



CASE STUDY:

LEADING IN SUSTAINABILITY, ATTRACTING CUSTOMERS

Convention Centers are Creating Successful
Environmental Programs in Dining, Energy and More

Sustainability and environmental programs have become increasingly important for today's convention centers. Many convention centers are now stepping up their green practices, driven largely by consumer demand. Their efforts include a variety of projects — from recycling to LED lighting to renewable energy.

The Anaheim Convention Center, for example, has perfected several areas of sustainable practices and found that along with being great for the environment, its wide-ranging sustainability program is great for business, too. It's also saving money thanks to energy upgrades and waste and water conservation programs.

Several other convention centers, including Pennsylvania Convention Center and Phoenix Convention Center, are also finding support for sustainability initiatives through their partnerships with Aramark. By working on sustainability issues with an experienced partner, convention centers gain several key advantages, including knowledge of best practices in implementing a wide range of environmental initiatives, a built-in culture of sustainability, connections to the right organizations, relationships with ecologically focused vendors, and a robust community service template.

ANAHEIM CONVENTION CENTER

CREATES MODEL SUSTAINABILITY PROGRAM

The Anaheim Convention Center is the largest convention facility on the west coast. Every year, it serves meals to over 1.2 million visitors. This broad exposure provides both a responsibility and an opportunity to operate a multi-faceted sustainability program.

In 2004, the center conducted an in-depth environmental gap analysis to study the convention center's ecological footprint and create a plan with specific goals and initiatives, primarily focused on foodservice operations. With the support of its partner, Aramark, the convention center achieved most of its goals within the first year of the plan, including reduction of waste sent to landfills, sustainable menu development, energy savings, sourcing more sustainable office supplies and cleaning products, and improving communication and education.

In 2011, the center added an environmental internship program and broadened its focus to include whole animal sourcing and purchasing, sustainable beverage programs, an on-site recycling center, a green roof and community food donation.

“ We consider our organization to be a leader in our industry in providing sustainable products and practices for our customers and within our community.”

— Spokesperson, Anaheim Convention Center



The sustainability initiative program created by Aramark at Anaheim Convention Center includes these programs:

Sustainable Food and Beverage Service

The convention center committed to a farm-to-fork mission that includes crafting World Healthy® menus, stressing seasonality and locally grown food. The World Healthy stamp designates certifications such as organic and humanely raised products.

Central to this program is support for nearby farmers, ranchers and fisheries. Aramark helped build strong relationships with local family farmers operating within 120 miles who are committed to sustainable agriculture of fruits, vegetables, cheeses, eggs and meats. The center also partners with the Monterey Bay Aquarium's Seafood Watch program, the first convention center in the country to obtain this recognition.

The sustainable beverage achievements include everything from water to wine. The center partnered with Arrowhead for bottled water that comes from local natural springs located just 80 miles away and uses recyclable rPET bottles. The center participates in Trinity Oaks's "buy a bottle, plant a tree" program, which plants a tree in Brazilian forests for every bottle of house wine purchased. The facility's coffee is Rain Forest Alliance and Fair Trade Certificated.

Other sustainable achievements the center and Aramark have implemented include using recyclable, natural and reusable items to replace water-intense linen and one-time-use products, using 100% recycled unbleached napkins at the concession stands and converting from petroleum-based disposables to renewable-resource products.

THE ANAHEIM CONVENTION CENTERS SUSTAINABLE FOODSERVICES PROGRAM'S ACHIEVEMENTS INCLUDE:

- Reduces food travel mileage by over 500,000 miles per year
- Gains savings in local sourcing
- Supports the local businesses, communities and municipalities
- Hosts the annual Natural Products Expo West Conference
- Invited guests to events such as The Organic Summit, All Things Organic in Chicago, and Green Meetings International in Vancouver

Energy Conservation

Complementing the convention center's investments in the first and largest grid-connected solar power generating system in Anaheim, the Aramark team worked with the center to achieve deep energy savings that contributed to the facility's LEED Gold certification in 2010. It is the largest convention center on the west coast to receive the designation at that time. It supplies approximately 145,000-kilowatt-hours of energy annually to the local community, which is enough to power 27 homes per year. The center's full operational policy delivers multifaceted energy savings from HVAC to lighting to refrigeration.



Waste Stream Management

Cardboard packers reduce wet trash hauls and divert one ton of cardboard each month. Bailers divert about 450 pounds of PET plastic from the waste stream. Paper receptacles manage separation. Used kitchen oil is made into vehicle biofuel. Minor modifications to chemical selections in wastewater resulted in greater efficiency and toxicity reduction.

Green Zone Initiative

In 2011, the center constructed the “green zone” to compost and recycle glass, aluminum and electronic waste. It also installed food-waste recycling machines to convert leftover food scraps into a humus-rich soil amendment. The center converts 500 pounds of wet waste into 100 pounds of compost daily for the community. Over 33,000 pounds a month are diverted from the landfill.

Green Roof Initiative

The center created an organic herb garden on a reinforced roof above its box office. The roof garden also reduces heat and air conditioning in the box office. Among the many uses of the fresh, organic herbs used by the Aramark dining team is making herb-infused water for client events.

Recycle and Reuse

Its 100% rPET, post-consumer recycled plastic bottles are cleaned, refilled and reused over 20 times before being recycled into a variety of products, like children’s playground equipment and sneakers. The water facility is LEED-certified and works to protect 426,000 acres of natural lands and freshwater resources around the springs.

Also, the center uses Forest Stewardship Council-certified paper and office products, 100% recycled bathroom tissue, Green Seal-approved cleaning agents, zero-VOC paint and varnish, and low-VOC products for ware washing, kitchen and restroom cleaning.

Communication and Education

The center and Aramark work together to educate employees and customers about sustainability, such as showcasing the sustainable attributes of the food and beverages of buffet items. The information includes notations of all farms and other food partners, all Seafood Watch designations from the Monterey Bay Aquarium Seafood Watch Guide, and the compostable or biodegradable items used. The center also supplies all event coordinators with a sustainability checklist to help them plan their events.

Community Service

The convention center partners with Chefs to End Hunger to share food after each event with the local food bank facilities in Orange County.



PENNSYLVANIA CONVENTION CENTER

CREATING A CULTURE

The Pennsylvania Convention Center had been engaged in some sustainability efforts, but after receiving questions from guests, the team realized the center needed to take its programs to the next level. Today, the convention center's sustainability efforts, supported by its Aramark partnership, cover a wide range of initiatives, including using BioHiTech food waste digesters, serving Fair Trade Certified coffee, sourcing seafood identified as Best Choices or Good Alternatives by the Monterey Bay Aquarium Seafood Watch and donating excess, unserved food to the community. During the process of building its program, the center focused on creating a culture of sustainability and community service through education, gaining buy-in, monitoring results and providing feedback.

The center's progress in sustainability has paid off in multiple ways, including being the host location for the annual Natural Products Expo East Conference.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE CENTER'S SUSTAINABILITY PROGRAM INCLUDE:

- Purchasing locally from growers and providers in eastern PA, NJ, DE, MD, VA and NY
 - Composting 1,000 lbs. of organic waste into liquid every day
 - Using compostable serviceware
 - Donating event leftover items to the community, including Habitat for Humanity
 - Serving meals to vaccination teams during COVID
 - Donating leftover food through Food Donation Connection and Archdiocese of Philadelphia
 - Feeding over 220,000 children during the pandemic
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“ We’re good partners when it comes to not just business but sustainability and community involvement. Our clients know that we’re focused on the right things.”

— Spokesperson, Pennsylvania Convention Center

PHOENIX CONVENTION CENTER LAUNCHING SUSTAINABILITY INITIATIVES

Inspired by customer feedback, and with the passion and determination of its team, the Phoenix Convention Center has engaged in sustainability initiatives that make the venue a more appealing choice for event organizers. Its program, which is supported by its partnership with Aramark, includes eco-friendly products for both enterprise and account-specific purchasing, composting of about 1,000 pounds a week, and recycling fryer oils.

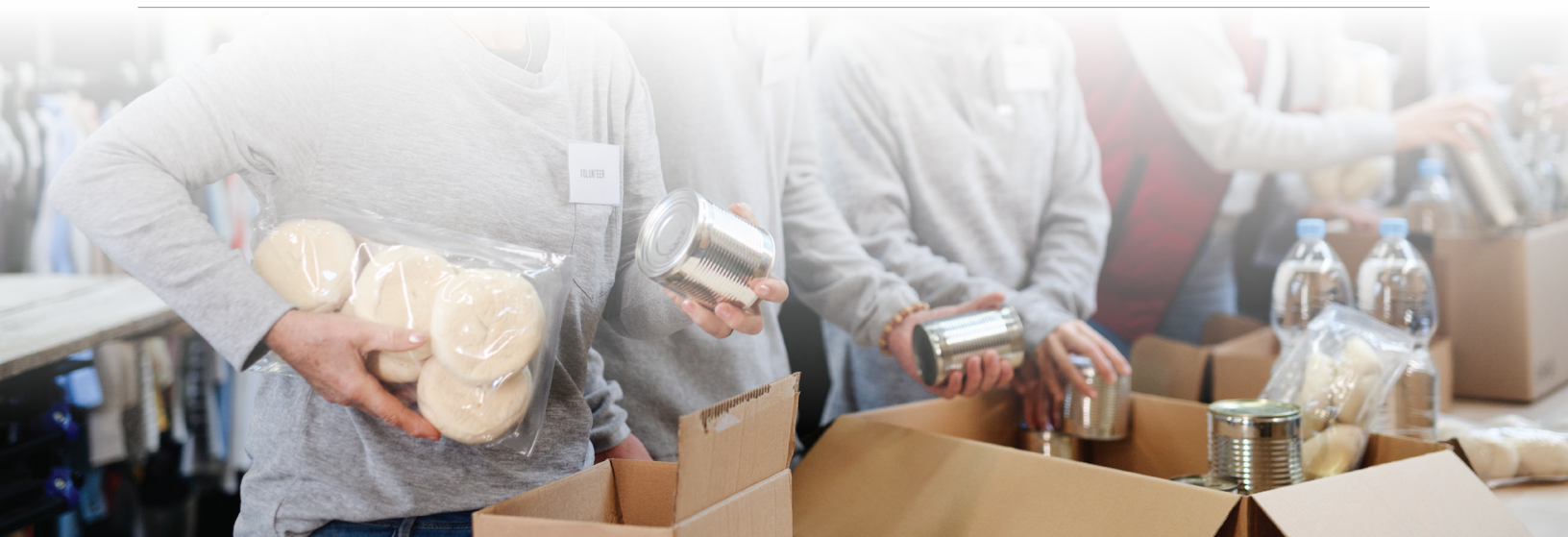
The center's sustainability efforts also support a strong community program, including donations to a local community partner through the Food Donation Connection. The convention center partners with the community to provide 1,000 meals per week that are distributed to underprivileged areas. In working with the city of Phoenix, the convention center plans to launch initiatives to help get people back to work after the pandemic.

“ At many events, the meeting planners like to learn about our sustainable foodservice program and share insights about it with their attendees.”

— Jerry Harper, Deputy Director at Phoenix Convention Center & Venues

THE CENTER'S CHILD-FOCUSED COMMUNITY PROGRAMS INCLUDE

- Providing lunch and meal kits at community events
- Hosting donation drives for items like socks and toiletries
- Providing bundles of water and snacks for the homeless
- Working with youth through the Junior Achievement organization
- Donating a chef's dinner for silent auction at ALS Foundation's Bite Night



HOW TO LAUNCH A SUSTAINABILITY PROGRAM

While every convention center has its own unique programs, processes and plans, you can get started with a sustainability initiative by following these steps.

1 Conduct a Gap Analysis

Assess your existing operations, including your ecological footprint.

2 Create a Plan

Determine your specific goals and initiatives to deploy over time.

3 Identify first initiative

Target the most impactful program to begin.

4 Expand Focus

Add new sustainability initiatives over time.

5 Form Partnerships

Partner with local and regional community members supplying sustainable products and services.

6 Educate Employees

Create a culture of sustainability to gain buy-in from employees who will support successful outcomes.

**TO EXPEDITE AND AMPLIFY YOUR
SUSTAINABILITY PROGRAM, CONTACT
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GET STARTED

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