The Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) has been implementing event sustainability best practices through General Assembly (GA) since 2004. Each year, GA is held in a different city, bringing new challenges and opportunities. UUA has been able to collaborate with vendors across the country to improve existing sustainability efforts through the development of a formal event sustainability strategy. In 2016, UUA GA continued by working with the Greater Columbus Convention Center (GCCC) and Columbus hotels. This report presents the outcomes of this work, including recommendations to continue to improve against sustainability goals.

Summary

**Hotel room nights**: 6,829
**Offsite Delegates**: 126
**Countries represented**: 6
**Congregations represented**: 637
**Onsite Attendees**: 3,771
**Exhibitor booths**: 111

**June 22-26, 2016**
**Greater Columbus Convention Center**
**Columbus, Ohio**

Background

The Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) has been implementing event sustainability best practices through General Assembly (GA) since 2004. Each year, GA is held in a different city, bringing new challenges and opportunities. UUA has been able to collaborate with vendors across the country to improve existing sustainability efforts through the development of a formal event sustainability strategy. In 2016, UUA GA continued by working with the Greater Columbus Convention Center (GCCC) and Columbus hotels. This report presents the outcomes of this work, including recommendations to continue to improve against sustainability goals.
Dear Friends of General Assembly

The General Assembly Planning Committee has come a long way on our sustainability journey in the past thirteen years! Since 2004, we have been living our faith by putting our Seven Principles into practice. We have engaged a dozen cities in the process of making their hotels and convention centers more sustainable, and in some cases (e.g., Portland), have influenced significant change.

In 2016, I’m especially proud of the work that we’ve done in Columbus to offset the carbon emissions associated with GA for a second time, from shipping and hotels, to attendee travel. You can read about the metrics from this year, and the cumulative metrics from prior years in the report that follows. We’ve strived to bring in the voices of attendees and volunteers, and to talk about the ongoing and very real challenges that we face in hosting sustainable events all over the US.

What I want to stress is the commitment to sustainability that has been demonstrated by those who plan General Assembly (MeetGreen, the General Assembly and Conference Services office and the General Assembly Planning Committee), UUA, the volunteers who conduct on-the-ground education and waste diversion, and each curious and helpful GA attendee. This combined effort has been sustained for more than a decade!

We do this work because we want future generations to be able to experience all of the beauty and abundance of our planet. And quite simply, we do this work because it is the right thing to do. Please join us in facilitating powerful experiences for our faith, and doing so in a way that resonates with our principles.

Thank you,

Rev. Chip Roush
Since 2004, GA has brought this commitment to the Seven Principles to twelve cities across the country and helped to promote change through dedicated sustainability efforts.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Long Beach, Calif</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Established baseline practices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fort Worth, Texas</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>First time recycling program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Louis, Mo</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>First time polystyrene ban at event</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portland, Oregon</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>First time front-of-house composting program for venue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salt Lake City, Ut</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>First time composting for venue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minneapolis, Minn</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>100% renewable energy use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charlotte, NC</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>Partnership with local Farmer's Fresh Market for sustainable concessions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phoenix, Ariz</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>Highest waste diversion rate to date</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Louisville, Ky</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>First time composting program for venue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providence, RI</td>
<td>2014</td>
<td>First time composting program for venue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portland, Or</td>
<td>2015</td>
<td>First time 100% of event carbon emissions offset</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Columbus, Ohio</td>
<td>2016</td>
<td>First time composting program for venue</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Unitarian Universalists live by Seven Principles. These Principles were created through a grassroots effort, agreed upon democratically, and serve as the cornerstone of Unitarian Universalism.

**Seven Principles**

1st Principle: The inherent worth and dignity of every person
2nd Principle: Justice, equity, and compassion in human relations
3rd Principle: Acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations
4th Principle: A free and responsible search for truth and meaning
5th Principle: The right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large
6th Principle: The goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all
7th Principle: **Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part**

**Triple Bottom Line Thinking**

This common sustainability framework incorporates the Seven Principles and provides a useful lens for approaching challenges and opportunities.
The Unitarian Universalist Association identified five main sustainability objectives for General Assembly 2016. Each objective is accompanied by individual targets and action items designed to address and evaluate each objective. These targets are customized given the current level of sustainability in each host city prior to the event.

1. **Improve Overall Sustainability for the Event**
   - Improve APEX/ASTM Standards compliance from 82% total
     - Current Status: 78% (100% planner, 67% supplier)
   - Improve MeetGreen® Calculator score from 86%
     - Current Status: 88%

   - Reduce waste per participant to 0.25 kg
     - Current Status: 0.44 kg per participant per day
   - Hold a zero landfill waste event
     - Current Status: 0.17 kg landfill per participant per day
   - Offset 100% of the carbon emissions associated with UUA GA
     - Current Status: Offset 100%; 2,371 MT of CO$_2$e

3. **Measure the Benefits of Sustainable Practices**
   - Collect data before, during and after GA, analyze and present in final report
     - Current Status: Completed, see report

4. **Provide and Promote Sustainable Food and Beverage at the Event**
   - Specify and measure local and organic foods procured for GA
     - 2016 catered food was 48% local and 9% organic by spend

5. **Educate Attendees in Sustainability Efforts**
   - Informational signage, volunteer education, and information provided through social media, web site, and mobile app pre-event and onsite
     - All educational opportunities completed

Sustainability is addressed at every step of the General Assembly planning process. Environmental initiatives are included in contract language several years before the event, and work is done with vendors throughout planning to ensure objectives are being met. This focus on pre-event, onsite, and post-event work aims not only at internal improvements at GA, but helps engage vendors in a way that promotes long term change and impact.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Methods</th>
<th>What We Do</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Pre-event** | **Contracting:** Sustainability expectations are included in most vendor contracts and agreed upon several years before the event. These contracted terms have been refined over years of experience based on stakeholder feedback, changing regulations and UUA advocacy priorities.  
**Input:** The GA sustainability team gathers input from the community, including UUA congregations, GA attendees and delegates, UUA staff, exhibitors, vendors and the host city.  
**Pre-event Meeting:** An in-person meeting is held with the venue, catering, general services contractor, AV, and hotels to research destination best practices and communicate UUA values and GA objectives. Onsite tours are taken at each hotel and venue, as well as the recycling, landfill, and compost facilities to gauge current practices and working conditions.  
**Objective-setting, Targets and Action Planning:** While objectives are consistent, improvement targets are set based on anticipated issues and destination and vendor baselines. An action plan is created to ensure progression.  
**Mid-point Check-in:** Vendors are checked against targets, and timetables are adjusted based on progress.  
**Measurement Requests:** MeetGreen works with staff and vendors to identify important data to be collected and reported post-event. |
| **Onsite** | **Onsite Management:** Follow-through on action steps is overseen by MeetGreen during GA, including daily Green Team meetings and operation of the Green Booth.  
**Onsite Audit:** MeetGreen is onsite for seven days to observe onsite practices including front and back of house. These observations are taken into account when analyzing measurement data during post-event analysis. |
| **Post-event** | **Measurement Analysis:** Vendors and staff provide post-event data which is analyzed by MeetGreen, including attendance, material use, waste, donations, emissions, energy, and water use.  
**Recommendations:** A final report is prepared to summarize observations, outcomes, and recommendations for future events. This step also considers if overall objectives should be updated. |
The efforts made at this and previous GAs are amazing! The fact that UUA worked with the convention center and hotels to set up recycling and other green practices; that carbon offsets are required; that we as attendees were encouraged in many ways to adopt ‘green’ practices and offered many messages to raise awareness and educate…most impressive!

-GA attendee

Sustainable food

UUA and Centerplate Catering worked together to build a menu for GA that utilized local, organic and sustainably grown and harvested products (such as coffee and seafood). Centerplate Catering executed the “meat-free Friday” campaign during GA by serving nutritious vegetarian meals. Educational information about the food served and the decisions to consider the impact of menu choices were communicated extensively on the GA mobile event application and signage throughout the dining area.

Commercial composting

The Greater Columbus Convention Center (GCCC) had never composted in the front of the house prior to GA. GA was also the first time that the GCCC operated the combined pulper and biodigester. This system “cooks” food waste at 315 degrees for 18 hours, creating a dry, fibrous material that reduces the weight of waste by 94%. The material can either be applied directly to the onsite garden at the GCCC, or transported to local community gardens. Creating a pure, uncontaminated stream of food waste was challenging, and was accomplished with very specific signage and diligent, helpful staff and volunteers. After this inaugural convention, the GCCC plans to continue this practice in the future.

Bulk condiment stations

The GCCC switched from single use condiments to bulk condiment stations in multiple concession areas throughout the convention center. Vendors modified their practices and communicated the changes to customers.
Reusable service ware

Given the great success using reusable service ware in Portland, OR for GA 2015, the GCCC agreed to offer reusables at a few of the food and beverage concession stands during General Assembly 2016.

Orientation to sustainability at GA

The Green Team attended the orientation for first time attendees, as well as the orientation for the Youth Caucus, explained the overall sustainability initiatives at GA, and offered an invitation to participate in these efforts at GA.

Host hotel engagement

Contracted hotels made changes to ensure environmental initiatives were present and communicated to guests. Guests were made aware of how they could participate in efforts such as recycling, linen-reuse, and efficient energy use through electronic communications. Each hotel also offset the carbon emissions associated with guests’ stay.

Exhibitor sustainability

Exhibitors agreed to comply with a set of sustainability guidelines as part of their exhibitor agreement. They were asked to limit giveaways and packaging, participate in the donation program, and use energy efficient lighting to help ensure a less wasteful GA. Those who went above and beyond in the previous year proudly communicated their achievements with the Green Exhibitor placard.
How Did We Do?

Columbus In Action

Carbon offsetting

This year, 100% of the emissions associated with GA were offset for the second time! GA has historically required that hotels and venues offset their carbon but the largest contributor, attendee travel, has been offset voluntarily. This year GA worked with Carbonfund.org to calculate and offset emissions from air, ground, and freight travel. Roughly half of the offsets purchased will support the Truck Stop Electrification Project, helping to provide electricity to truckers during rest periods and eliminate the emissions and air quality concerns from idling. The other half will go to the LifeStraws Carbon for Water Project, which uses carbon financing to sustainably provide millions of people with clean water in Kenya.

Public witness:
State Of Emergence; Faith Filled People Rally For Racial Justice

The 2016 Public Witness focused on the UUA commitment to boldly work for Black liberation. This event was a collaboration between the Ohio Student Association, the People’s Justice Project, UU Justice Ohio, Rev. Dr. William J. Barber, II, Alicia Garza, UUA President Rev. Peter Morales, and other Movement for Black Lives and many local and multifaith leaders. Local UUA organizers, joining the mass movement for Black liberation, have been displaying Black Lives Matter banners, fighting for criminal justice reform, raising the minimum wage, and defending voting rights all over the country. Even with a last minute venue change, this Public Witness called forth some strong, beautiful, voices to speak up, come together, and shift the dialogue back to real issues affecting people. The Witness complemented workshop tracks for Black Lives of UU and Building a Transformative Movement for Racial Justice, as well as general session programming, worship and healing/ritual space.
The MeetGreen® Calculator measures overall sustainable event performance. This graph shows sustainability scores for General Assembly over time against other similarly sized events that have been entered into the Calculator system.

Overall Event Sustainability Comparison Against Other Events

The highest score for GA was in Portland in 2015. Check out the Event Summary by Category to see why this spike occurred.

GA consistently scores well against other similar events and has continued to improve year over year since 2012.

Event Score: MeetGreen® Calculator

How Did We Do?
The MeetGreen® Calculator also allows for a more in-depth analysis based on ten sustainability categories. Scores are shown for all twelve years below, in chronological order, where the left-most line represents 2005.

The Meeting Venue score went down from 2015. While the GCCC has adopted many sustainable technologies and practices and did improve due to UUA requests, the Oregon Convention Center is a Platinum LEED and APEX certified building with more advanced operating and purchasing practices.

While destination, hotel and venue capabilities change year-to-year, UUA has excelled in policies and practices related to what they can control each year, such as the Onsite Office and Marketing and Communications.

UUA has focused on systematizing sustainability in contracts, expectations and culture with repeat vendors such as AV provider CMI.
How Did We Do?

Waste

Recyclables:
The co-mingled recycled material collected at the GCCC is sent to one of the Rumpke Recycling facilities located in the Columbus, OH area. WestRock Recycling utilized some of the specialty items such as cardboard and film plastic.

Beyond basic comingled recycling, this number includes specific materials that may have been specially recycled. For more information on what was recycled in Columbus, please see the Materials section.

Compost:
Compost was processed in the convention center for the first time during GA, using a pulper and a dehydrator. This is based on the weight of food waste BEFORE it has been processed.

The food waste generated at some of the hotels in the hotel block is sent to Quasar Biomethane facility, which produces energy from waste.

Landfill:
The diversion rate for 2016 GA was 61%, in other words, 61% of materials that were not bound for reuse were diverted from the landfill.

Materials that cannot be reused, recycled, composted, or donated are sent to the SWACO Franklin County Sanitary Landfill.

The annual average diversion rate for the GCCC was:

Waste Facility Audits:
The recycling, compost, and landfill facilities used by the GCCC were inspected prior to GA to ensure proper practices and safe working conditions. Information about each of the facilities was included in onsite education to help attendees better understand where their waste ends up after it is discarded.

2016 Total Waste Profile

- Recycled: 55% (4,536 kg)
- Composted: 6% (464 kg)
- Landfilled: 39% (3,257 kg)
- Total Waste: 4,536 kg + 464 kg + 3,257 kg = 8,257 kg
I've always been impressed by the number of compost cans around and the signs educating attendees about proper use. For you to work with 5,000 people to understand the system, when our church still has trouble making the 400 understand, is great! -GA attendee

More disposable dishes and cups were used in Columbus, contributing to a higher landfill rate and a higher overall waste rate than in Portland.

I appreciated the efforts to recycle and the suggestions to bring one's own water bottles and coffee cups. -GA attendee
This year, GA offset 100% of attendee transportation emissions for the second time, amounting to more than 2,300 MT.
While many attendees drove to Columbus, Ohio, this location also led to a high percentage of attendees who flew from both coasts. As air travel is the largest contributor of event emissions for GA, the 2016 number is higher than the event baseline as well as the GA average.

Flight Emissions
Air travel is typically the largest contributor of event emissions. For reasons of accessibility, GA is held in a different region of the United States each year, which has a large effect on overall emissions. This unavoidable variability in travel emissions is one of the reasons GA now relies on offsets to compensate for all travel emissions.

Venue, Hotel & Meal Emissions
GA also works with venues and hotels to offset their emissions.

Carbon Emissions (kg CO2 per person, per day)

- **180** MeetGreen Average
- **106** GA Average
- **100** 2005 Baseline
- **126** UUA GA 2016

Carbon Emissions

- **1,699.8 MT**
- **288.7 MT**
- **164.1 MT**
- **3.1 MT**

How Did We Do?
### How Did We Do?

**Water**

**UUA General Assembly Water Use Analysis**

Liters water use per participant per day

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Liters</td>
<td>13.6</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>48.7</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*GA 2013 water use data unavailable.

Venue water use has been explicitly tracked for GA since 2009.

In 2015, a reusable dish program was instituted for GA in Portland, which resulted in a 600% increase in water use for dishwashing. The results of lifecycle analysis show that using reusable dishes is a better choice overall, when considering material use, overall water use, air pollution, and solid waste.

One water saving technique that was adopted in Columbus was having the catering company use bulk beverage containers instead of pre-poured beverages.
Material use has always been a priority at GA. Working with Heritage, the decorator for GA, large amounts of waste have been alleviated through reductions, reuse, and recycling. The following table shows what materials were used during GA and how they were treated after the event.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Product</th>
<th>Product Type</th>
<th>Quantity Used</th>
<th>Reused</th>
<th>Recycled</th>
<th>Landfilled</th>
<th>Locally Sourced</th>
<th>Reusable</th>
<th>Recyclable</th>
<th>Post-Consumer Recycled Content</th>
<th>Post-Industry Recycled Content</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Carpet</td>
<td>Emerald</td>
<td>5,821</td>
<td>5,711</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>111</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carpet</td>
<td>Standard</td>
<td>580</td>
<td>580</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Padding</td>
<td>Grandeur</td>
<td>310</td>
<td>310</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Signage</td>
<td>PVC Sintra</td>
<td>270</td>
<td>270</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Signage</td>
<td>Cardstock</td>
<td>2,120</td>
<td>2,120</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shrinkwrap</td>
<td>Polyolefin</td>
<td>700</td>
<td>700</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table tops</td>
<td>Vinyl</td>
<td>1,320</td>
<td>1,320</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Double-face tape</td>
<td>Cardboard</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How Did We Do?

Materials

1

7
How Did We Do?

Volunteers

24 recycling volunteers gave 315 hours to help educate and sort waste at GA 2016.

Being part of the Green Team was thrilling, because it made me believe that the dream is possible. Ordinarily, when I sort a lone compostable cup from the recycling bin to the landfill one, I know that the bins will soon be contaminated again and that every other bin in the building is likely just as mixed up. But as part of the Green Team, I knew I could rely on the shared responsibility of our team as sorters and educators, and the rest of the conference-goers became part of our team by extension, as learners and educators in their own right.

– Jim Hays

I was surprised by the enthusiasm and gratitude of the Assembly attendees - people are intimidated and confused by the differing rules in different city, but want to do the right thing. I really enjoyed the long conversations I was able to engage in, and enjoyed how willing people were to being educated. It was clear that people appreciated the presence of a team to assist with environmentally conscious waste disposal.

– Angela Wilcox

I enjoyed building a little community with the group and it was nice to see our team walking around with the grabbers around the convention center. I think people (in general) really appreciated the work we did and many people expressed gratitude to me as I was working.

– Erin Holmes

The most often mentioned words I heard from GA attendees as they recycled their stuff was “thank you!” I think that speaks volumes about UU’s!!!

– Robert Freer
Attendee feedback on sustainability efforts is gathered each year, onsite, and from an online evaluation which asks the following question:

**Question:**

The Unitarian Universalist Association and the General Assembly Planning Committee are committed to reducing the impact of our annual meeting on the environment. How would you rate General Assembly efforts to support greening, both in preparation for GA and at GA, including hotels, transportation, the convention center, handouts, etc.?

**GA in Portland 2015**

- **Excellent:** 49.7% (271 responses)
- **Good:** 40.4% (220 responses)
- **Fair:** 6.2% (34 responses)
- **Poor:** 0.9% (5 responses)
- **N/A:** 2.8% (15 responses)

**Total Responses:** 545

**GA in Columbus 2016**

- **Excellent:** 38% (187 responses)
- **Good:** 48% (239 responses)
- **Fair:** 10% (8 responses)
- **Poor:** 2% (12 responses)
- **N/A:** 2% (2 responses)

**Total Responses:** 494
This table explains some of the key issues that arose for 2016 GA stakeholders, and describes some of the barriers that are considered in designing sustainability initiatives for GA. Please note that the strength of the sustainability approach for UUA lies in integrating all of the Seven Principles, and especially in honoring social and economic justice at the same time as environmental justice.

### Material Issues

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issues</th>
<th>Barriers</th>
<th>Comments from 2016 attendees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACHIEVING A “ZERO WASTE” GOAL</td>
<td>In order to address ACCESSIBILITY for people with various economic backgrounds and levels of technology adoption, paper handouts, programs, and voting are still a fixture at GA.</td>
<td>“I am booklet dependent. I am glad the app worked for some but it probably would only lead to frustration if the only program materials were electronic.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PHYSICAL INFRASTRUCTURE</td>
<td>is needed by the venue and vendors in order to attain the zero waste goal, and these capital projects are often slow, complex and costly.</td>
<td>“I realize a printed program uses up trees. And that said I really appreciate it, not having or wanting a smart phone. Please keep the printed book.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENERGY USE IN CONVENTION CENTERS</td>
<td>The physical LIMITATIONS OF HVAC SYSTEMS for large rooms require pre-chilling to accommodate large groups.</td>
<td>“My biggest issue was that the app was not referenced like the program was. I tried to solely use the app, but was not as informed as those who had the program.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ATTENDEE TRAVEL</td>
<td>is typically the largest contributor of event emissions. For reasons of accessibility, GA is held in a different region of the United States each year, which has a large effect on overall emissions.</td>
<td>“Seemed like the quantity of food service materials that went to landfill rather than recycle was up, but this may be more a function of the 'system' in Columbus.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HEATH &amp; SAFETY</td>
<td>play a big role in setting the temperature in large meeting rooms within Convention centers.</td>
<td>“Cold temperatures and the waste of energy that UUA has taken stands on accommodating disabilities; however, I was dismayed to find the convention center (“CC”) so cold on many occasions that I found it difficult to concentrate.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AIR TRAVEL</td>
<td></td>
<td>“Let’s do some direct democracy and vote online.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>carbon emissions</td>
<td></td>
<td>“A lot of things were clearly aimed at greening GA, but really -- how can an annual conference that people fly to from all over the continent, that inevitably uses hotels with a huge footprint (AC 24/7, for starters), make a significant dent in environmental degradation?”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Where Are We Going?

**Material Issues**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issues</th>
<th>Barriers</th>
<th>Comments from 2016 attendees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Food</strong></td>
<td><strong>LOCAL ECONOMIES</strong> dictating whether each unique city and venue have access to locally grown and processed food at a comparable cost.</td>
<td>“We need to offer far less meat and a lot more plant-based food, if we are going to truly live into the value of greening our GA.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>SEASONALITY</strong> is a barrier to fresh, local food in many climates.</td>
<td>“Thank you for supporting &quot;Meatless Fridays.&quot; This campaign needs more publicity.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Education</strong></td>
<td><strong>ATTENDEE ENGAGEMENT</strong> UUA promotes education and awareness about event sustainability programs in a variety of ways, however the message can still be missed, given the <strong>LACK OF TIME</strong> and the diversity of activities at GA.</td>
<td>“I think GA did really well; I noticed that we (the congregants) could have done better- I saw lots of waste and misuse of trash bins, leaving AC on in the hotel rooms, etc. We can do better.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Supply Chain</strong></td>
<td><strong>DESTINATION AND HOTEL</strong> <strong>VARIABILITY</strong> is a factor in pushing hotels to deepen their sustainability practices, as they each begin at a different level of sustainability.</td>
<td>“Really appreciated the info about this at the orientation meeting and all the volunteers who stood at the recycling bins -- an outstanding effort!”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Where Are We Going?</strong></td>
<td>“The efforts are stellar! The overall impacts are still in question. The hotels try to cooperate, but the message doesn’t always get down to the workers.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This table explains some of the key issues that arose for 2016 GA stakeholders, and describes some of the barriers that are considered in designing sustainability initiatives for GA. Please note that the strength of the sustainability approach for UUA lies in integrating all of the Seven Principles, and especially in honoring social and economic justice at the same time as environmental justice.
## Recommendations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>UUA Objectives</th>
<th>2017 Recommendations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **1. Improve overall sustainability for the event**                          | • Develop a comprehensive UUA Sustainability Policy to align sustainability operations across UUA and within GA.  
• Establish a long-term sustainability plan for GA, including 5, 10 and 20 year goals that consider environmental, social and economic justice. |
| **2. Reduce environmental footprint in waste, water, energy, and emissions**  | • Improve upon visual aids during sessions and GA mobile event application use and promotion in order to reduce the need for paper handouts, voting, and other promotional materials.  
• Run a reusable coffee cup campaign.  
• Design new system to encourage sustainability best practices with exhibitors.  
• Consider local food and beverage vendors outside convention center to better plan for potential waste streams. |
| **3. Measure the benefits of sustainable practices**                          | • Refine event staff training and direction during move-in to increase diversion rate.  
• Track legacy of UUA collaboration with local suppliers from prior GAs. |
| **4. Provide and promote sustainable food and beverage at the event**         | • Continue to advocate for the use of local, organic and sustainable food options in each GA destination.  
• Provide more information at the Green Booth about local food producers and sustainable retail options in the host city. |
| **5. Educate attendees in sustainability efforts**                             | • Increase teachable moments and touch-points during GA, for example, during orientations.  
• Conduct main stage announcements about sustainability.  
• Increase specific recycling directions on mobile event application.  
• Coordinate green booth with Commit2Respond, Green Sanctuary, and Religious Education curricula. |

Suppliers: Carbonfund, Centerplate, Crowne Plaza Columbus-Convention Center, Hilton Columbus Downtown, Heritage Expositions, Hopkins Printing, Hyatt Regency Columbus, Greater Columbus Convention Center.


Scope: Carbon calculations include: Venue energy use, guest room energy use, all participant travel to and from the event, and show management freight. Waste metrics include: venue landfill, recycling, donations, and compost. Supply chain verification includes: venue, hotels, caterer, general services contractor, audio-visual supplier, freight providers, mobile event app, print and signage vendors.

Baselines: Since data tracking occurred on an evolving basis, baseline dates for data collection may be different depending on the metric. For example, tracking for carbon metrics began in 2005, while waste metrics only began to be reliably collected in 2008.

Definitions: “Local” is assumed to include goods purchased within 250 miles of the event site. “Organic” and “fair trade” must include verification or certification by a third party, such as USDA or Equal Exchange. “Green” cleaners must bear a third-party certification, such as Green Seal. “Landfill” is waste to landfill (no recovery). “Waste” includes landfill, recycling, compost, and donations that are discarded from the event.

Source: All metrics direct reported by vendors through metering, hauling records, and procurement analysis. All reports are checked in comparison with historic and external baselines and onsite observations to validate and error-check data. Carbon offset calculation completed by the Carbonfund.org, reported carbon calculations completed by MeetGreen.

Auditing: Supply chain compliance with external standards, such as Green Seal, Fair Trade and USDA Organic, verified by MeetGreen. Conformity of event practices with APEX/ASTM Environmentally Sustainable Event Standard and ISO 20121: 2012 first-party verified by MeetGreen. Where multiple vendors are required to demonstrate conformity with the APEX/ASTM Standard, credit for compliance is only given where all comply with a specification. Therefore no credit is given for partial conformity among vendors. This significantly impacts the Accommodation and Communication scores where a single non-reporting or non-conforming vendor can neutralize the efforts of other suppliers.