

# Zero Waste Event Guide

## Why it Matters?

Adopting Zero Waste (ZW) practices helps us minimize the amount of waste we contribute to the environment. Waste has negative impacts on the environment by contaminating land, water, and air. Composting and recycling allow us to repurpose and reuse resources. It limits the amount of trash that ends up in landfills, incinerators, and bodies of water. **Maximizing diversion from the landfill not only reduces your carbon footprint but can also save you money in the process.**

## Sorting Guide



### Compost:

**Food waste, products labeled compostable, paper products**



### Recycling:

**Glass, bottles, cans, cardboard, Hard Plastics (1, 2 & 5)**



### Trash/Landfill:

**Plastic bags, other hard plastics, condiment wrappers, styrofoam**

## Additional Resources

### Compostable Products

<https://greenpaperproducts.com>

### Northfield Composting

<https://www.curbsidecompostmn.coop>

### Food Planning Tips

<https://savethefood.com/community>

### More Information on Composting

<https://www.compostingcouncil.org>

## Actions You Can Take:

### Before Your Event

- Prioritize and Plan ahead. Implementing a Zero Waste management plan requires additional attention.
  - Designate a team member to coordinate your waste management plan.
  - Advertise your event digitally or with sustainable materials (plant-based ink, recycled paper).
- Make a plan with your food vendor.
  - Select a vendor who can provide reusable or compostable cutlery, containers, or other items.
  - Discuss an appropriate order to minimize excess food waste.
  - Use bulk condiment containers instead of single plastic ones.
  - Consider a buffet-style meal to reduce packaging waste.
- Hire a waste removal contractor.
  - Anticipate the amount of waste your event will generate and ensure they can provide a three-bin system with the composting option.
- Replace single-use plastics with Zero Waste options (reusable, compostable, or recyclable).
  - Opt for reusable products rather than a single-use one.
  - Consider party favors and decorations that can be reused.
  - Use large water coolers and reusable cups instead of plastic water bottles.
- Reuse tablecloths instead of purchasing plastic ones.

### During Your Event

- Adopt a three-bin container system with proper signage.
  - Strategically place the three-waste bins in accessible and highly frequented areas.
  - Use color-coded, clear, and simple signage to intercept your attendees before they arrive at the bins, redirecting them to the correct waste method.
- Communicate your event's ZW goals with attendees.
  - Use signage, announcements, and advertisements to promote your ZW goals.
- Train staff on ZW procedures.

### After Your Event

- Donate excess food to the Community Action Center (CAC).
- Ensure that waste containers are picked up by the contractor or taken to the proper facilities.
- Evaluate the results of these procedures and discuss results with other event planners. Learning and teaching are key to adopting sustainable practices.