



Go Green at National Night Out

Starting to plan your National Night Out event?

Looking for ways to be more environmentally friendly this year?

Look no further! GreenGatherings can help you go green at your community's National Night Out event.

GreenGatherings is a guide that helps events of all sizes learn why going green matters and what works for them. Resources including planning guides, tips, case studies, helpful links, and more are provided to help you get started with going green at your next event.

Enclosed you will find several GreenGatherings resources that can help you make your next National Night Out event more environmentally friendly:

- **10 Simple Ways to Go Green at a Block Party:** This fact sheet includes ten easy steps you can take to make your National Night Out event as green as possible.

Additional Information

- **Organic and Local Foods Fact Sheet:** August is a great time for local food in Minnesota, so why not try to incorporate it into your event? This fact sheet includes several resources on local and organic food, as well as environmentally friendly food waste disposal options.
- **Newsletter and Website article:** This short article can be added to your community newsletter or website to promote resources to green your National Night Out event.

Want to share your green story with others? Visit www.rethinkrecycling.com/events and click on "My Event" to share how you went green!

For additional information and resources, visit us online at www.rethinkrecycling.com/events or send an email to info@rethinkrecycling.com.

10 Simple Ways to Go Green at a Block Party

Event Type Overview:

Number of Attendees: 30-50

Types of Activities: Potluck/barbeque, information tables, games and other activities

Ways to Go Green:

- Provide recycling bins for cans, bottles, and other recyclables that may be produced at your event.
- Put out containers for food waste recycling. This is a great option if you have curbside pick-up of food waste/non-recyclable paper. If you do not have this option, ask ahead of time for neighborhood volunteers who are willing to compost food waste from your event in their backyard compost bins. (Note: composting meat and dairy products in backyard bins is not recommended.)
- Ask event attendees to bring their own reusable plates, napkins and utensils from home. As an alternative, consider using compostable paper plates and ask for neighborhood volunteers who are willing to compost them in their backyard compost bins. (Note: this may require extra water because of the high paper content.)
- Only serve beverages in reusable or recyclable containers. If you do not have enough reusable cups, ask attendees to bring a reusable cup from home.
- When possible, email information about your event to attendees to cut down on paper use. If that is not an option, print all event flyers double-sided or shorten to two flyers per page on a minimum of 30% post-consumer content recycled paper. Most copy stores provide a selection of recycled paper.
- Encourage attendees to use local food for potluck items, such as from a farmer's market or even their own backyard garden. If food for your event is being provided by an outside source, talk to them about how they can incorporate local food into the menu and reduce wasteful packaging.
- Use decorations that can be reused in future years, and limit or don't use balloons. If you are printing banners or other signs, making sure they are recycled at the end of the day. Also consider using a reusable banner, and not including the event year on so they may be used again.
- Provide condiments in bulk instead of individually wrapped servings. For example, provide bottles of ketchup instead of individual packets. Buy other products in bulk whenever possible.
- Provide an information table with greening resources for attendees, such as information on native plants, rain gardens, and purchasing save energy and money from your utility company.
- Provide information for attendees on efforts your event has made to go green and how they can help.

Organic and Local Foods

- *Do you know how easy it is to buy organic and locally grown foods?*
- *Do you want to learn how you can dispose of your food waste in an environmentally friendly manner and save money?*
- *Do you want to protect the health of your community and the environment?*

Serving locally grown and organic foods is easier than you think!

Organic and locally grown foods are a healthier, more environmentally friendly choice. Keeping food waste out of your trash benefits more than just the environment. With the right resources at your disposal, it's easier than you think to green up the meals you serve!

Buy local. Local food is food that is grown and produced by local farmers and artisan food makers. Did you know that a typical dinner travels over 1,500 miles before it's served? Eating local food greatly reduces the consumption of fossil fuels and wasteful packing materials. And with a shorter journey, local farmers can offer you more choices based on flavor rather than long expiration dates.

Go organic. When local food isn't an option, organic is the way to go. Organic food is produced by farmers who emphasize the use of renewable resources and the conservation of soil and water to enhance environmental quality for future generations. Organic meat, poultry, eggs, and dairy products come from animals that are given no antibiotics or growth hormones. Organic food is produced without using most conventional pesticides; fertilizers made with synthetic ingredients or sewage sludge; bioengineering; or ionizing radiation. To ensure your product is at least 95 percent organic, look for the USDA Organic certification label.

Reduce waste. Events, both large and small, can generate a significant amount of waste in a short period of time. A 2006 study of 25 different venues and events in California indicated that on average 2.44 pounds of waste is generated per visitor, per day. In addition, nearly 11% of non-residential waste consists of food and food-soiled paper. Food waste recycling is a great solution, offering the opportunity to save the environment, save money and more!

GreenGatherings assists organizations and individuals in realizing how easy it is to make environmentally-conscious decisions regarding the purchase, preparation and disposal of local and organic food to benefit our community.

Resources for Food Establishments & Caterers

Local Foods

- The Heartland Food Network
www.mnproject.org/food-heartland.html
The Heartland Food Network is a project of the Minnesota Project, a non-profit dedicated to renewable energy, agriculture, and local foods systems in Minnesota. The Network builds collaboration and ties among chefs, catering companies, food distributors, and local family farms through an online marketplace, events, and education activities.
- Renewing the Countryside
www.renewingthecountryside.org
Hosts Farmer Buyer Networking Workshops several times each year to connect local chefs and farmers. Also produces the Local Food Hero Radio Show, which includes a featured chef using local foods each week.
- Minnesota Grown Directory
www2.mda.state.mn.us/webapp/mngrown/mngrown_default.jsp
Directory of products for general consumers produced by Minnesota farmers.

Organic Foods

- Minnesota Directory of Organic Farms
www.mda.state.mn.us/food/organic/directory.htm
Find farmers in your area that are growing commodities you want to buy.
- United States Department of Agriculture
www.ams.usda.gov (click on "National Organic Program" in the left navigation bar)
Learn more about the National Organic Program administered by the United States Department of Agriculture. Includes information about standards, certifiers and labeling requirements.

Food Disposal

- Hennepin County Organics
www.hennepin.us, search "organics, business"
Information on food recycling options, including food recovery, food-to-animal recycling and composting. Includes an introductory video to food recycling options in English and Spanish.

Additional Resources

- National Restaurant Association Conserve initiative
www.conserve.restaurant.org/issues/index.cfm
Background on environmental initiatives such as energy efficiency, water conservation and building improvements.

Find additional resources and information online at
www.rethinkrecycling.com/events.

Go Green at National Night Out – Article

Planning for National Night Out in your neighborhood? Thinking about ways your event can be more environmentally friendly this year? Look no further! GreenGatherings can help you go green at your neighborhood's National Night Out event.

GreenGatherings has several resources available that can help make your National Night Out event more environmentally friendly, including:

- **10 Simple Ways to Go Green at a Block Party**
- **Organic and Local Foods Fact Sheet**
- **Newsletter and Website Article**

Find the above resources and more online at www.rethinkrecycling.com/events.