



Sustainability Vision & Policy

A framework for advancing sustainability through events, partnerships, and nonfiction storytelling.
March, 2026

Introduction

newportFILM believes arts and culture organizations have a unique role in shaping a more sustainable future. Through our screenings and public events, we bring people together in shared spaces, both indoors and outdoors, where sustainable practices can be experienced in action.

Rooted on Aquidneck Island, we are committed to caring for the natural and community resources that sustain us. This Sustainability Vision and Policy outlines how we integrate responsible practices into our programs, partnerships, and operations while continuing to learn, improve, and hold ourselves accountable.

As a small nonprofit, we recognize that meaningful progress happens through collaboration. By working with local partners and engaging our audiences, we aim to strengthen our community and contribute to broader adoption of sustainable practices across Rhode Island.

1. Vision

newportFILM envisions public-serving arts and culture organizations as sustainability leaders by modeling responsible operations, practicing community stewardship, and sharing nonfiction films that showcase a world worth protecting, thereby strengthening Aquidneck Island and catalyzing climate-resilient practices statewide.

2. Mission

newportFILM fulfills its vision by practicing sustainability across our screenings, events, education programs for middle and high school students, filmmaker development, partnerships, and operations. Our public programs create shared spaces where the community can gather and experience sustainable practices in action as we continue learning, improving, and holding ourselves accountable.

3. Definition of Sustainability

For newportFILM, sustainability means operating in ways that care for the natural and community resources that sustain us while supporting the long-term health of our organization. We hold ourselves to high standards and work to reduce waste, minimize emissions, lower energy use, and relentlessly pursue zero waste events wherever possible.

We partner with local organizations and businesses whenever possible, recognizing that meaningful progress happens through collaboration. Sustainability for us is also rooted in placemaking. Whether indoors or outdoors, we treat every venue we are invited into with care and gratitude. Our approach is simple. Carry in what we need, carry out what we bring, and take responsibility for leaving each place better than we found it.

As a small nonprofit, we recognize this work is a journey. Through commitment, partnership, and thoughtful planning, we continue setting new goals and benchmarks that move our organization toward more responsible and sustainable practices.

4. Scope

This sustainability policy applies to all newportFILM programs, events, and operations. This includes our public screenings, special events, education programs for middle and high school students, filmmaker development initiatives, partnerships, vendor relationships, and internal organizational practices.

The policy also guides how we steward the venues and public spaces we are invited into across Aquidneck Island and beyond. Staff, volunteers, vendors, and partners are expected to support these practices and help advance newportFILM's sustainability goals.

5. Objectives and Targets

newportFILM sets measurable sustainability objectives and tracks progress each year. These objectives guide how we reduce environmental impacts, strengthen partnerships, and continuously improve our practices.

Zero Waste Events

newportFILM relentlessly pursues zero waste events, defined as diverting 90 percent or more of event waste from landfill. We work toward this goal through staffed zero waste tents at our events where green team members guide attendees in properly sorting materials into compost, recycling, and landfill streams.

We partner with food truck vendors who agree to use fully compostable service materials. Our team reviews vendor materials in advance of each event to confirm compliance. If any materials fall outside our standards, we ensure they are identified ahead of the event so they can be properly managed and sorted.

To encourage leadership among our vendors, we launched the Sustainable Stewards Program which publicly recognizes the food vendor with the highest compliance rate each season with an official citation.

At the conclusion of each event, compost, recycling, and landfill streams are weighed to gather the data needed to track diversion rates and measure progress toward our 90 percent zero waste benchmark.

Within our internal operations, we also strive to eliminate single use plastics, continually seeking alternatives and planning accordingly.

Catalyzing Partnerships

Catalyzing Partnerships is newportFILM's methodology for advancing sustainability through collaborative, place-based partnerships that align community priorities with the capacity of local organizations to implement meaningful change.

This approach recognizes that the most effective sustainability solutions are built locally through collaboration, shared resources, and aligned capacity.

newportFILM developed this methodology to maximize sustainability impact as a limited resource nonprofit. By leveraging local individuals, organizations, and businesses, we advance sustainability efforts through mutually beneficial outcomes rooted in systemic change.

Catalyzing Partnerships also recognizes that sustainability priorities differ across communities. Rather than relying solely on rigid multi-year plans aligned with broad standards, this approach allows benchmarks to emerge from local community needs and the capacity of partners to implement meaningful change.

Catalyzing Partnerships as the Antidote to Silos

Catalyzing Partnerships responds to a common challenge within the nonprofit sector. Many organizations are doing meaningful and important sustainability work, but too often these efforts happen independently. When organizations operate in silos, opportunities for shared learning, coordinated action, and efficient use of resources can be lost.

newportFILM believes that collaboration strengthens impact. By bringing together organizations, businesses, and community leaders around shared sustainability goals, Catalyzing Partnerships helps align efforts that might otherwise remain separate.

This approach recognizes that when organizations work together rather than independently, their collective impact can grow significantly. Partnerships allow groups to share knowledge, coordinate initiatives, and extend the reach of sustainability practices across the community.

For small nonprofits in particular, this approach helps ensure that donor contributions, public funding, and institutional support generate the greatest possible impact. Instead of duplicating efforts, organizations can build on one another's work and accelerate meaningful change.

Through Catalyzing Partnerships, newportFILM aims to create a collaborative ecosystem where sustainability efforts reinforce one another and contribute to broader community progress.

newportFILM launched its sustainability journey in 2022 with three founding partners. By 2026, this network has grown to eight collaborating organizations, reflecting the power of partnership to expand sustainability impact across Aquidneck Island and the broader region.

Responsible Materials and Resource Use

newportFILM works to minimize material use and prioritize reusable, recyclable, and compostable materials in both events and internal operations.

Targets include eliminating single use plastics, prioritizing compostable or reusable service materials for vendors, and reducing unnecessary printed materials through thoughtful planning and digital alternatives.

Energy and Emissions Awareness

While operating primarily through temporary venues and public spaces, newportFILM seeks to minimize the energy use and emissions associated with events, transportation, and operations.

Targets include encouraging sustainable transportation options such as biking and shared travel, working with partners and venues to support responsible energy use wherever possible, remaining informed about emerging battery storage and clean energy technologies that may help power events with lower emissions, exploring opportunities to pilot cleaner power solutions through partnerships with sustainability organizations and technology providers, and identifying practical opportunities to reduce operational emissions as new technologies become viable and accessible.

Culture Building and Storytelling

newportFILM believes sustainability practices take root when they are visible, shared, and celebrated. Operational practices such as zero waste events only succeed when audiences, volunteers, vendors, and partners understand how to participate and see the collective impact of their actions.

For this reason, culture building and storytelling are central to newportFILM's sustainability framework. By creating rituals, sharing results, and celebrating leadership, we help normalize sustainable behaviors and make them part of the shared experience of our events.

Rituals reinforce participation and recognition. Each year we present the Sustainability Steward Award recognizing the food vendor with the highest sustainability compliance, and the Compost Captain Award recognizing an outstanding Green Team volunteer who demonstrates leadership in zero waste practices.

Transparency helps audiences understand their role in achieving sustainability goals. During the Outdoor Summer Series, diversion rates are shared weekly so the community can see the measurable results of their participation.

Storytelling extends the impact of these practices beyond the event itself. Through signage, social media, and shared messaging with partners, we communicate the practices and values behind our sustainability efforts. These stories help audiences see how collective action can contribute to meaningful environmental stewardship.

By making sustainability visible and participatory, newportFILM helps transform individual actions into shared community norms.

6. Strategy for Implementation and Monitoring

newportFILM integrates sustainability practices into the planning and execution of programs, events, and operations. Implementation relies on coordinated staff leadership, trained volunteers, vendor collaboration, and strategic partnerships.

Event implementation includes zero waste infrastructure, vendor compliance with compostable materials, and staffed zero waste sorting stations. Green Team volunteers assist audiences with sorting waste streams and help ensure materials are handled properly.

Vendor and partner engagement is central to implementation. Vendors confirm material compliance before events begin, and staff coordinate with partners to ensure proper waste management practices.

Through the Catalyzing Partnerships methodology, newportFILM collaborates with organizations, government agencies, and businesses to expand the reach of sustainability efforts.

Measurement and monitoring include weighing compost, recycling, and landfill streams at the conclusion of each event to calculate diversion rates and track progress toward the 90 percent zero waste goal.

The process of developing this sustainability policy revealed the need for stronger internal sustainability metrics within newportFILM's operations. The organization is committed to collecting data, auditing internal practices, and establishing measurable benchmarks for areas such as purchasing, materials use, energy consumption, and operational waste.

7. Reporting

newportFILM is committed to transparent reporting on the progress of our sustainability efforts.

Event level metrics such as waste diversion rates are tracked following each event. During the Outdoor Summer Series, diversion rates are shared publicly with audiences to encourage participation and demonstrate the collective impact of the community.

Internally, sustainability performance is reviewed annually to assess progress and identify opportunities for improvement.

Where applicable, newportFILM aligns its practices with recognized standards and certifications. Our events have achieved RIDEM Certified Green Event status, and we will continue exploring opportunities to strengthen alignment with leading sustainable event management frameworks.

Through transparent reporting and community engagement, newportFILM aims to build trust, share learning, and contribute to broader adoption of sustainable practices across the region.

8. Commitment from Leadership

The leadership and staff of newportFILM are committed to integrating sustainability into the organization's programs, events, partnerships, and operations. Through this policy, the Executive Director, Managing Director, and the newportFILM team affirm their responsibility to support the practices, partnerships, and accountability measures outlined in this document.

We recognize that sustainability is an ongoing journey requiring learning, transparency, and collaboration. Our team will continue working with volunteers, partners, vendors, and the broader community to implement these commitments and strengthen our practices over time.