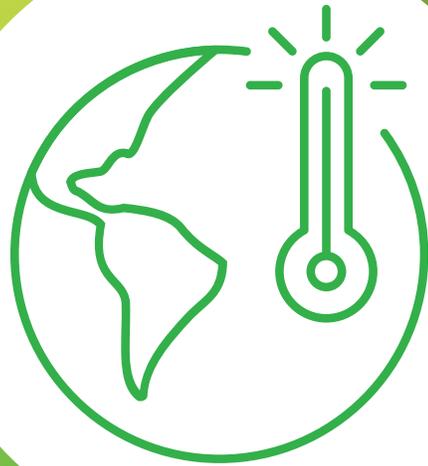


Greening Your Chapter



How ACP Chapters Can Help Tackle Climate Change by Reducing Their Carbon Footprint

Climate change is a [threat to human health](#). Heat-related illness, respiratory diseases, vector and water-borne diseases, behavioral health conditions and others are caused or worsened by climate change. ACP supports [policies](#) to mitigate and adapt to climate change and ACP's chapters can play a key role in this global effort.

This toolkit suggests ways that ACP chapters can reduce their greenhouse gas emissions, decrease waste, promote healthy food and activity, and advocate in U.S. and global communities for environmentally friendly policies.



Sustainable Meetings

Meetings and conventions can be a major greenhouse gas contributor. Transportation, planning and preparation, accommodations, and food and beverage have an impact on [carbon emissions](#). Environmentally friendly in-person meetings have several potential benefits, including lower greenhouse gas emissions and costs.

Plan Virtual or Hybrid Meetings and Conferences

- The most effective way to limit carbon emissions is by meeting virtually instead of in-person. Going from in-person to virtual conferencing can [decrease the carbon footprint by 94%](#) and slash energy use by 90%. A hybrid meeting, where half of attendees meet in-person at hybrid hubs and the other half meet virtually, can reduce carbon emissions and energy use by two-thirds.

Green Your In-Person Meeting

- Include sustainability criteria in your Request for Proposals for hotels, venues, and vendors. Criteria can include commitments to recycling and greenhouse gas emission reductions.
- Select venues that have a [Green Building Certification](#), such as Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design ([LEED](#)). Green certified buildings are rated for energy and water efficiency, carbon emissions, and renewable material use.
- Promote cleaner transportation. The transportation sector contributes [nearly one-third](#) of the United States' total greenhouse gas emissions. Choose venues that

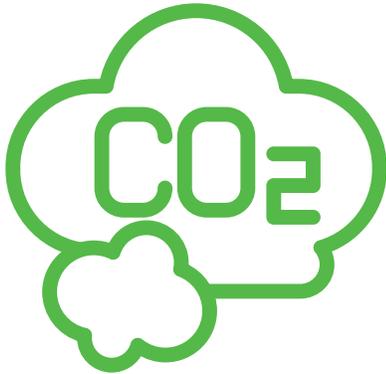
are accessible to mass transit and encourage attendees to travel to the meeting using public (such as bus or rail), active (such as walking, cycling) transportation, or by carpool.

- Choose electronic over paper documents. Doing so will help preserve forests that can [mitigate climate change](#). Limiting printed material saves money: a 2010 international AIDS conference [saved over \\$30,000](#) by not printing information books and programs. If you use paper, choose products with 100% recycled content.



- Encourage re-usable bottles. Plastic production [contributes](#) to climate change and plastic water bottles are a growing part of the world's [plastic waste](#). Encourage attendees to bring re-usable water bottles and make water filling stations available.

- Other ways to reduce waste include using reusable cutlery, tableware, and linens; buying bulk instead of individually portioned foods and condiments; and donating leftover foods to a local food bank.



- Offer healthy, in-season plant-based food options from local vendors. [Food production](#) contributes to climate change, particularly animal products like beef. Offering plant-based foods and sustainably produced meat and fish can

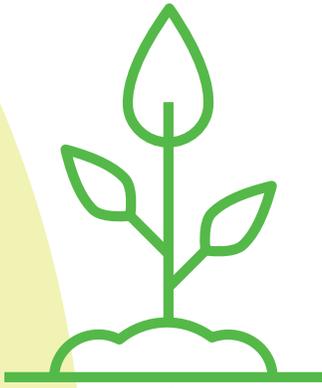
encourage a more balanced diet and help reduce emissions related to livestock and deforestation.

- Give attendees an opportunity to buy carbon offsets. Travel, especially by air, is a major contributor to carbon emissions. [Carbon offsets](#) can be purchased to balance travel-related emissions by supporting projects that mitigate climate change, like wind farms or tree planting initiatives.

Additional Resources:

- [United Nations: Sustainable Events Guide](#)
- [United Nations COP26 Climate Change Conference: Carbon Management Plan](#)
- [U.S. Environmental Protection Agency: It's Easy Being Green! A Guide to Planning and Conducting Environmentally Aware Meetings and Events](#)





Volunteer Projects

Many ACP chapters have volunteer opportunities for members.

- For example, after chapter meetings, your chapter can schedule time to [plant trees](#) or work at a [community garden](#), which help remove carbon from the atmosphere.
- Physicians can use their voice to educate and advocate for policies to reduce carbon emissions and address climate change. Chapters can take time to write to their state and local policymakers to express support for action on climate change.

- Chapters can also reach out to other medical societies and community-based organizations to build coalitions to support climate change action.

Additional Resources:

- ACP's [Climate Change Toolkit](#): Featuring resources to help you educate and advocate for climate change solutions.
- Medical Society Consortium on Climate and Health: [The Medical Promise of Climate Solutions](#): A report on how addressing climate change benefits human and environmental health.

Strategies to Reduce Office Emissions

There are several actions you can take to make your chapter's office space more environmentally sustainable.

- Help commuters reduce emissions by encouraging staff to use mass transit, establishing vanpool/carpool programs, and offering telecommuting options for employees. You can also provide lockers, showers, and bicycle parking for employees who bike or walk to work. When selecting office space, choose a location that's close to public transit.
- Reduce your office's energy use by switching to energy efficient light bulbs (CFLs, LED bulbs), use [Energy Star-rated electronics and appliances](#), adjust thermostats to save energy when appropriate (up a few degrees in the summer, down a few degrees in the winter). Maintain heating and air

conditioning systems to ensure they are operating at peak efficiency. Optimize the building envelope with better insulation and energy-efficient windows. Choose energy efficient office space, which is associated with reduced [emissions and health benefits](#).

- Reduce waste by recycling and using recycled products, including paper and electronics. Use a water cooler or filtered tap water [instead of bottled water](#).

Additional Resources:

- U.S. Green Buildings Council: [LEED rating system](#)
- Energy Star: [Action Workbook for Small Businesses](#)