transportation alternative. [Lime scooters](#) are found on corners or near sidewalks around the city. Boulder's [public bus system](#) includes the easy-to-use [HOP](#), [SKIP](#) and [JUMP](#) lines, and RTD offers frequent buses from [Denver International Airport to Boulder](#).

3. Dispose of Waste Properly or Go Zero-Waste

Boulder's [Universal Zero Waste Ordinance](#) requires all properties in Boulder to have separate compost, recycling and trash services, and businesses are required to recycle and compost, provide zero waste signs and educate employees on proper waste sorting. Ensure that recycling and composting bins are clearly labeled and easy to find. Find posters at Eco-Cycle's [resource library](#), and use their guide to [Waste Sorting 101](#). Offer reusables as much as possible to minimize waste production. [Eco-Cycle's Zero Waste Event Services](#) offers equipment for rent such as recycling and waste bins and bags. Contact zerowaste@bouldercolorado.gov to request ready-to-print sign PDFs, laminated signs, and bin labels at no charge or to learn more about options for custom signs in consultation with [Partners for a Clean Environment](#).

4. Eco-Friendly Catering and Meals

Source local, seasonal, or organic foods with plant-based options. Boulder has a rich history of directly connecting people with their food and prioritizing healthy and sustainable options. Use reusable or compostable dishware (check what's accepted). Provide refill stations and reusable cups. Promote mindful portions and food donation. Research options for donating surplus food to local food banks.

5. Go Digital and Reconsider Swag Items

Replace paper with websites, QR codes, and apps for schedules and materials. Encourage reusable or recycled giveaways or none at all.

6. Reuse Materials for Future Events

Collect and store reusable materials, such as signs, decor, and badge holders, for future events.

7. Educate & Engage Attendees

Promote green lodging options, encourage reusable bottles/mugs/bags, and utilize digital networking tools. Offer eco-friendly activities, share [BoulderWise](#) Leave No Trace guidance, and support local sustainable businesses.

Thank you for stepping up to protect and care for Boulder and the planet! This checklist covers the essentials so your event or conference aligns with responsible and sustainable Leave No Trace practices.

Sustainable Event Checklist

Transportation

- Choose venues near public transit and with bike/walking access
- Promote and provide info on public transport routes, biking, carpooling, walking, EV charging, shuttles

Food & Drink

- Source local, seasonal, and/or organic ingredients, including plant-based and dietary-inclusive meal options
- Use reusable or certified compostable dishware (where accepted)
- Provide water refill stations
- Reduce food waste through composting and donating leftovers

Reduce, Reuse, Recycle

- Prioritize reusables and recyclables (including signs, decor, badge holders)
- Provide clearly marked recycling and compost bins
- Research third-party zero-waste services if needed
- Discourage disposable swag; encourage useful, sustainable giveaways

Energy & Venue Efficiency

- Choose energy-efficient venues
- Ask attendees and staff to turn off lights and power down unused devices
- Evaluate the venue's water-saving and cleaning practices

Communications & Promotion

- Go digital: use websites, apps, or QR codes for agendas/materials
- Eliminate printed materials wherever possible or ensure signs are recyclable
- Promote digital networking (e.g., apps, e-business cards)

Education & Engagement

- Educate attendees on sustainable practices pre-event
- Encourage bringing personal reusables (bottles, mugs, bags)
- Promote eco-friendly behaviors and activities during the event
- Support and recommend green local businesses and experiences

Measurement & Offsets

- Track carbon footprint and waste diversion
- Share sustainability results and lessons learned with attendees
- Offset emissions to reduce net environmental impact