



UNITARIAN
UNIVERSALIST
ASSOCIATION

General Assembly Event Sustainability Report
New Orleans, Louisiana 2017

Prepared by
MeetGreen[®]

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We welcome your feedback! For further information or to share your ideas please contact:

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A Message from the Planning Committee

We are pleased to share the results of another successful year in practicing sustainability on a large scale. Thanks to the participants at General Assembly —and the leadership of MeetGreen— we helped to make GA'17 more sustainable than most conferences of that size. Even better, we left behind a legacy that may affect the city of New Orleans and the state of Louisiana for many years to come.

Although New Orleans' event services industry does not have the same green infrastructure as some more progressive cities, we did introduce them to a number of better practices. They have learned about ethical eating and vegan menus; they tested cup refill programs and expanded their use of compostable service ware. Many of the hotels we used provided guest room recycling and carbon offsets for the first time. They won't always offer it, but now they know how, when other events ask for it.

The addition of a third, *local* carbon offset program was part of our commitment to leaving a legacy in the community where we gathered. Our participation in the Lower Mississippi Reforestation project may be the first of many similar locally-focused partnerships.

As proud as we are, we also know we can always do better. We welcome your ideas. This year's on-demand printing of paper name badges was not perfect, but successful enough to try again, with improvements. What else might we try?

Thank you, and see you in Kansas City,

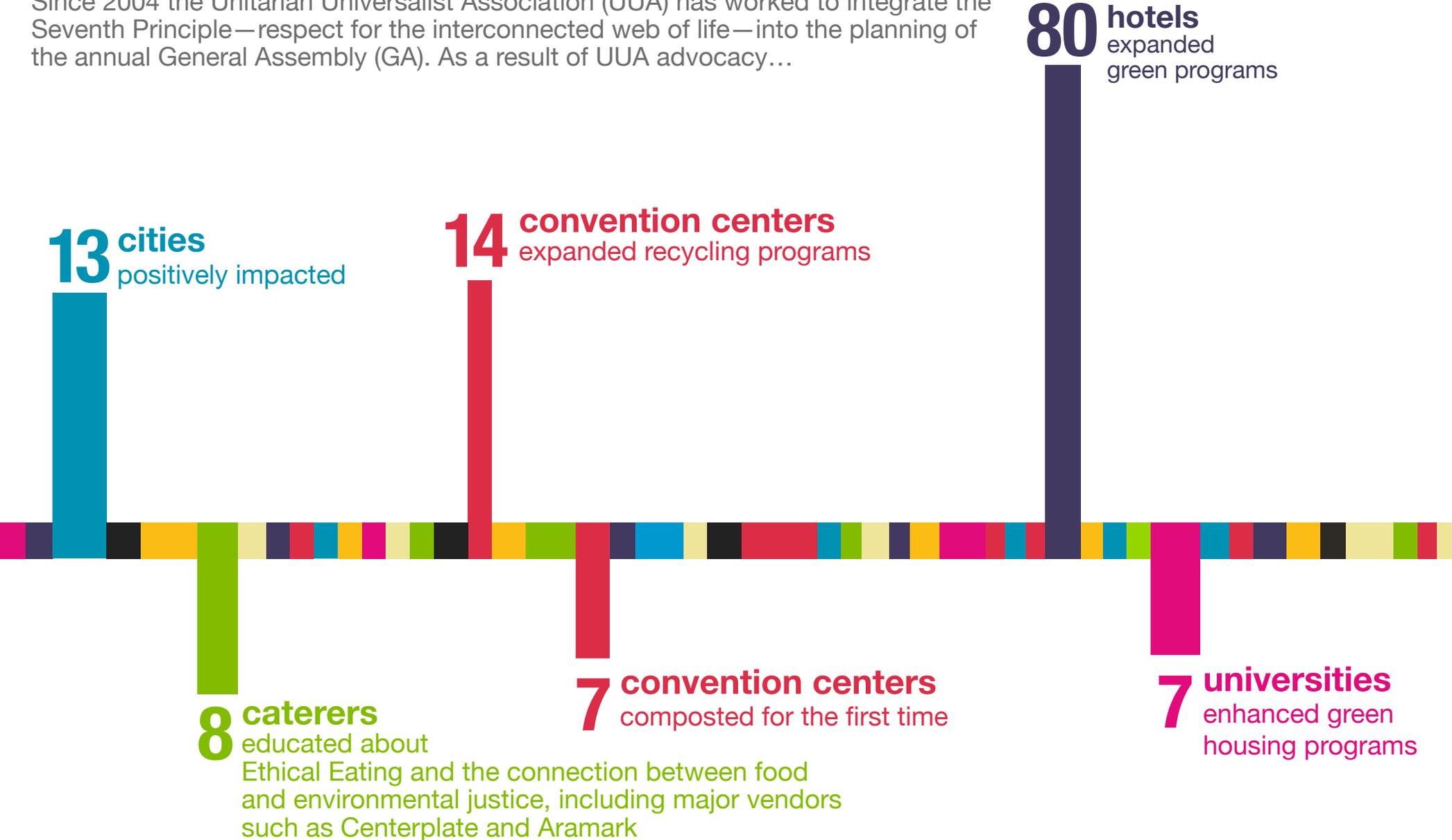


Rev. Chip Roush



UUA General Assembly Legacies 2005-2017

Since 2004 the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) has worked to integrate the Seventh Principle—respect for the interconnected web of life—into the planning of the annual General Assembly (GA). As a result of UUA advocacy...



97% less trash to landfill
was produced in 2017
compared to 2005¹

47,328 Kg. of waste recycled & composted
enough to fill
3.7 garbage trucks

10% less solid waste
was discarded in 2017
compared to 2005,
meaning less needed
to be recycled,
composted and landfilled²

2,112 Kg. of donations
including
3,881 meals

16,154
metric tons of
carbon emissions offset,
equal to planting
418,649 trees

162 volunteers
involved in the event
Green Team
bringing waste-wise education to
43,830
GA participants

3,190 hours donated to
zero-waste
programs onsite

Sustainability Principles

UUA congregations affirm and promote seven Principles, which UU's hold as strong values and moral guides. These Principles are integrated into how GA is planned:

- I | The inherent worth and dignity of every person.
- II || Justice, equity, and compassion in human relations.
- III ||| Acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations.
- IV |∨ A free and responsible search for truth and meaning.
- V ∨ The right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large.
- VI ∨| The goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all.
- VII ∨| **Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.****

This report summarizes outcomes related to the Seventh Principle only.



General Assembly's Green Team provides an opportunity for Unitarian Universalists to "live the Seventh Principle" at the event.

Sustainability Process

UUA's General Assembly planning is guided by ISO 20121: 2012, a global event sustainability management system standard for events. Conformity with this standard is first-party audited by MeetGreen® each year. Steps in this process include:

Pre-Event

Contracting: Sustainability expectations are included in most vendor contracts and agreed upon several years before the event. These contracted terms are continually refined 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 progress.

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 post-event.

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 action steps for the following year.

Material Sustainability Issues

Input from host destinations, congregations and committees about local sustainability concerns is sought prior to each GA. UUA also solicits feedback from attendees, vendors and staff during and following General Assembly. In addition, MeetGreen consultants stay abreast of latest sustainability concerns related to the event industry that may not be immediately obvious to attendees. These feedback loops are combined to identify important issues related to the Seventh Principle at GA:

- **Equal, inclusive and diverse participation**
- **Water conservation and quality**
- **Climate change**
- **Solid waste**
- **Health and wellness**

Sustainability Goals

The sustainability team at General Assembly has sought to achieve the following objectives related to the Seventh Principle. Important targets for 2017 are noted for each.

1. Improve overall sustainability at the event

- ✓ Maintained ISO 20121: 2012 system
- ✓ Maintain MeetGreen® Calculator score
- ✗ Completed APEX/ASTM audit of event suppliers (*scoring 61% overall*) and achieved 100% planner compliance with the Standard

2. Reduce environmental footprint in waste, water, energy and emissions

- ✓ Reduced solid waste and landfill and improved waste recovery
- ✗ Reduce carbon dioxide equivalent emissions per participant
- ✗ Reduce water use per participant

3. Measure benefits of sustainable practices

- ✓ Received information from all suppliers

4. Provide and promote sustainable food and beverage at the event

- ✓ Increased number of and hours worked by Green Team volunteers
- ✓ Expanded vegan and vegetarian options
- ✗ Improve ethical, organic and local food sourcing

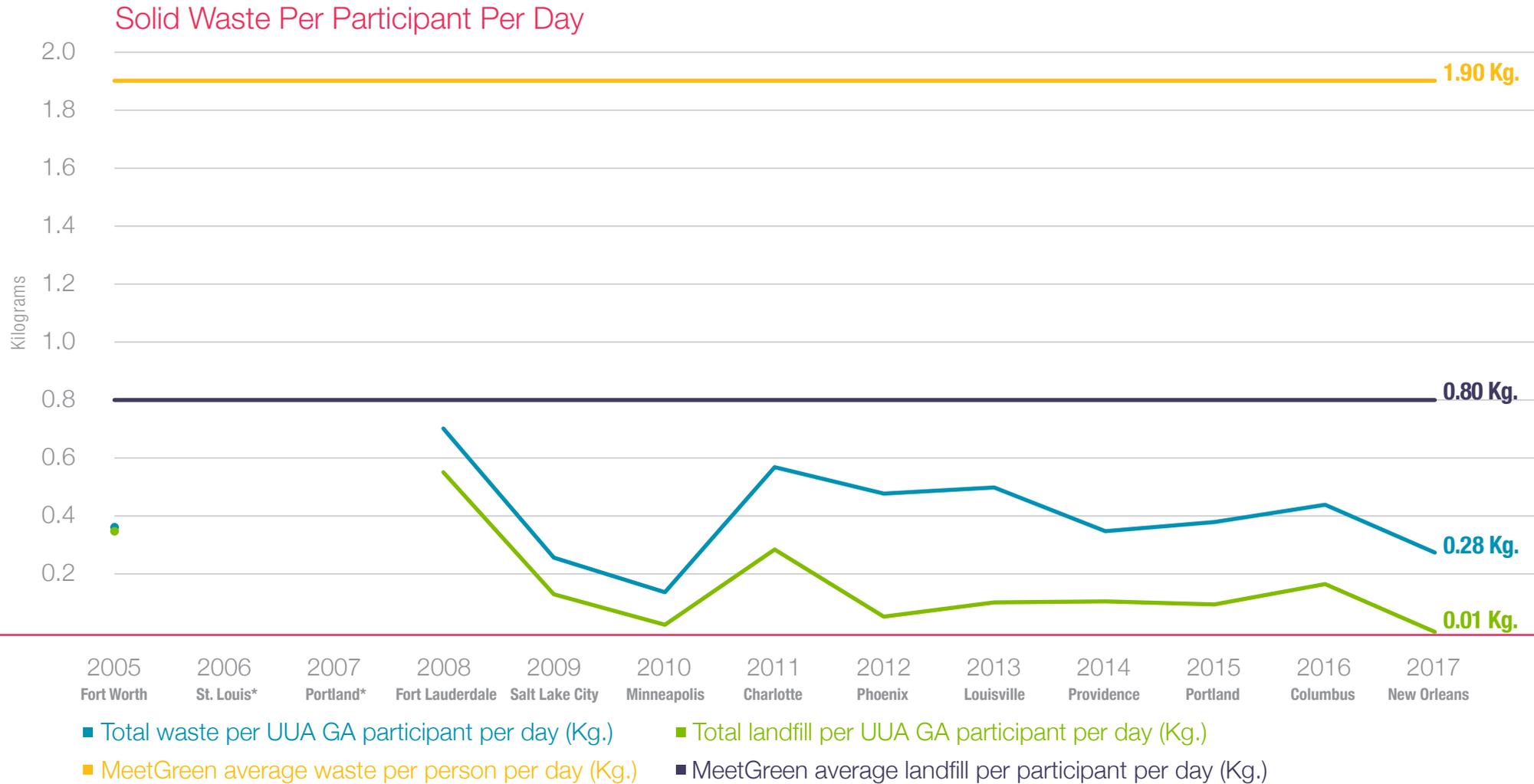
5. Educate attendees in sustainability efforts

- ✓ Improved engagement of UUA staff and local committee
- ✓ Information integrated into social media, website, event app and onsite signage
- ✓ Educated caterers about ethical, sustainable eating

Sustainability Outcomes

Solid Waste Impacts 2005-2017³

Ongoing collection and auditing of waste data is essential to enabling UUA to effectively assess progress against objectives. Waste data gaps evident in 2006 and 2007 have been prevented through contract guidelines that now require measurement.



* Waste weight unavailable

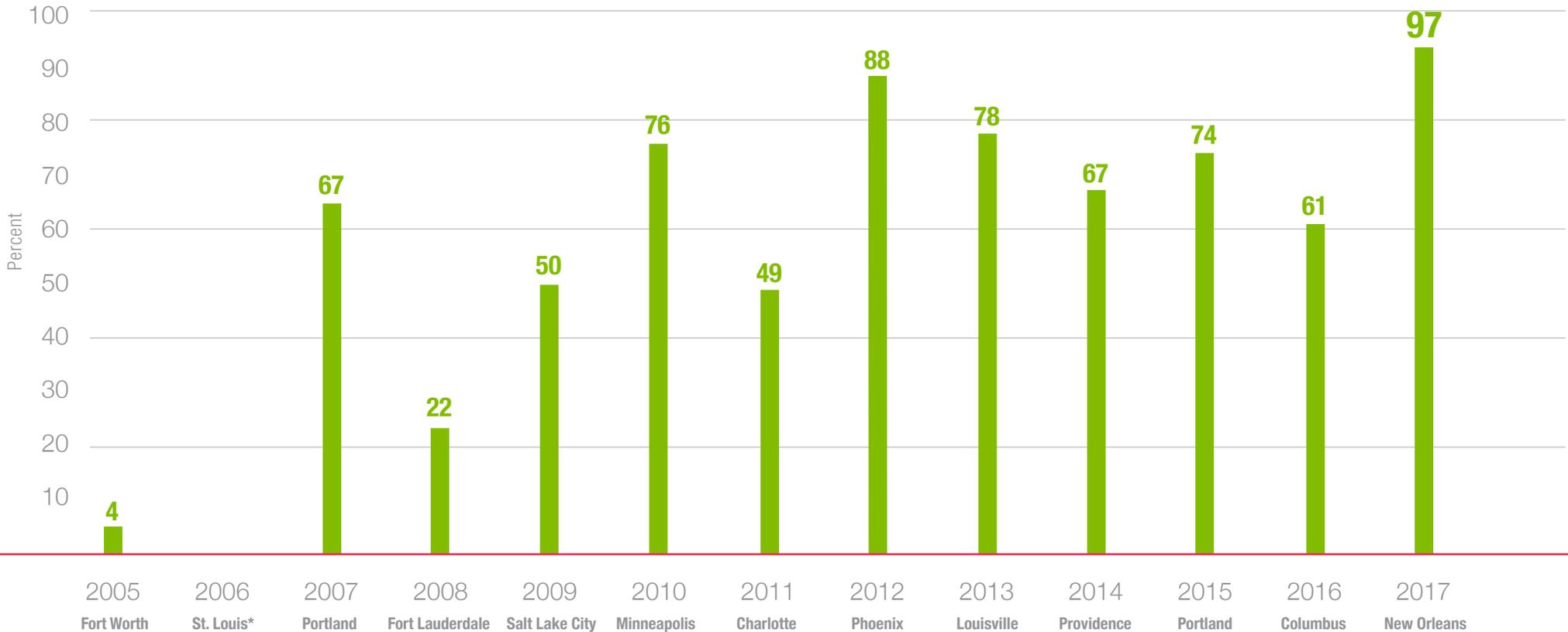


UUA GA's waste footprint is dramatically less than the MeetGreen average per day. GA 2017 in New Orleans achieved the lowest landfill per person to date, unseating Minneapolis in 2010. The event came up third best in terms of total solid waste per person. The MeetGreen average has been derived from audits of 70 conference event waste programs in North America since 2007, including non-UUA events.

Sustainability Outcomes

Solid Waste Impacts 2005-2017³

Solid Waste Recovery Rate From Landfill



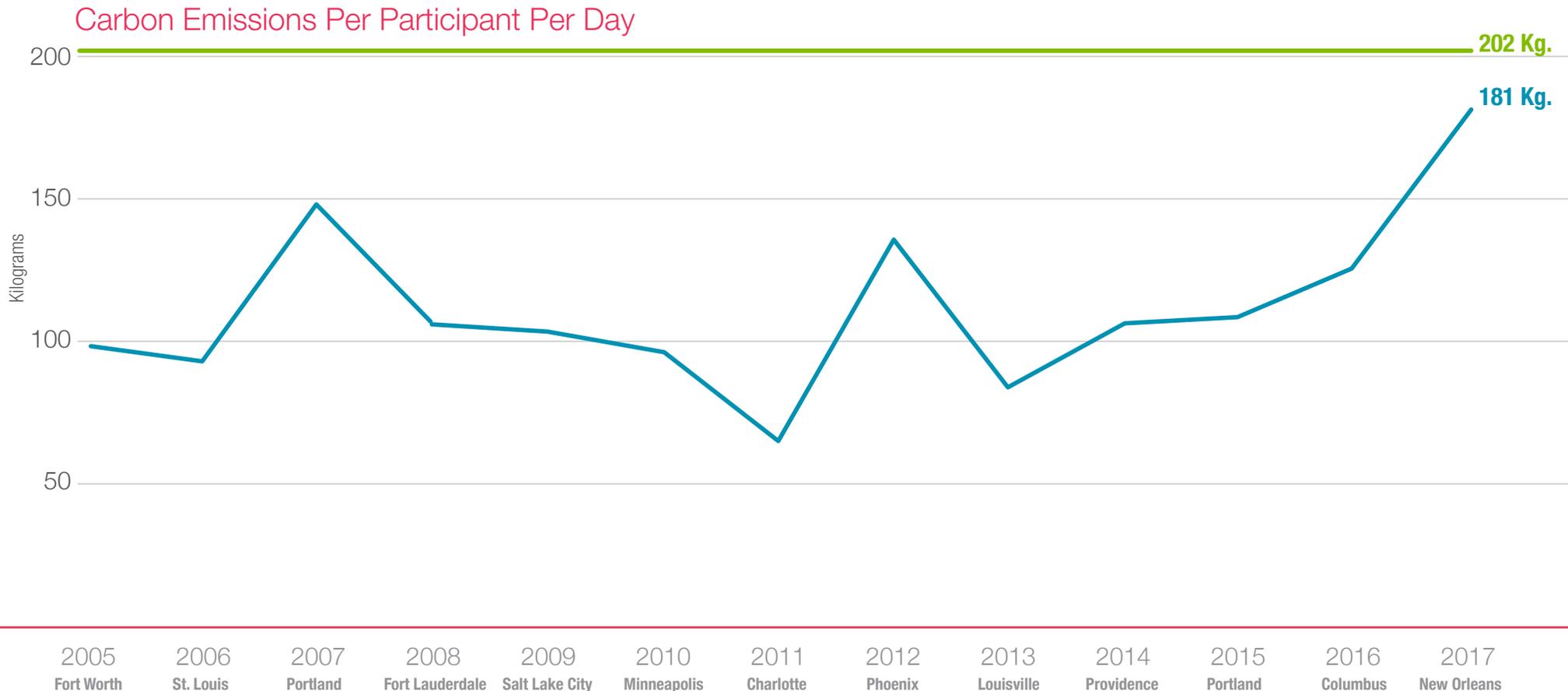
* Diversion rate unavailable



UUA GA event recovery rates have been 10-60% higher than pre-event venue recovery rates every year. Highest recovery rates result where venues compost and involve their staff in hands-on sorting of waste, which was the case in New Orleans, where GA has achieved its best diversion rate to date. Food and beverage service ware from outside of the convention center continues to be the largest source of landfill waste at the event. This year special steps were taken to recycle glass and compost paper towel.

Sustainability Outcomes

Carbon Impacts 2005-2017⁴



- MeetGreen average carbon emissions (CO₂e) per person per day (Kg.)
- Total carbon emissions (CO₂e) per UUA GA participant per day (Kg.)

Air travel accounts for 70-80% of greenhouse gas emissions for GA. Emissions per person tend to be greater where a higher portion of participants fly to the event on short to medium haul flights with multiple connections. This is because shorter flights tend to produce more emissions per passenger mile than longer flights. This was the case with New Orleans where emissions per person were at an all-time high. This reinforces what has been learned in previous years: destination selection has the greatest influence on carbon impacts. However, while meeting on the east coast every year may result in lower emissions due to less air and fewer short-haul travelers, it would unfairly disadvantage UU's located farther afield who would face longer and more expensive travel burdens.

Carbon Offsets

Change the world, one offset at time...

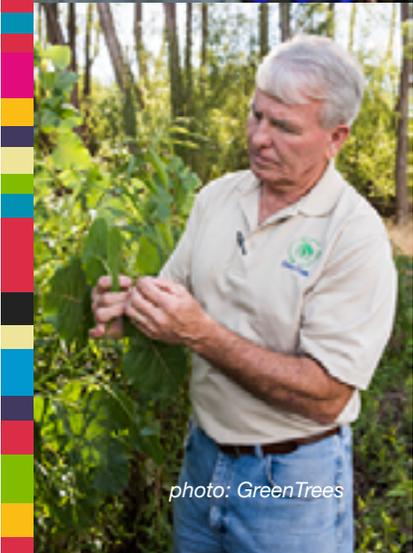
Since 2015, UUA GA has taken responsibility for carbon emissions that cannot be avoided by supporting carbon offset projects. This year offsets purchased supported the:



Truck Stop Electrification Project in Louisiana, helping to provide electricity to truckers during rest periods and eliminate the emissions and air quality concerns from idling. To date, the Louisiana installation has reduced almost 9,400 metric tons of carbon dioxide emissions. UUA's contribution will eliminate 1,000 metric tons of emissions.



LifeStraws™ Carbon for Water Project, which uses carbon financing to sustainably provide millions of people with clean water in Kenya. Over 800,000 LifeStraws® have been distributed through this project to date. The system can filter up to 18,000 liters of water, enough to supply a family of five with microbiologically clean drinking water for three years.



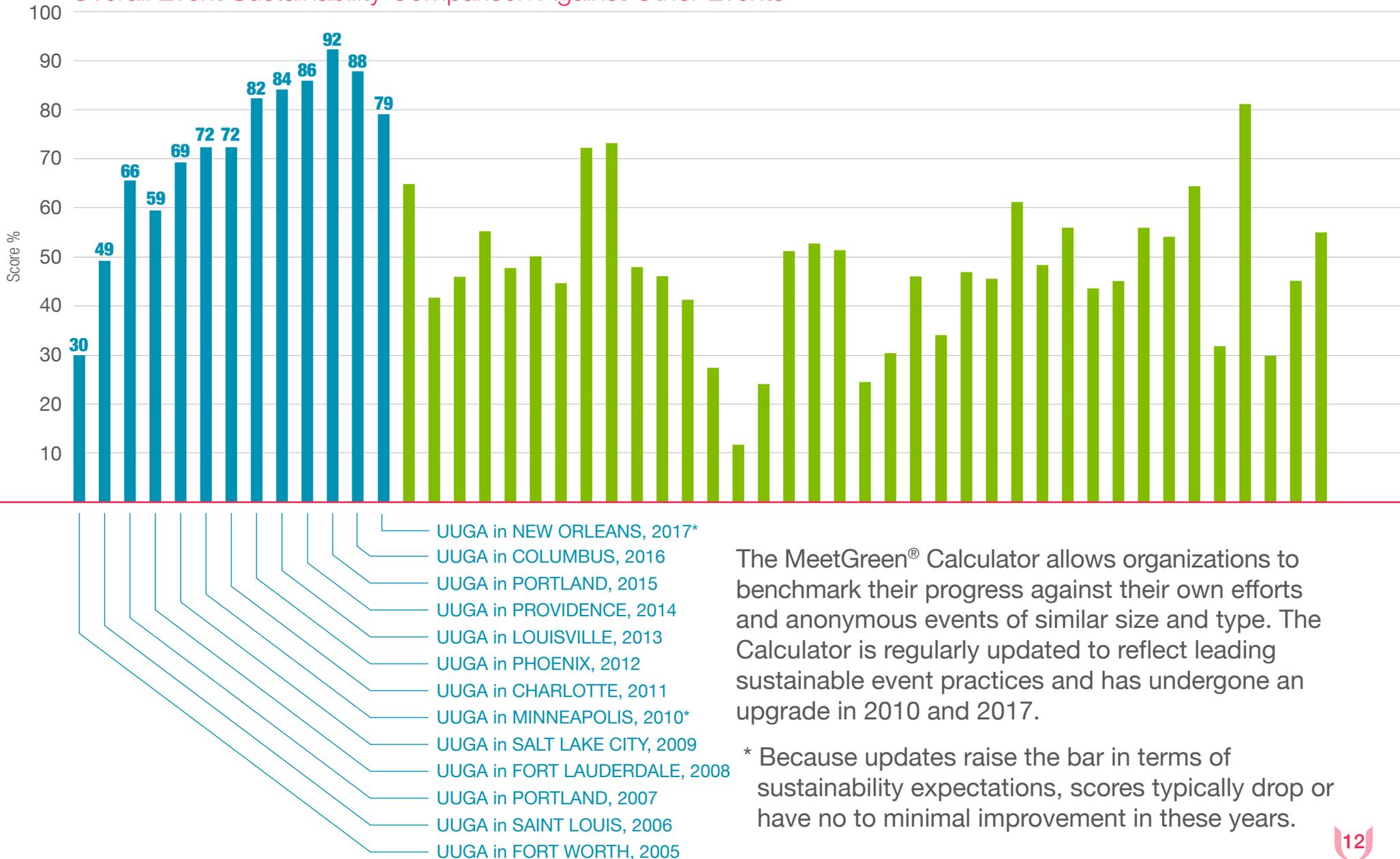
Mississippi Reforestation Project, working to reforest 1 million acres of land along the lower Mississippi River. This region supports habitat for 60% of all birds in North America and the watershed drains 41% of the USA and two Canadian provinces. To date, 450 landowners have become involved in the project and 120,000 acres have been planted with 42 million tree seedlings.

Sustainability Outcomes

MeetGreen® Calculator 2005-2017

The MeetGreen® Calculator measures overall sustainable event performance. This graph shows sustainability scores for General Assembly as well as scores for other similarly sized events that have been entered into the Calculator system.

Overall Event Sustainability Comparison Against Other Events



The MeetGreen® Calculator allows organizations to benchmark their progress against their own efforts and anonymous events of similar size and type. The Calculator is regularly updated to reflect leading sustainable event practices and has undergone an upgrade in 2010 and 2017.

* Because updates raise the bar in terms of sustainability expectations, scores typically drop or have no to minimal improvement in these years.

Sustainability Outcomes

MeetGreen® Calculator 2005-2017

The MeetGreen® Calculator also allows for a more in-depth analysis based on thirteen sustainability categories. Scores are shown for all GA's below, in chronological order, where the left-most line represents 2005.



MeetGreen® Calculator updates in 2017 have added new assessment categories, including Agency and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Project sections. In addition, the former Exhibits section has been divided into two categories: Exhibitors and Sponsors and Exposition Contractor. These changes afford more opportunities to credit good, sustainable practices in more flexible ways. It also ensures high-scoring users are assessed against leading sustainable practices as expectations advance.

Service Projects

Change the world, one act at a time

Every year GA enables opportunities for UUs to be of service to communities that host the event. This year several meaningful opportunities were organized in New Orleans.

GA attendees were invited to participate in hands-on service projects at or within a short distance of the convention center that benefitted over 1,000 persons. These included:

The Big Easy / Real Life: An Immersion Experience

More than 80 people attended a pre-experience workshop and 48 participated in this unique day of service. Volunteers from across the country worked in four teams, on four houses, in four distinct New Orleans neighborhoods. Two houses were for families still trying to return home nearly 12 years after Hurricane Katrina. The other two were "Opportunity Houses" — blighted properties that were being refurbished for eligible first-time homeowners who want to return to New Orleans. Gulf Coast Volunteers for the Long Haul and Starr King School of Ministry worked with SBP, a local agency doing recovery and rebuilding work since Katrina. Work included installing flooring, painting, finishing ("punch") work, tiling, and mudding and taping drywall.

The Red Flame Hunters and the Flaming Chalice Keepers Create!

Members of the unique all-youth Black Mardi Gras Indian Tribe shared the history of their art and celebrations, and demonstrated how they create their performances and costumes rich with beadwork and feathers. This experience trained UUs— "Flaming Chalice Keepers" for this day— to sew beadwork, to assemble bead patches into one creation, to lead chants, and to move as the "Hunters" move. A beaded globe featuring UU and Mardi Gras Indians' symbols emerged from the collective work.



photo: Starr King



photo: Sandra Weir

Service Projects

Change the world, one act at a time



Ubuntu Village and UUs, Embracing Youth Away in Juvenile Detention

Ubuntu Village is an organization providing services for incarcerated and formerly incarcerated youth and their families. This experience included a presentation in which Village leaders described the group's work. UUs assembled care packages for the 48 youth currently in pretrial detention in the City of New Orleans, preparing notes of encouragement to be included in the care packages. The UUs then traveled by bus to the detention center to meet the youth one-on-one and delivered the care packages.

“Days for Girls” Sustainable Menstrual Hygiene Kits Fight Poverty and Isolation

An assembly line of 135 UUA volunteers packaged 400 menstrual hygiene kits to distribute to girls in New Orleans and around the world. These deluxe kits contain reusable liners and donated soap that enable recipients to live fuller lives, overcoming isolation that can keep them from social, educational and employment opportunities. At least 100 participants also attended a workshop covering the mission of Days for Girls. \$2,400 in UUA funds helped make this the largest kit assembly event the chapter has completed to date.

Families and Friends of Louisiana’s Incarcerated Children

The Service Project collection taken at the Sunday Morning Worship during General Assembly 2017 benefitted the Families and Friends of Louisiana's Incarcerated Children (FFLIC). The collection and matching funds from the Youth Justice Funding Collaborative totaled \$105,214. The mission of the FFLIC is to create a better life for all of Louisiana's youth, especially those involved in or targeted by the juvenile justice system. FFLIC was also a partner in a drop-in service project to prepare messages that will be sent to incarcerated persons.



Standards Compliance

ISO 20121: 2012

UUA GA is planned according to ISO 20121, the international standard for event sustainability. The event is first party-audited to comply with the following requirements of the standard:

- Event sustainability policy created.
- Sustainability principles identified.
- Sustainability stakeholders consulted so that issues can be identified.
- Sustainability objectives identified, including key performance indicators and targets to evaluate success.
- Management systems in place that support objectives, including procurement, human resource management, budgeting, communications and documentation control.
- Action plan to execute against objectives.
- Auditing and measurement process in place to drive continuous improvement.

APEX/ASTM Environmentally Sustainable Event Standard

UUA GA has attempted to comply with the APEX/ASTM Standard promoted by the Event Industry Council (EIC). This standard was adopted in 2012 and is currently under review. The standard verifies planner and supplier compliance with the following:

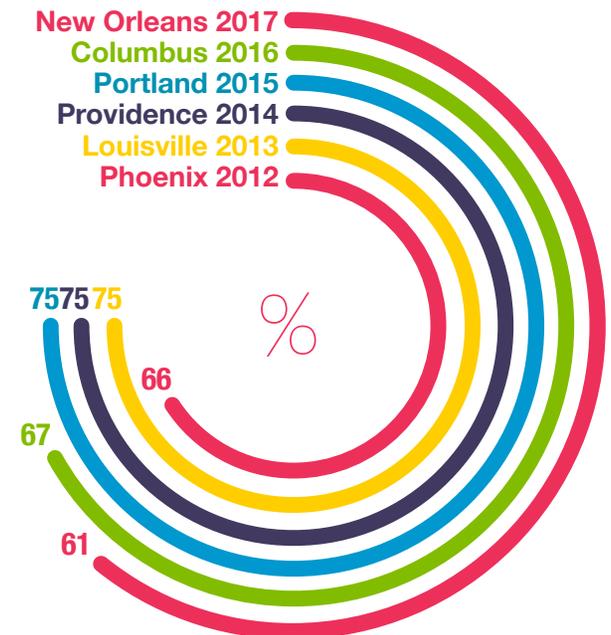
Best practice categories

- 1 Staff Management & Environmental Policy
- 2 Communication
- 3 Waste Management
- 4 Energy
- 5 Air Quality
- 6 Water
- 7 Procurement
- 8 Community Partners

Logistical areas

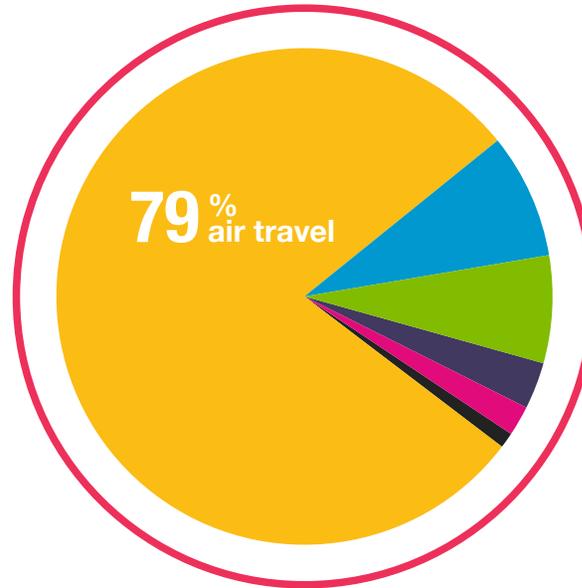
- 1 Audio Visual / Production
- 2 Destination Selection
- 3 Meeting Venue
- 4 Accommodations
- 5 Exhibits
- 6 Onsite Office
- 7 Communications
- 8 Food and Beverage
- 9 Transportation

UUA has maintained 100% compliance with Planner requirements since 2015. Supplier compliance, more difficult to control, has been assessed as follows:



UUA General Assembly New Orleans 2017

100% of carbon emissions offset
3,693 metric tons



Emissions came from the following sources:

79% air travel

8% accommodation

7% venue

3% automotive and other non-air travel

2% meals

<1% freight

Each event participant at GA:

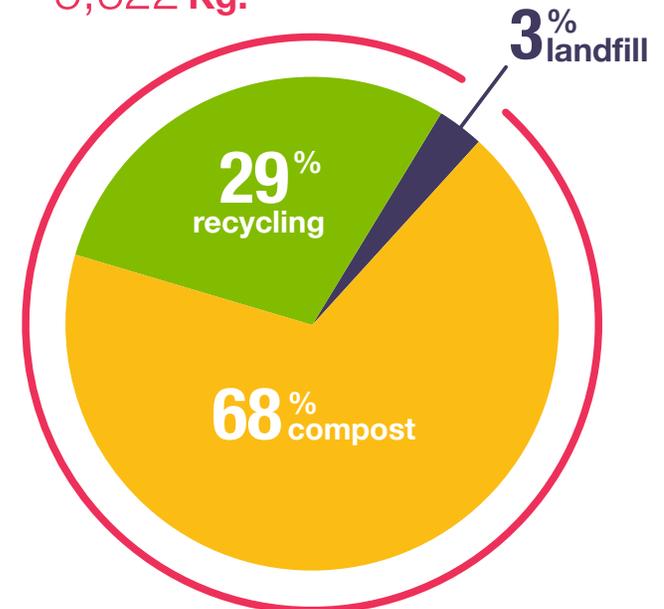
Generated **280 grams of solid waste**
(including landfill, recycling and compost) per day, the weight of
22 empty water bottles⁵

Produced **10 grams of landfill**
per day, the weight
of two nickels

Emitted **181 Kg. of carbon dioxide equivalent emissions**
enough to fill
18,100 party balloons⁶

Used **30 L of water**
enough to fill
120 cups

97% of solid waste recovered from landfill
5,622 Kg.



Top ways GA participants engaged in sustainability⁷:

93% **sorted waste** at the convention center

76% **participated** in green efforts at hotels

70% brought and **reused a water bottle**

Sustainable purchasing:

54,443 square feet of **carpet reused**
enough to cover **30 volleyball courts**

25% **post-industrial recycled content** carpet used in the exhibit hall

100% **recycled content lanyard** and **PVC-free** name badge

0 **signs** sent to landfill

27 **Green Team volunteers** provided
430 **hours** of sustainability education onsite

5 **community service projects** benefitted over
1,000 **persons**

134 **MT of carbon emissions** were avoided by enabling
288 **remote participants** to join GA from their homes. Equal to saving
310 **barrels of oil.**

UUA General Assembly New Orleans 2017

Sustainability Action Steps

While UUA seeks to improve sustainability year-over-year, of equal importance is advocating for the host destination to advance their own practices. To achieve sustainability targets, UUA focused on the following sustainability priorities in New Orleans, which are ordered according to steps that achieved top, moderate and limited success.

TOP SUCCESS

Organic Waste Composting

The New Orleans Ernest N. Morial Convention Center implemented a comprehensive back and front of house composting program for GA. The Composting Network took all organic waste from GA to their composting facility just outside of New Orleans. Established in 2010 by local residents, The Composting Network's goal is to help reduce food waste in Louisiana by collecting food scraps from local residents, businesses, schools and universities, and restaurants.

Compostable Food Service Ware

All food outlets in the convention center, with the exception of Starbucks, provided certified compostable service ware that was recovered through the onsite composting program. This included boxed lunches that were needed for select functions.

Back of House Sorting

For the first time since GA 2012 in Phoenix, the convention center operated a material recovery sort back of house for GA. This sort line supplemented volunteer efforts to educate attendees to properly recycle and compost waste. Venue staff combed through every bag of recyclables, compost and landfill to ensure participants were recovering as much as possible, and correcting where needed.



TOP SUCCESS

Green Team Volunteers

27 volunteers provided over 400 hours of waste education onsite at GA. Their efforts were critical to achieving a high recovery from landfill rate for the event. In particular, Green Team volunteer deployment at the Witness event helped improve recovery of beverage containers and paper.

Recyclable Graphics

UUA GA has eliminated disposable PVC and foamcore graphics, both of which are non-recyclable. The event uses reusable signage with generic branding, the majority of which is in its third year of use. Temporary signage, including registration kick panels, meter boards and exhibit hall arches, is made from certified, recycled content cardboard, which is recycled post-event.

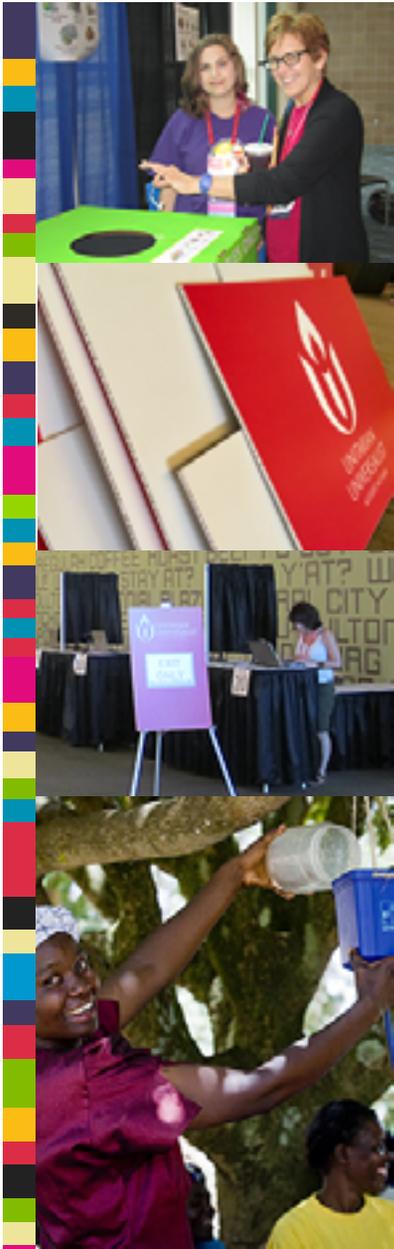
Electronic Voting

Presidential elections were executed using a fully electronic voting system for the first time. This eliminated paper waste and multiple balloting. In addition, the three candidates running for President of the UUA were provided with sustainability guidelines for their onsite campaigns.

Event Carbon Offsets

Since 2015 UUA has taken responsibility for unavoidable carbon emissions by measuring and offsetting. The organization aims to select a mix of offset projects that are long-term, locally relevant and social justice-oriented.

One metric ton of carbon emissions is avoided for each person who participates in GA remotely.



MODERATE SUCCESS

UUA Staff and Affiliated Group Engagement

UUA GA includes many events that are not directly organized by GA staff, but by different departments and affiliated groups within UUA. MeetGreen delivered a special briefing for these teams to educate them about sustainability efforts, including specific action steps to take. This also enabled the teams to give MeetGreen feedback on any special needs related to sustainability. While engagement with all teams is advancing, timely and complete involvement from UUSC and UUMA could improve MeetGreen's ability to address sustainability concerns. Green Team volunteers were on-hand to assist with last-minute efforts to support waste recovery for these groups.

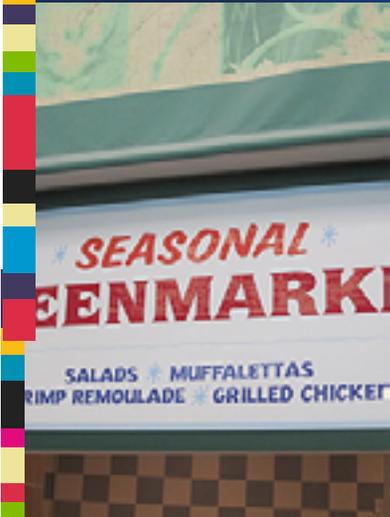
Hotel Recycling and Offset Programs

While all hotels signed sustainability clauses in their contracts, it proved very difficult to ensure compliance with contract requirements. UUA was most successful in improving hotel recycling and carbon offset programs. Seven of nine hotels expanded cardboard recycling to include plastic, paper and metal. These same hotels also purchased offsets to cover 100% of guest rooms booked for UUA. Two hotels: The OMNI and The Blake were non-cooperative with sustainability requests.

Vegan and Vegetarian Meal Options

UUA GA staff took special effort to expand vegan and vegetarian options at convention center food outlets. Initial menus providing only three side-salad options were expanded to include seven meal-size options, with vegan protein. While UUA lobbying on this catering topic experienced success, efforts to improve organic, local and seasonal fare was not possible without dramatically increasing food prices. This increased the risk of food waste due to the proximity of the cheap and convenient Riverwalk Food Court, just outside the convention center.

If everyone at GA opted for one vegetarian meal each day of the event it would eliminate 71 metric tons of carbon emissions. That's equal to planting over 1,800 trees⁸!



MODERATE SUCCESS

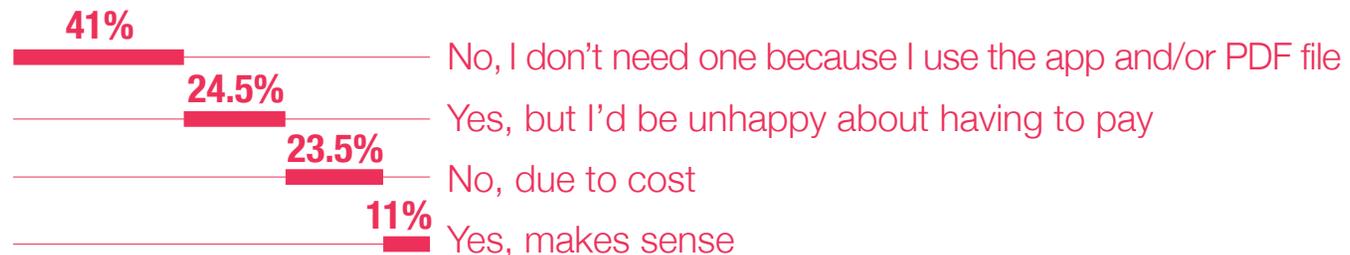
Beverage Refills

Beverage containers are the most significant source of attendee waste at GA. Attendees are encouraged to bring reusable containers for drinks to help curb cup waste. Adoption is very high for water bottles. However, during planning it was learned that refilling personal mugs is counter to venue policy. Centerplate was able to modify this policy to pilot a limited refill program at venue concessions for non-specialty hot drinks after significant lobbying by UUA.

If everyone at GA refilled their water bottle it would conserve one gallon of water per person. That's enough to overflow 50 bathtubs over one GA⁹!

Event Mobile Application

UUA continues to urge attendees to use the mobile event application to get most up-to-date information about GA pre-event and onsite. Use is improving; however, some event participants still need and prefer paper-based communications. To balance the trade-off, these items are printed on recycled content paper. GA participants were asked if printed programs were not available for everyone, if they would purchase a copy for \$12. They responded¹⁰:



LIMITED SUCCESS

Ethical and Organic Eating

Since 2011, MeetGreen has shared UUA's Ethical Eating Statement of Conscience with any caterer servicing UUA GA. In addition, staff have attempted to learn the extent to which caterers comply with aspects of the Statement, and urge them to improve efforts. While MeetGreen was able to verify caterer workplace health and safety programs and sustainable seafood purchasing, Centerplate was unable to increase purchasing of organic, fairly traded, local or seasonal items. MeetGreen estimates ingredients meeting these criteria to be less than 10% of spend, compared to 25% or more at previous GA's.

Starbucks Coffee Operations

The Starbucks outlet operating in the convention center presented several challenges to sustainability. In particular: unwillingness to use compostable service ware and refill personal beverage containers. While UUA was successful in lobbying for limited refills at Starbucks, this outlet combined with polystyrene packaging from the Riverwalk Food Court outside the convention center, was the greatest source of landfill at the event.

Air Conditioning

Every year complaints are received about air conditioning at GA and how energy use for this contributes to climate change. This is a particularly important topic given climate justice activities within UUA and New Orleans' vulnerability to flooding. Organizers did increase temperature set points to 72F pre-event in an attempt to prevent discomfort. Fan use was further reduced once the building was fully occupied. The cooler temperatures within the building were particularly pronounced given the hot and humid weather resulting from Tropical Storm Cindy. While complaints were received throughout the first day of GA they did taper off after both steps were taken.

General Assembly landfill was comprised almost entirely of disposable food service ware, including over 14,000 disposable coffee cups¹¹.



UUA General Assembly New Orleans 2017

Vendor Best Practice Summary

UUA contracts with suppliers to implement sustainability for GA. In addition to contracts, voluntary best practice may be requested. Contract requirements and best practice requests are audited for compliance by MeetGreen. The following list notes practices that were in place and gaps that were evident. Acceptance and conformity with practices contribute significantly to MeetGreen® Calculator scores.

	Sustainability policy	Sustainability certification	Staff trained in sustainability policy	Equal opportunity and anti-discrimination program	Workplace health and safety program
Agency (MeetGreen)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
CVB (Visit New Orleans)	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓
Accommodation (9 contracted hotels)	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓
Venue (Ernst N. Morial New Orleans Convention Center)	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓
Catering (Centerplate)	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓
Transportation	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Exhibit Contractor (Heritage)	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓
Audio visual (CMI Communications)	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓
Communication (Printer)	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
Communication (Event App)	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓

Planning Agency (MeetGreen)

- ✗ Provided local staff.
- ✓ Created or contributed to the event sustainability plan.
- ✓ Followed through on onsite commitments.
- ✓ Provided requested sustainability metrics.

Convention and Visitor Bureau

- ✓ Recommended local suppliers with sustainability credentials.

Accommodation (Nine contracted hotels)

- ✓ Efficient lighting in public areas, guest rooms, staff areas is either 100% installed or a scheduled plan to retrofit within two years exists.
- ✓ Renewable energy purchased or emissions offset 100% (for event).
- ✓ Efficient plumbing fixtures, including public and guest rooms sinks, toilets, urinals, is either 100% installed or a scheduled plan to retrofit within two years exists.
- ✓ Reuse program for towels and bed linen for the duration of UUA guest stays.
- ✗ Rainwater or greywater capture and recycling program.
- ✗ Native plant landscaping.
- ✗ Building and sidewalks are not pressure-washed more than once per year.
- ✓ Paperless check-in and check-out.
- ✓ Recycling program throughout hotel, including a visible program for UUA guests that captures paper, plastic, metals and glass.
- ✗ Composting program throughout hotel, including a visible program for UUA guests.
- ✗ Bulk bathroom amenity dispensers.
- ✓ Individual bathroom amenities collected for donation or recycling.
- ✓ Reusable or locally compostable or recyclable cups in guest rooms (hot and cold).
- ✗ Green-certified cleaners.
- ✓ Minimum 30% post-consumer recycled content bathroom tissues and office paper.
- ✗ Fairly traded coffee and tea in guest rooms.
- ✓ Bottled water refill station provided to UUA guests.
- ✓ No daily newspaper drops to guest rooms for UUA guests.
- ✓ Scent-free guest rooms and lobbies during event.
- ✓ Communicated sustainability practices to UUA guests.
- ✓ Participated in human trafficking awareness program.

Venue (Ernst N. Morial New Orleans Convention Center)

- ✓ Provided an event environmental footprint report.
- ✓ Efficient lighting in public areas, meeting rooms, exhibit halls and staff areas is either 100% installed or a scheduled plan to retrofit within two years exists.
- ✓ 100% of event space heating, ventilation and air conditioning is centrally controlled for efficiency.
- ✓ Heating, ventilation, air-conditioning and lighting adjusted to low-power levels during move-in and move-out while still meeting work safe requirements.
- ✓ Renewable energy purchased or emissions offset 100% (for event).
- ✓ Efficient plumbing fixtures, including sinks, toilets, urinals, is either 100% installed or a scheduled plan to retrofit within two years exists.
- ✗ Rainwater or greywater capture and recycling program.
- ✗ Native plant landscaping.
- ✗ Building and sidewalks are not pressure washed more than once per year.
- ✓ Recycling program throughout venue, able to divert all event materials.
- ✓ Composting program throughout venue, able to divert pre- and post-consumer food waste and service ware.
- ✓ Green-certified cleaners.
- ✓ Minimum 30% post-consumer recycled content bathroom tissues and office paper.
- ✓ Drinking fountains available.
- ✓ Communicated sustainability programs to UUA and UUA guests.

Communication (Printer)

- ✓ Printed items locally and reduced print quantities.
- ✓ Recycled content paper used.
- ✗ Eliminated gloss, laminates, varnishes on print items.
- ✗ Reduced packaging on printed items.

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Vendor Best Practice Summary

Caterer (Centerplate)

- ✗ Provided food that met all sustainability criteria (i.e. organic, seasonal, local, etc.).
- ✗ Measured sustainability criteria for food purchased.
- ✓ Use water-efficient equipment or has a scheduled plan to update to efficient equipment within two years.
- ✓ Provided sugar, cream and coffee condiments in bulk or compostable packaging.
- ✗ Provided sauces and dressing in bulk or compostable containers.
- ✓ Service ware was either reusable or 100% compostable (exception: Starbucks).
- ✓ Refilled hot and cold beverage containers for UUA guests.
- ✓ Water refill stations provided (no individual disposable bottles given away unless purchased at retail outlets).
- ✓ Reusable tablecloths and centerpieces.
- ✓ 30% post-consumer recycled content paper products.
- ✓ Provided vegan, vegetarian, cultural/religious meals, gluten-free, kosher and other special meal options.
- ✓ Reduced use of ice.
- ✓ Recycling and composting program in place throughout operations.
- ✓ Food donation program in place.
- ✓ Green-certified cleaners.
- ✓ Communicated sustainability programs to UUA and UUA guests.

Exhibit Contractor (Heritage)

- ✓ Carpet is reused and contains recycled content (25% post-industrial).
- ✓ Graphics are not landfilled and disposable graphics are made with recycled content cardboard (no disposable PVC).
- ✓ Furnishings are reused.
- ✓ Lighting is efficient and minimally used.
- ✓ Waste bins are only provided on request and materials are sorted for recycling.
- ✓ Exhibitor kits provided online only.
- ✗ Minimum of 75% of materials sourced locally.
- ✓ Minimum of 75% of shipments consolidated.
- ✓ Reused packaging, reduced use of plastic film and eliminated polystyrene packaging.
- ✗ Alternatives to vinyl tabletops provided.
- ✓ Reused (downcycled) vinyl tabletops.
- ✓ No idling.
- ✓ Communicate sustainability programs to UUA, exhibitors and labor.

Audio Visual (CMI Communications)

- ✓ Resells or donates usable equipment.
- ✓ Has a verifiable recycling program for e-waste.
- ✓ Has a registry of hazardous substances that ensures equipment and disposal of it is properly handled.
- ✓ Complies with venue environmental practices.
- ✓ Reduces paper use.
- ✓ Powers down non-critical equipment when not needed.
- ✓ Minimum of 50% of lighting, sound and projection equipment is efficient.
- ✓ Reused staging, backdrops and furnishings.
- ✗ Sets verified free of harmful chemicals.
- ✗ Minimum of 75% of materials sourced locally.
- ✓ Minimum of 75% of shipments consolidated.
- ✓ Reused packaging, reduced use of plastic film and eliminated polystyrene packaging.

Recommendations

The following items have been identified as new and continued priorities to address event sustainability issues at General Assembly 2018 in Kansas City:

UUA Objectives	2018 Recommendations
1. Equal, Inclusive and Diverse Participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess the Green Team experience and training for inclusivity.
2. Water Conservation and Quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess capabilities of the venue to service water bottle refills and proactively plan to address any limitations. GA participants were asked if they would be willing to pay more for registration so that water bottle refilling stations could be provided¹²: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 46% indicated they would pay \$5 more • 46% indicated they would pay \$0 more • 8% indicated yes, no matter the cost • Document standard sustainability specifications for print items to ensure no chlorine or glossy varnishes are used and that post-consumer recycled content papers are selected.
3. Climate Change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) management practice at event venue and adjust for efficiency and attendee comfort if necessary. • Include messaging about HVAC in the event mobile application, walk-in slides and comments in Plenary. • Identify a carbon offset program of benefit to host city and state.
4. Solid Waste	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce organic waste composting at event venue. • Purchase food and beverage service ware in accordance with onsite waste management program. • Work with hotels to use a to-go coffee cup that can be recovered at the event venue. • Reinforce the expectation of sustainable packaging with all vendors, particularly local vendors that change year-to-year, such as printers. • Identify alternative material for exhibit hall table tops, which are not recyclable but down-cycled into riser covering.
5. Health and Wellness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure availability of vegetarian and vegan meal options. • Educate event caterer about Ethical Eating. • Measure and improve sustainable and ethical food purchasing by the event caterer. • Provide onsite messaging to participants to improve transparency about food sourcing.
6. Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include stronger incentives and penalties in the sustainability clause of hotel contracts. • Improve process to involve partner organizations booking space for special events at GA in sustainability program.

Endnotes

1. Based on baseline solid waste measured in 2008, including landfill, recycling, compost and donations.
2. Based on baseline landfill measured in 2008.
3. Waste data: Includes all materials discarded by UUA staff, vendors and event participant at event venues, from move-in through move-out of General Assembly. This may include materials that are recycled, composted, donated, landfilled, incinerated, and/or used as waste-to-energy. It does not include material discards at hotel sites, or non-UUA events, unless otherwise noted. Waste generated in the planning process (i.e. at UUA headquarters and during site visits) is also excluded. Data is direct reported by waste haulers and audited by MeetGreen through onsite observation and comparison with historical data. Waste disposal sites are visited to verify follow-through on actual recovery. Recovery from landfill includes materials that are composted, recycled and donated. Landfill and incineration are not calculated as recovered waste.
4. Carbon data: Is calculated by TheCarbonFund.org in collaboration with MeetGreen, using data provided by UUA (registration) and vendors (freight and bus fuel, building energy use, landfill). The following emissions sources are considered in-scope for UUA GA:
 - Event space energy for UUA-functions (convention venues and hotel event space).
 - Hotel guest room energy for UUA guest rooms booked in the UUA housing block.
 - UUA-freight, including items shipped from UUA headquarters and by the exhibit contractor.
 - UUA-provided shuttle buses (if used).
 - Event participant travel to and from the event by air, train, bus, transit and/or personal vehicle, including staff, vendors, speakers and all participants.
 - Landfill.
5. Assumes one empty water bottle weight 12.7 grams. Using International Bottle Water Association data for the water footprint of a disposable bottle, 2011.
6. It takes approximately 10 grams of carbon dioxide equivalents to fill one party balloon. Source: Meeting Change, April 2011.
7. Based on a survey sample of 952 persons.
8. Assumes one beef entrée substituted by a tofu entrée for 5,000 attendees, 5 days. Using data provided by A Meat Eaters Guide to Climate Change, 2011. Carbon equivalency sourced from USEPA Greenhouse Gas Calculator, 2017.
9. Assumes two 500 ml bottles per person, per day. 5,000 attendees, 5 days. Using International Bottle Water Association data for the water footprint of a disposable bottle, 2011. Assumes one bathtub holds approximately 100 gallons of water.
10. Based on a survey sample of 956 persons.
11. Based on disposable cup and lid weight of 14 grams combined.
12. Based on a survey sample of 930 persons.

Thank You!

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Destination Partners: Rachel Avery, New Orleans Convention and Visitors Bureau

Hotel Partners: Doubletree by Hilton New Orleans, Embassy by Hilton New Orleans Convention Center, The Blake Hotel, Hampton Inn and Suites New Orleans Convention Center, Hilton Garden Inn New Orleans Convention Center, Hilton New Orleans Riverside, Loews New Orleans Hotel, Hyatt Place New Orleans Convention Center, Omni Riverfront Hotel

All photos: UUA GA Green team, MeetGreen, unless otherwise noted

We welcome your feedback. Please contact jsneegas@uua.org or operations@meetgreen.com with questions and ideas.