

ASHRAE Community Sustainability Projects Lessons Learned

Introduction: The below “lessons learned” were written by an ASHRAE chapter that has already performed multiple sustainability projects in their community, so please read these lessons carefully, as they were written based on actual “in the trenches” experience!

ASHRAE Community Sustainability Projects typically involve three distinct tasks: identification of a local non-profit beneficiary and planning for the project (1st task); fundraising (2nd task); and design, construction and commissioning of the actual project itself (3rd task). In most cases, there will be overlap between all three tasks. However, most projects flow from Task 1 to Task 2 to Task 3.

These “lessons learned” is broken down into these three tasks.

Task 1 – Planning

- Make sure the charity understands your expectations. Identify a point of contact with the charity who is as excited about the event as is your chapter. Take advantage of any office staff services available from the charity to create graphics, booklets, advertising etc.
- When working with your charity, establish realistic goals and expectations and a timeline.
- If working with another professional group, establish a joint account to manage funds. If no other group is involved, maintaining a separate money management account is still a good idea.
- Establish the next year's event date and reserve venue as soon as possible.

Task 2 – Fundraising

- At the fundraiser, do not assume the venue supplies anything, including an alcohol license.
- At the fundraiser event, have two off-duty uniformed police officers with radios not only for security, but also medical.
- Make sure to have a cleanup committee whose members are fresh and ready to work at the end of the event, as workers from the day are exhausted.
- Follow all local health rules for cooking, even if other local groups tell you not to be concerned. Get your permits and be ready for health inspections.
- If you can get a rain date for the calendar with the venue, take it.
- If you are having a band, work out electrical requirements are understood prior to the event.

- If you have oysters, provide a shucker.
- Get as many volunteers as you can to cook, cleanup and donate items to keep down costs.
- The success of the event from the standpoint of fundraising is all about the sponsorships. So keep the pressure on to find sponsors.

Task 3 – Project Design, Construction and Commissioning

- Professional services to design and understand the project are considered a contribution to the charity from the chapter.