



**National Sustainability Society
Annual Conference Co-Host Application**

Host the national conversation on sustainability —
and put your institution at the center of it.

About the National Sustainability Society

The National Sustainability Society (NSS) is a fast-growing 501(c)(3) professional organization dedicated to convening, curating, and amplifying sustainability research and practice across disciplines and sectors. We exist to bridge the gaps between academia, industry, and government — because the most urgent sustainability challenges demand all three working together.

Our membership of approximately 1,200 professionals spans academia (faculty, students, postdoctoral researchers, and campus sustainability staff), industry (sustainability leaders and practitioners in the private sector), and the public sector (experts, policymakers, and nonprofit professionals).

As an independent, Michigan-incorporated nonprofit, the NSS engages its community through an annual conference, webinars, podcasts, a quarterly newsletter, and LinkedIn

Our Conference Track Record

Each year, the NSS partners with a different host institution — bringing our national network to a new region, amplifying local sustainability leadership, and building lasting cross-sector relationships.

2024 — University of Washington, Seattle, WA: "Innovation, Implementation, and Workforce Development for Sustainability" · 600 attendees

2025 — University of Notre Dame, Notre Dame, IN: "Transformative Change for a Just and Sustainable Future" · 400 attendees

Why Partner with the NSS?

Co-hosting the NSS annual conference is a strategic investment in your institution's national presence, cross-sector relationships, and sustainability leadership. Here is what you gain:

Shape the Agenda. Your representatives join the conference planning committee — directly influencing themes, sessions, and programming in ways that highlight your institution's expertise and regional accomplishments.

Elevate Institutional Prestige. Being selected as an NSS conference partner signals academic excellence and a genuine commitment to cross-sector collaboration — a distinction recognized nationally.

Amplify Your Reach. Your institution is featured in 6–10 months of pre-conference promotion reaching NSS's national network. During the event, your faculty, researchers, and students gain direct access to 1,200+ sustainability professionals.

Build Lasting Collaborations. The partnership opens new pathways for your sustainability units to collaborate directly with NSS — deepening your institution's network, broadening research scope, and amplifying real-world impact.

What Foundational Sponsors Receive

Co-hosts who contribute at least \$100K in in-kind or financial support are recognized as Foundational Sponsors — a permanent mark of leadership in the NSS community. Foundational Sponsors receive: your logo on the conference website, mobile app, and registration desk; recognition in opening remarks every year for 10 years; 10 complimentary conference registrations; 5 complimentary workshop registrations; and 1 poster presentation slot.

In-kind contributions — venue space, IT support, staff time, catering, and other services — count in full toward Foundational Sponsorship. A direct financial contribution is welcome but not required.

Co-Host Criteria and Selection

We select partners who share our values and have the institutional capacity to co-create an exceptional conference experience. Strong applicants demonstrate alignment across all four areas:

1. **Planning Committee Commitment.** Partner institutions must be represented on the planning committee, with a designated point of contact serving as committee chair or co-chair.
2. **Mission Alignment.** All partnering individuals and organizations must align with the NSS mission and values, and commit to supporting that year's conference theme.
3. **Cost-Share Contribution.** Co-hosts are expected to cover a portion of conference costs through in-kind contributions and/or discounted services.
4. **Venue and Logistical Capacity.** The proposed venue must meet NSS facility, accessibility, and sustainability standards outlined in the requirements section below.

Costs vary by location, in-kind support, and sponsorships secured. NSS retains the registration revenue and is open to collaborative fundraising arrangements that offset co-host expenses.

Venue and Facility Requirements

To ensure an accessible, high-quality experience for all attendees, NSS requires the following:

Space and Capacity: 10–15 breakout rooms for parallel sessions (minimum 30 per room); one plenary hall (minimum capacity: 600); coffee break space (minimum: 200); reception space (minimum: 600); buffet-style lunch space (minimum: 300); a poster display area with equipment stands; all spaces fully ADA accessible.

Technical Capabilities: Presentation technology (installed equipment or laptop hookups and screens) in all session rooms; recording capability in plenary space (strongly preferred); an on-call venue technician (NSS will coordinate student volunteer tech support); reliable internet connectivity throughout all conference spaces.

Catering and Amenities: Catering for coffee breaks and buffet-style lunches; sustainability-forward options including vegetarian, vegan, and gluten-free items with minimal-waste service; water bottle refill stations or water fountains; ADA-accessible and gender-neutral restrooms; a private lactation room.

Nearest airport and transportation options, as well as nearby accommodation options, should also be described in your proposal.

Co-host Roles and Responsibilities

NSS manages most conference operations. Your institution's primary contributions are leadership, local knowledge, local outreach, and logistical support.

NSS handles: the call for contributions and review process; registration and attendee communications; conference marketing and promotion campaigns; student and early-career volunteer coordination; and the conference website and mobile app.

Co-hosts handle: venue access and on-site coordination; a point of contact serving on the planning committee; curation of a local host committee; in-kind and/or financial contribution; and local promotion through institutional channels.

The local host committee should consist of well-connected individuals in the area who can identify unique local opportunities, engage local practitioners, surface potential sponsors, and help promote the event regionally. This committee does not need to meet regularly — it serves as a resource for the conference as needed.

The NSS planning committee meets frequently — often weekly during the planning phase. We look for partners who are reliable, flexible, and genuinely energized about co-creating the conference experience.

Ready to bring the national sustainability conversation to your campus?

Contact Cristy Watkins at cristy@thenss.org to express your interest and start the conversation.