

2014 Gay Games Sustainability Plan

Overview: For over 30 years, the Gay Games have built an international legacy of changing cultural, social, and political attitudes towards LGBT people across the globe, while at the same time empowering tens of thousands with the transformative benefits of sports competition. The largest sports and culture festival in the world open to all, the Gay Games take place every four years under the founding principles of Participation, Inclusion, and Personal Best™. The 2014 Gay Games, presented by the Cleveland Foundation, will take place in the cities of Cleveland + Akron from August 9-16, 2014 with an estimated 10,000 participants, 4,000 volunteers, and thousands of additional visitors engaging in more than sporting and cultural events. The Games will showcase Cleveland and Akron on an international stage and drive an estimated tens of millions of dollars in economic impact into the region.

The Cleveland Special Events Corporation, dba Gay Games 9 (GG9), is the registered 501(c)(3) organization which is planning, organizing, and hosting the 2014 Gay Games. Aware of the scope and scale of the 2014 Gay Games, GG9 is committed to maximizing the positive economic and social impacts of the Games, while minimizing its environmental impact on the region. GG9 hopes to make the 2014 Gay Games the most sustainable Gay Games ever held, and we plan to form a foundation upon which subsequent host cities can build to continue to harness the tremendous potential for positive social, cultural, political, economic, and environmental change which the Games represent.

Sustainability definition: GG9 defines sustainability using the principles of the Triple Bottom Line. GG9 takes a holistic approach to its operations, focusing on economic success, social responsibility, and environmental stewardship in its operations.

Sustainability mission statement: GG9 endeavors to make the 2014 Gay Games, presented by the Cleveland Foundation, the most sustainable Gay Games to date and, furthermore, to provide a legacy of sustainability upon which future Gay Games can build.

Objectives:

I.) Economic Success:

The LGBT community in the United States has a cumulative annual buying power of \$790 billion. As a result, the Gay Games has historically provided a significant economic impact for its host cities. The previous five Games have seen more than 35,000 participants and spectators visit the host cities, generating, on average, \$62.7 million in economic impact. Moreover, Cleveland recently played host to the 2013 National Senior Games, an annual sporting event for individuals aged 50 and over. The NSG brought nearly 11,000 athletes and an estimated 18,000 family members and friends to Greater Cleveland, creating a total economic impact of \$36.1 million.

Given these numbers, GG9 projects that the 2014 Gay Games will bring approximately 30,000 participants, volunteers, and spectators to the Cleveland + Akron area. The total economic impact of the Games is estimated to be upwards of \$40 million. GG9 remains devoted to guaranteeing that the majority of this economic benefit remains in the region. The Games have created 15 full- and part-time staff positions, and we will provide internship opportunities for more than 40 young adults from Northeast Ohio. Moreover, GG9 has made a commitment to providing contract and vendor opportunities to businesses in Northeast Ohio, particularly those that are certified as LGBT, minority, woman, and veteran-owned. This focus on partnering with local and minority-owned businesses is the

first of its kind in the history of the Gay Games, and it will contribute to the continued economic development of this region.

II.) Social Responsibility:

Since its founding in 1980, the Gay Games has acted as a vehicle for positive change throughout the world. The Games provides a safe and welcoming environment where LGBT athletes, performers and artists, and their allies can gather together and compete in an atmosphere devoid of discrimination. Moreover, the Gay Games is open to all adults, regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity, health status, or athletic ability, making it the largest sports and cultural event in the world that is open to all.

GG9 recognizes the potential to use the Games as a catalyst for social change in Northeast Ohio. Accordingly, we have developed a number of initiatives that will enable the Games to leave a positive and lasting legacy in our region.

1. Supplier Diversity Program

GG9 has developed the first supplier diversity program in the history of the Gay Games in order to bring contract and vendor opportunities to LGBT-owned and certified businesses, Northeast Ohio and Ohio-based businesses, and other minority-owned businesses. This supplier diversity strategy is based on the idea that organizations should use suppliers that represent the diversity of the communities they serve. All potential suppliers are welcome to submit inquiries. All suppliers will be evaluated based on ability to perform, experience, price, and responsiveness. GG9 will base its decisions on the totality of the factors and considerations.

2. Cultural Competency Training

When it chose Cleveland & Akron to host the 2014 Gay Games, the Federation of Gay Games hoped to effect positive change in attitudes towards and opportunities for LGBT individuals in the Midwestern United States. GG9 has taken on this challenge by partnering with The Diversity Center of Northeast Ohio to provide LGBT-sensitivity training to volunteers; all safety, medical, and transportation providers; and others who will be providing products and services to participants and visitors to the Games. These trainings will help volunteers and our partners better serve the needs of participants and visitors to the Games and, ultimately, make Cleveland a more welcoming location for LGBT individuals in the long-term.

3. Building a stronger LGBT community

It is unlikely that Greater Cleveland will have an LGBT platform as significant as the one which the Games provides. Accordingly, GG9 understands the need to utilize the Games as a catalyst for the LGBT community in Greater Cleveland. GG9 has developed partnerships with key LGBT organizations in Cleveland and Akron, including our Lead Community Partners, – the LGBT Community Center of Greater Cleveland, Plexus, and CANAPI – the Cleveland Foundation, and the Gay Community Endowment Fund of Akron Community Foundation. Through its partnerships with the Cleveland Foundation and the GCEF, GG9 will set aside a portion of its revenues in order to fund LGBT programming in Cleveland and Akron. Through these efforts, GG9 will be able to leave a lasting legacy for Northeast Ohio, strengthening and supporting a revitalized LGBT community long after the Games have ended.

III.) Environmental Stewardship

GG9 knows that it cannot focus its attention solely upon the economic and social aspects of its operations. Both Cleveland & Akron have made firm commitments to sustainability in recent years. Accordingly, in this spirit, GG9 has designed a strategy to minimize the impact of the Games upon the environment and to utilize our natural resources in a more mindful, efficient manner. GG9's environmental stewardship strategy includes five focus areas: water, waste management, sustainable transportation, local food, and greening our internal operations.

1. Water: Our goal at GG9 is to eliminate waste generated from plastic water bottles by
 - Eliminating bottled water from volunteer hospitality at all Gay Games venues. Instead, we will ensure that participants and volunteers have access to tap water at all venues.
 - Launch a Bring Your Own Bottle (BYOB) campaign to encourage participants, volunteers, and spectators to bring their own water bottles to the Games, rather than relying on bottled water. We will work to procure reusable water bottles to provide to participants and volunteers who do not have their own bottles, where available.
 - Secure in-kind sponsorships from water providers in order to have potable water on hand at downtown Cleveland locations for participants and volunteers.
 - Include information regarding the location of drinking foundations and other water sources in the maps/information for each venue.
2. Waste Stream/Waste Management: GG9 is committed to promoting zero waste principles at our events, in recognition of the fact that 2014 is the [Year of Zero Waste in the City of Cleveland](#). Accordingly, we will strive to:
 - Divert at least 40% of total waste generated from landfills.
 - Have recycling available at all venues in downtown Cleveland & Akron.
 - Adopt zero waste policies for major Cleveland & Akron venues, enabling the 2014 Gay Games to provide a positive example for the Year of Zero Waste 2014.
 - Develop an effective communication policy for waste management goals, including:
 - Clear, consistent signage
 - Strong waste management messaging in various communication channels, including GG9 website, social media, official program, etc.
 - Training for recycling volunteers, who will act as vital, on-site partners to ensure that implementation of the waste management plan
 - Provide support to vendors and venues to help them develop waste management plans in order to limit their waste generation and support overall waste management goals.
3. Sustainable Transportation: GG9 encourages all participants, spectators and volunteers to take advantage of alternative transportation options. Accordingly, we will:
 - Ensure that mass transportation is available for all participants via Greater Cleveland RTA, Metro Akron, Lake Tran, and other partners.
 - Work with public transit agencies to provide free/discounted transit passes to participants and volunteers.
 - Develop a bike share program for participants and volunteers in downtown Cleveland
 - Provide secure bike parking for at least one downtown Cleveland venue.
 - Provide free bike maintenance service for at least one downtown Cleveland venue.

- Work with partner organizations to develop a cycling guide that highlights cycling routes and bike parking in Cleveland & Akron.
 - Develop a communications plan to promote alternative transportation modes for participants, volunteers, and spectators.
 - Work to ensure that at least 15% travelers flying into Cleveland & Akron purchase carbon offsets through our air partner, United: <http://www.united.com/web/en-US/content/contact/products/carbonoffset.aspx>.
 - Develop sustainability/green site tours for attendees of the Games.
4. Local Food: Northeast Ohio has made a strong commitment to the local food movement. It is home to dozens of farmers' markets and hundreds of community gardens, including two of the largest urban farms in the United States. Recognizing the array of local food options available in the region, along with GG9's commitment to support local businesses, we will
- Source at least 10% of our food from local vendors/producers.
 - Focus on procuring local produce for volunteer hospitality needs.
 - Encourage participants, spectators, and volunteers to support local restaurants, food trucks, and fruit stands whenever possible.
5. Greening GG9: GG9 is also aware that our own, internal operations have an environmental impact. Accordingly, we will:
- Work to embed sustainability into GG9 staff and volunteers workstreams.
 - Ensure that at least 25% of official GG9 merchandise is produced locally and/or sustainably.
 - Partner with one or more renewable energy firms from Northeast Ohio to provide renewable energy displays at Festival Village.
 - Work with press & media partners to support the communication of the 2014 Gay Games' sustainability efforts.
 - Develop an engagement program to discuss sustainability with participants and volunteers for the Games.
 - Expand our Community Partnership Program to include sustainability partners.
 - Secure sustainability sponsorships to finance the implementation of this plan.

If you have any questions regarding GG9's sustainability initiatives, please contact:

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