

Low-Waste Planning Guide

For Large Events

County Resources

Technical Assistance

- Staff answer questions and provide guidance.
- Free consulting services through BizRecycling.

Containers

- Portable containers for recycling and food scraps.
- Bags provided for each waste container.

Inventory of Event Equipment

Containers	Frames	Lids	Signs
Recycling (Blue)	30	30	30
Food Scraps (Green)	15	15	15

Pre-Event Planning

1. Meet with the event coordinator, waste hauler and others involved in managing waste.

2. Set goals for the event.

- Aim to achieve a specific waste diversion rate. Waste reduction refers to the amount of waste that was kept out of the trash. (Example: We want to achieve 50% waste diversion at this year's event.)
- Increase public knowledge about waste diversion.

+ **WHY:** This is helpful after the event and before the next event to let volunteers and staff know what they did matters.

3. Brainstorm items expected to be discarded.

- Consider what will be served by the vendors and what people may bring in with them.
- Include images of the expected waste on your waste container signs.

+ **WHY:** The items on-site will affect what waste containers you need and what education you must provide to vendors, volunteers and staff.

Signage

- Hanging signs available for each container.

Additional Resources

- Sample vendor letter.
Optional: Bring a scale to your event to weigh the amount of waste collected (a bathroom scale can work for this).



Pre-Event Planning (cont.)

4. Plan the waste stations.

- All waste containers should be located together, creating a waste station.
 - At least one trash, one recycling and one food scraps container (if using).
- Include signage for recycling and food scraps.
- Recruit volunteers to stand by each waste station to ensure waste is being discarded in the appropriate containers.
- Use a layout map of your event to plan where the waste stations will be located.
 - Place waste stations near heavy traffic areas, food vendors and gathering places.
 - Only put as many stations as you can have volunteers. A large event doesn't necessarily need 20 stations. Attendees can walk to a waste station.
- Decide who will set up and take down the waste stations.
- Decide who will empty the bags throughout the event and weigh the materials.
- Know where you will take your recycling. Remember that plastic bags are not recyclable. You must remove the recyclables from the plastic bags before recycling, or they will not be recycled. The bags can go in the trash.
- The bags used for food scraps are compostable, and therefore do not need to be separated from the contents inside.

5. Communicate with your vendors.

- Share your goals with the vendors and get them excited to contribute to your low-waste event.
- Ask vendors to only use **BPI certified** compostable food service items.
- Rewrite vendor contracts or permits so that they include a section on low waste.
(Example: *Require compostable food service items.*)

6. Plan for additional hauling.

- Contact your waste hauler to find out if they can offer food waste hauling or additional recycling carts for your event.

During the Event

Communication

- Have one to two staff or volunteers assigned as the go-to leads during the event.
- Train waste station volunteers right before the event if collecting food scraps.
- Answer questions from volunteers and event attendees.
- Take advantage of opportunities to engage and educate event attendees, including website, email and social media.

Vendors

- Check in with vendors as they set up. Make sure they are using the utensils and food ware that they said they would.
 - If they are not, communicate this to waste station volunteers.
 - Have a supply of compostable ware on hand that the vendors can purchase.

Waste Stations

- Place waste containers and signage at each waste station.
- Ensure that the bags at waste stations are emptied as needed.
IMPORTANT: Weigh bags each time they are taken from the waste station (a standard bathroom scale can work for this).
- Relieve volunteers as needed for breaks.

Calculate Your Waste Diversion Rate

$$\begin{array}{r} + \text{ (Food scraps pounds)} \\ + \text{ (Recycle pounds)} \\ \hline \text{ (Trash pounds)} \\ + \text{ (Food scraps pounds)} \\ \text{ (Recycled pounds)} \end{array}$$

After the Event

- If using a scale, calculate the waste diversion rate and share it with event attendees, volunteers and event staff.
- Ask volunteers what they noticed or what could be improved.
- Reflect on the successes and opportunities for improvement.
- Follow up with staff and volunteers after the event to communicate successes, waste diversion rate and a thank you.