

Welcome! Thank you for your interest in the Urban Ecology Center's Facility Rental Program!

Are you...

- *An individual interested in hosting a private party for friends and family?*
- *A local business, corporation, or fellow non-profit organization seeking a space for your next meeting or seminar?*
- *An environmentally conscious couple looking for an eco-friendly facility for your green wedding?*

Whatever your event entails, the Urban Ecology Center is uniquely equipped to provide the perfect backdrop for your day.

What sets us apart, you might ask?

Choose us and you choose to support our mission too!

One hundred percent of rental-generated revenue goes toward supporting our mission to provide innovative, enriching environmental education to urban youth, adults and families. In a time when voting with your dollar is important, this is an investment you can feel good about.

We operate with the environment and community in mind

Our spaces proudly integrate green building techniques such as photovoltaic cells, green roofing and rainwater collection systems, geothermal heating and consistent use of recycled building materials. These features are not only functional and help us keep costs low (so we can pass those savings on to you), they are also great conversation pieces and teaching tools.

These features are also an important component of the Urban Ecology Center's function as a neighborhood community center. We are open to the public and encourage exploration of our space and the surrounding parks in which we operate. In choosing to rent the Urban Ecology Center, your guests are not confined to one space – we encourage them to wander around and discover what the Urban Ecology Center is all about!

No hidden fees!

As an organization that strives to build community and promote environmental justice, we strive for transparency. What does this mean for you? No unexpected costs or rate hikes! That's right - we offer the use of our furniture, A/V equipment, dishware, glassware and on-site event staff at no additional cost. Our rental rates are straightforward and easy to understand.

Rental Amenities

Hospitality and Informational Welcome

Never been to the Urban Ecology Center? Are your guests curious about how we started and what we do? No problem – just ask!

- We gladly offer a short welcome presentation given by one of our passionate staff members
- Welcome presentation can be given at any time during your event
- Talks are typically five to ten minutes in length
- We welcome your feedback and will happily answer any questions you or your guests might have

Free, Available Resources

By choosing the Urban Ecology Center to host your event, no matter how big or small, you benefit from FREE use of the following:

- **Ample parking.** The parking lot in Washington Park is just a short walk from the building and has plenty of spaces available for your guests.
- **Use of our audio/visual equipment.** Our guests are welcome to use our portable PA, laptops, projectors and microphones. Urban Ecology Center staff will gladly set up and take down any equipment for you and give you and your guests a tutorial on the use of the equipment.
- **Use of our kitchen and its contents.** Guests are welcome to utilize our kitchen during the duration of their event. Our kitchen includes a refrigerator, freezer, and wash sinks.
- **Use of our furniture.** Our staff is happy to set up Urban Ecology Center furniture for you and your guests. We offer tables and chairs to accommodate seating for 100 people.

Facility Rental Rates

When you rent the Urban Ecology Center, all of the proceeds directly support the operation and mission of our organization. You can feel great knowing that you had the perfect venue for your event and that you contributed to a wonderful cause at the same time.

At the Urban Ecology Center, we pride ourselves on offering competitive, easy to understand rates without any hidden fees or obligations. Time needed for setup and clean up will be included when assessing the start and end time for facility rentals. Capacity for the Stage Room is limited to 100 guests.

During business hours: (Tuesday-Friday 12:00pm-6:00pm, Saturday 9:00am-5:00pm)

\$75/hour

During non-business hours (available until 10pm)*

\$100/hour (plus \$100 security deposit for non-business hour rentals)

**3 hour minimum rental required. Inquire about discounts for non-profit organizations or full day rentals.*

Room Descriptions

Stage Room

Maximum Occupancy: 100 people

The Stage Room is suitable for meetings, socials, birthday parties, fundraisers, family gatherings, wedding receptions and more. Tables and chairs for up to 100 are included as well as use of our kitchen.

Stage Room – After Hours (available until 10pm)

Maximum Occupancy: 100 people

Includes use of the Lagoon Welcome room and our kitchen.

Bookings and Cancellations

The Urban Ecology Center facility rental staff is happy to answer your questions and offer advice to help you plan your event. We have hosted hundreds of events at our facility and are happy to share tips for the best way to make your event a success!

Contact Information

If you have any questions, please contact us at any time:

MaryBeth Kressin (Office hours: Thursday-Monday, days off Tuesday and Wednesday)

Facility Rental Coordinator

(414) 964-8505 x156

- MaryBeth can check room availability, lead facility tours, book rentals and staff/coordinate events.

Terrance Davis (Office Hours: Tuesday-Saturday, days off Sunday and Monday)

Visitor Services Specialist

(414) 344-5460

tdavis@urbanecologycenter.org

- Terrance is responsible for all aspects of the visitor experience at Washington Park. He is ready to answer questions, lead facility tours, and staff events.

Booking Process

Please contact the Urban Ecology Center to speak with a member of our facility rentals staff to inquire about date availability, a tour of our facilities, or making reservations. Reservations are based on space and staff availability and are confirmed only upon receipt of a signed contract and the full rental fee for Stage Room rentals. The reserved rental hours must be consecutive and include all set up and clean up time. Payment for any unused portion of time will not be refunded.

Payment Policies

Payment can be made via credit card or a check made payable to the Urban Ecology Center. All payments should be sent to the attention of the Facility Rental Coordinator. Invoices can be created for organizations that require it and receipts are available upon request. For Stage Room room rentals, payment is due upon reservation.

For rentals, the security deposit is due upon reservation. This deposit is separate from the facility rental fee and is refunded within four weeks of the event, less any damages, charges for additional time or extraordinary cleaning measures (ex. vomit clean up). The facility rental fee is due in full one month prior to the event.

Cancellation Policies

If a renter wishes to cancel an event, they should contact the facility rental staff immediately. Security Deposits will not be refunded upon cancellation. Additionally, 50% of the full rental fee will be withheld for cancellation notices received less than four weeks before an event.

The Urban Ecology Center reserves the right to cancel a reservation if the facilities are rendered unsuitable for the presentation of the event due to fire, calamity, weather emergency, natural disaster, notice of violation by any government agency, or any occurrence beyond our control. The renter will not be liable for payment of fees for canceled events, nor will the Urban Ecology Center have any further liability with regard to said canceled event. We reserve the right to cancel an event at any point if the Renter fails to comply with the rental policies. Such cancellation will result in forfeiture of the Security Deposit and forfeiture of all rental fees paid to date and the event will not be rescheduled.

Planning Your Event

A well organized event is a successful event. Make sure you have plenty of people to help with setup and cleanup and a clear understanding of your responsibilities as a renter to ensure your event's success! Please use the following information to help plan day-of event details:

Volunteers

A lot of effort goes into the preparation and cleanup of an event. In order to make sure all tasks reach completion, it is wise to appoint specific point people and groups of volunteers ahead of time and assign them specific duties. Creating checklists for your volunteers is very helpful. If you plan to serve alcohol at your event, it is important to remind your volunteers that they should be sober enough to effectively complete their assigned tasks at the end of the night!

Outside Vendors

Caterers, bartenders, musicians, DJs, party planners, photographers and street performers are all your outside vendors for the event. You can even hire folks to help with your setup and cleanup responsibilities if you prefer to not use volunteers. Outside vendors are responsible for their own equipment and setup and cleanup needs, though we will help them if they plan to use any Urban Ecology Center equipment during the night. It is important for us to know who they are and how to contact them before the event. We will gladly meet with vendors, answer their questions and give them a tour in advance of your event. Please have them contact us!

Planning tools

As a facility renter at the Urban Ecology Center, you have exclusive access to a variety of tools to help you plan your event.

Event Details Planner

This planning sheet is specifically designed for events at the Urban Ecology Center and will help make sure you do not forget any details by keeping all of the pertinent information in one place. This document will be provided to you by the facility rental coordinator and is due two weeks prior to the event. This helps ensure that everything goes exactly the way you planned it.

Floor Plans

We provide you with pre-drawn floor plans to choose from to fit your particular needs. There is also room on each floor plan to draw or write your own specific instructions. This PDF is available to download directly from our website at www.urbanecologycenter.org

Timeline Leading Up to Your Event

As your event draws near, it is important to keep these dates in mind and meet these deadlines to ensure success.

Booking

We prefer to book events more than one month prior to the event date. Exceptions can be made for smaller events and meetings. Talk to our staff about altered deadlines for shorter notice events.

Security Deposit

For after hours rentals, security deposits are due immediately upon booking. Security deposits are separate from the rental fee and will be refunded to you within four weeks after the event less any damages, charges for additional time or extraordinary cleanup measures.

Rental Fee

The after hours rental fee is due in full one month prior to the date of the rental. For open hours rentals, it is due immediately upon booking.

Event Details Planner

The Event Details Planner is due to us two weeks prior to the event. This includes all of the information about caterers, other outside vendors you have hired and timeline of your event.

Floor Plans

Floor plan selections and modifications are due to us two weeks prior to the event.

Security Deposit Refund

For after hours rentals, the security deposit will be refunded, less any necessary charges, within four weeks after the event. This will be sent via check to the address you provide.

Timeline During Your Event

The day of your event is here! Here are some important times to keep in mind when planning your day's schedule. NOTE: this information is for after hours rentals that take place after the Urban Ecology Center has closed to the public. Stage Room rentals can be scheduled during public hours, so renters are required to do all set up and clean up within the rented time.

Caterers

Caterers are welcome to arrive earlier in the day to begin prep work in the kitchen. Usually 3:00pm or 4:00pm in the afternoon is fine - but this must be confirmed with our calendar to make sure another group is not using the kitchen at that time.

Furniture

Urban Ecology Center staff will have furniture set up in the Stage Room according to your floor plan by the start time on your contract so that you can start getting that space ready as soon as you get there. Furniture set up in the Lagoon welcome room cannot begin until after we close but we can guarantee readiness by the time your guests arrive.

Setup

The earliest you can get in to start setting up for your event is 5pm. Occasionally exceptions can be made for some decorating or to drop off supplies earlier in the day or the day before, but this is subject to availability based on the schedule of programs and other events at the Urban Ecology Center.

Guests Arrive

We highly recommend that you have your guests arrive at least 30 minutes to an hour after your initial rental start time giving yourself plenty of time for setup. More complicated events and floor plans may require additional time.

Last Call

Last call for alcohol and dancing should happen at 9pm.

Event End

Because we operate in a county park and residential neighborhood, the Urban Ecology Center has a "Good Neighbors Policy" in order to ensure a good relationship with our community by not keeping them up too late. Evening events must end by 9:00pm. This includes discontinuing food and alcohol service, turning off the music, and letting your guests know that they "don't have to go home but they can't stay here". The majority of your guests should leave at this point. Everyone must be out of the building by 10pm.

Cleanup and Take Down

Urban Ecology Center staff may begin stacking chairs and moving furniture in unused spaces earlier in the evening, but this work will begin in earnest at 9:00pm. All cleanup and take down must be completed and you and all of your guests must be out of the building by 10:00pm

Setup and Cleanup

Setup –

Urban Ecology Center Staff Responsibilities:

- Rearrangement of furniture according to your floor plans
- Clean up of any messes in the rentable areas and bathrooms from the day's activities
- Set up of our A/V equipment including speakers, microphones, projector, screen, and laptop.
- Assistance for outside vendors with Urban Ecology Center equipment including kitchen appliances
- Set up of signs and directional information related to private events, our alcohol policies and smoking stations
- A rental attendant will be on hand for last minute questions or details

Rental client Responsibilities:

- Set up of all decorations, center pieces and other items that you bring in
- Coordinate and communicate with your caterer and bartender to set up all food, drinks, dishes, glasses, place settings and any other items related to food and beverages
- Coordinate and communicate with your outside vendors to set up any of their A/V equipment or other equipment they bring in
- Set up and coordination of any registration or seating assignment tables for your event
- Greet your guests and communicate with them throughout the event about the evening's schedule or to give directions
- Communicate with the Urban Ecology Center about any changes to the plan or schedule as soon as possible

Cleanup –

Urban Ecology Center Staff Responsibilities:

- Rearrangement of all furniture back to default setups for each room and floor
- Take down and storage of all of our A/V equipment and other Urban Ecology Center amenities used during the event
- Removal of all trash and recyclable materials accumulated during the event
- Sweep and mop floors and clean bathrooms
- Check the building for damage caused during the event
- Lock up the building after you and your guests leave

Rental Client Responsibilities:

- Take down all decorations and other items brought in and remove them from the building
- Take down any equipment or supplies brought in by you and your vendors and remove them from the building
- Gather all trash and recyclables and deposit them in the appropriate containers
- Clean up all dishes, glasses and table settings
- Clean the Urban Ecology Center kitchen (if you used it) or clear rented dishes from the kitchen
- Return the kitchen to a clean and organized state including clean up of the counters, carts and floors
- Spot clean any spills or messes made during the event
- Make sure that you, all of your guests, and vendors are out of the building by 10:00pm

Food and Drink

At the Urban Ecology Center you can choose from one of our Community and Earth Friendly Caterers, hire another caterer of your choice, or even bring in your own food for your event. Our flexible catering policies make it easy for you to customize food and drink exactly the way you would like. We even have a full service kitchen for you to use while you're here!

Community and Earth Friendly Caterers

The Urban Ecology Center partners with several local caterers who support the community and the earth through their sustainable practices. We recommend and encourage you to choose one of these caterers when planning your event! See our website for our Community and Earth Friendly Caterers list at each branch, and for more information on the policies and procedures these caterers practice to make our community and Earth a better place!

Other Caterers

Do you have another caterer in mind that you would like to work with? No problem! We are happy to meet and work with any caterer you choose. All we ask is that they send us a copy of their Certificate of Liability Insurance at least 2 weeks prior to your event.

Bring your own food!

Do you want to serve your own food? Go right ahead! You can use our kitchen to warm food and get it set, but should plan on doing the majority of the prep work and cooking before you arrive. Potlucks are encouraged as well! Insurance coverage may be required if you plan to cook and sell your food here at the Center. Please inquire for more details.

Leftovers

In keeping with our earth friendly practices, we ask that you try to not throw away large amounts of leftover food. Instead you can take them home with you, send them home with your guests, or donate them to the Center. Our staff and volunteers appreciate leftovers!

Coffee

The Urban Ecology Center has an airpot brewer and 2.5 liter airpots that you are welcome to use to brew coffee for your event. Please bring your own coffee grounds, sweeteners and creamers. We discourage the use of disposable cups, especially Styrofoam. We have plenty of mugs and stirring spoons available for use.

(Food and drink – continued)

Alcohol

The Urban Ecology Center does allow alcohol to be served at private events, provided that the following conditions are met:

- Alcohol can be served at private parties for your invited guests and not at rental events open to the general public.
- For events of 50 or more people, all alcohol must be served by a licensed bartender. A bartender can be hired through your caterer, a bartending service, or by an outside vendor you hire to serve alcohol which you provide. A copy of the bartender's state license must be provided at least two weeks prior to the event.
- No alcohol may be served to minors under the age of 21.
- Alcohol may not be served at parties for teenagers or children, including but not limited to birthday parties, graduation parties, coming of age parties, etc.
- Alcoholic beverages must be kept in the building and may not be taken into Washington Park.
- For events that take place during our public hours, alcohol must be kept in the rented room and may not be taken into public areas of the building.
- A liquor license is required in order for you or your vendor to sell drinks at the Urban Ecology Center.
- Non-profit organizations that wish to sell alcohol as a fundraiser must obtain a Special-B Permit from the City of Milwaukee prior to the event. Special-B Permits cover only the sale of beer and wine, not liquor.
- The Urban Ecology Center reserves the right to close the bar if the consumption of alcohol gets out of hand or creates any kind of conflict. Disruptive guests may be asked to leave.

Smoking

The Urban Ecology Center does not permit smoking in the building. We have a smokers' station just outside for your smoking guests. We will post signage in our facility directing them to this location. Thank you!

Kitchen and Dishes

Kitchen

The Urban Ecology Center has a kitchen adjacent to our Lagoon Welcome Room available for you or your caterers to use. You are welcome to use any of the appliances and dishes you find in our kitchen free of charge—all we ask is that you leave the kitchen as clean as when you found it. We can often accommodate caterers and other vendors who need to access the kitchen prior to our closing time of 5:00pm. Please discuss specific arrangements with our staff. Kitchen amenities include:

- Commercial size refrigerator and freezer (expect them to be half full with our own food)
- Wash sinks
- Ample counter space
- Water pitchers and coffee airpots
- Standard 4 burner electric oven.
- Dishware, glassware, utensils and coffee mugs also available upon request

Dishes

Because we are an environmental center, we strongly discourage the use of styrofoam and plastic disposable plates, cups and utensils. Disposable napkins are acceptable because they are recyclable.

The good news is that you can use our dishes or ask about compostable plates at no extra charge! All that we ask is that you arrange to bus, wash and neatly put away all dishes by the end of the night.

The Urban Ecology Center has multiple sinks and washing trays that make this much easier, but the process still requires at least two to three dedicated people throughout the evening. This can be achieved in a variety of ways:

- You may contract with your caterer to bus and wash dishes for you. Your caterer might assess an additional fee for this service but, considering we offer the use of our dishes at no cost, this may be well worth it to you.
- You may hire an outside vendor such as a server service to set up, bus and wash dishes for you.
- You may appoint a few volunteers to set up, bus and wash dishes for you. However, it should be made clear to your dishwashing delegates that this process is a full-time job during the event. Therefore, your volunteers will likely miss the majority of the party (in other words, don't ask your mother to do it).

If the use and clean up of our dishes seems challenging for your event, we encourage you to consider renting dishes through your caterer or another vendor and paying them to do the washing for you.

Setup and Cleanup

The setup and cleanup of all dishes and food related items is the responsibility of the renters and your hired vendors. We do not charge anything for the use of our amenities but ask that everything is returned to the condition in which you found it in when you arrived.

Decorations

Guests are welcome to decorate the Urban Ecology Center for events. In keeping with our mission to implement environmentally sustainable practices whenever possible, we ask that you keep the environment in mind when you choose your decorations. Stringed lights and vases with flowers (especially native flowers) are encouraged. We ask our guests to avoid the use of plastic table cloths, paper streamers, confetti and other disposable items as decorations. We are happy to give advice and help you choose tasteful and environmentally friendly decorations!

Our Furniture

Urban Ecology Center staff will move our furniture into position or out of the way for your event. This includes tables, chairs, couches, literature racks, exhibits, coat racks, plants, end tables and anything else found in our building on a regular day. There is no extra charge to use our furniture. We do not provide linens but they can often be rented through a caterer or an outside vendor. All you need to do is choose a floor plan or draw your own and submit it to us two weeks prior to your event. Floor plans are available on our website.

Setup and Cleanup

Setup and cleanup of decorations, dishes and other items not belonging to the Urban Ecology Center are the responsibility of the facility renters and their vendors. This includes table decorations, place settings, linens, signs and anything else brought in by the renter. All decorations must be taken down and removed from the building by 10pm or the end of the contracted time for the event.

Renters may be able to setup some out of the way decorations (such as stringed lights) the day before our event, but it depends entirely on what else we have going on in the building at that time. Please inquire with rental staff prior to your event.

Furniture from an Outside Vendor

Clients who wish to rent furniture from an outside vendor may do so at their own expense. Furniture must be dropped off the day of the event and picked up the same day. The renter and their vendor are responsible for the set up and movement of any rented furniture. If same day drop off and pick up is a problem - please talk with the our facility rental staff to arrange otherwise.

Banners and Signs

Renters may hang up signs, banners or other party materials in our building provided they use rope or non-duct tape and do not use any nails or other fasteners in our building.

Candles

We allow the use of small, contained votive candles as centerpieces on tables or as accents around the building. Please avoid large candles, tiki torches, candelabras and other large flames for safety purposes.

Audiovisual Equipment

Want to have music playing during your event? Need a microphone for speeches? Want to project a presentation to your guests on a screen? We've got you covered! The Urban Ecology Center has a variety of types of audio/visual (A/V) equipment available for renters to use free of charge. Simply let us know in advance what you would like and where you would like it set up and we will be happy to take care of it for you.

AV Equipment Available to Borrow

- PC Laptop
- PC Projector
- Projection Screen
- Yamaha Stagepas 500 Portable PA System

DJs and Live Bands

The Urban Ecology Center is happy to work with a DJ or live band you hire for your event. Typically these bands set up on the stage in the Stage Room. Most DJs and bands bring in their own equipment, but they are welcome to use our portable PA system and soundboard if they would like. Please have your vendor contact us directly if they have any questions about our facility.

The Urban Ecology Center is located in a residential neighborhood, so we ask that music vendors keep the volume at a reasonable level. Our staff reserves the right to ask that music be turned down if necessary and appreciate the cooperation of our renters and their vendors.

Projection Equipment

All of our rooms can be set up with a movie screen, laptop and projector for your A/V presentation. You can simply bring your presentation on a laptop or USB flash drive, plug it in to our machines and go. All of our laptops and projectors are PC compatible. If your device or software is Mac-formatted, you'll have to format it or bring in specific cables to make it PC compatible.

The Fine Print

The Urban Ecology Center does not discriminate against any member of the public or community group because of race, color, sexual orientation, national origin, age, sex or handicap with regard to occupancy, use of the pavilion, or rental of the pavilion according to the terms and conditions of our facility rental program.

The Renter is solely responsible for any incident, accident, injury or loss to persons or property (including the Urban Ecology Center facility and its contents) arising from or during the use of the facility. The Renter shall indemnify, defend, and hold harmless the Urban Ecology Center from all loss, expense and damages (including reasonable attorney fees) arising from or during the use of the facility. Without limiting any of the above, the Urban Ecology Center shall not be responsible for lost, damaged or stolen items. We may require, and Renter must then provide, at least two weeks prior to the rental date, a certificate of liability insurance coverage, naming the Urban Ecology Center as an additional insured, in the amount of \$500,000.

Renters must be 18 years of age or older (21 if alcohol is being served). The person named on the rental contract is liable for the event and must be present throughout the contracted use of the facility. The rental may not be assigned or subleased. Rentals for teenage or graduation parties must have one adult to every 10 attendees under the age of 18.

The Urban Ecology Center will not rent for the following uses:

- a) Parties or dances that are open to the general public
- b) Commercial use by private groups for the purpose of sales or promotions
- c) Any use deemed by the Urban Ecology Center to be in conflict with our mission, policies, 501(c)3 status or reputation