



## 10 Tips for Planning a Successful Low Waste Event

**1. Provide recycling containers.** For small events, consider using your own recycling cart/bin or a large cardboard box. If you need multiple bins or want to add organics recycling:

- Reserve them through Anoka County by calling 763-323-5730. There is no charge to reserve event recycling and organics containers from Anoka County.

**2. Consider creating “Waste Stations”.** It is helpful to reduce the number of trash options if you are collecting organics and direct people to waste stations. A waste station is an area where guests bring all of their waste and separate it.

- One waste station is enough to serve 200+ people unless the event area is spread out over a large area.
- A waste station includes a bin for recycling, a bin for organics and a bin for trash.
- Sometimes a bucket for liquids is also at a waste station to have guests pour out liquids to reduce the liquid weight of bags. You will need to supply your own bucket.

**3. Know what can be recycled or composted.** Not all recycling haulers accept the same materials, so check with your hauler before reserving containers and signs.

- For example, some accept plastic cups and some do not.
- If you are collecting organics for composting, find out what is accepted by the compost facility. If you are using Anoka County’s organics recycling drop-off program, you will receive a brochure including a list of accepted items.
- Use BPI certified compostable plates, cups and utensils so most of the waste generated from your event can go in the organics recycling bin, making the sorting process easier for your guests.

**4. Contact vendors to talk about waste.** Share your low waste plans with them.

- Ask them what waste they are expecting and determine whether it is recyclable or compostable.
- Ask vendors to only bring recyclable or certified compostable items.

**5. Signage is important.** The tops of containers are labeled but there are also additional signs that can be attached to containers.

- Signs include pictures of example items, which can be especially helpful if you are collecting food and non-recyclable paper for composting.
- It may be helpful to tape on the signs examples of items from your event (actual chip bag, plastic cup, paper cup, napkin, etc. taped directly on sign) that can go in each bin, especially the organics recycling bin.
- See the Anoka County Event Recycling page for information about to print free signs.

**6. Set goals for the event.** This is helpful after the event and before the next event to let volunteers and staff know what they did matters. It also helps to increase public knowledge about your waste diversion efforts.

- Example: We want to achieve 50% waste diversion at this year's event.
- Waste diversion is calculated using this equation:
  - $(\text{Organics lbs}) + (\text{Recycle lbs}) / (\text{Trash lbs} + \text{Organics lbs} + \text{Recycle lbs})$

**7. Recruit volunteers.** At the waste stations, it is important to have volunteers assisting guests. Volunteers can help by:

- Instructing others on how to separate their waste.
- Changing bags if they become full.
- Using a pair of tongs or rubber gloves to pull out items that guests may accidentally place in the wrong container.

**8. Plan for how waste from your event will be disposed.** Be prepared to transport bags in a vehicle if the event facility does not collect recycling or organics for you. We recommend:

- Transporting them in a leak-proof container, like a plastic tub.

**9. Promote your efforts.** Remind your attendees there will be recycling (and organics). If there are invitations going out, remind guests you are trying to make your event less wasteful and to look for recycling bins at your event.

**10. Reflect on successes and opportunities for improvement.** After the event, be sure to ask attendees, volunteers, and vendors what they noticed or what could be improved for future events.