

# LOW-WASTE PLANNING GUIDE FOR LARGE EVENTS



## COUNTY RESOURCES

### ✓ RECEPTACLES

- Portable x-frame receptacles for recycling and organics.
- Bags for each waste stream.

### ✓ SIGNAGE

- Hanging signs for waste stations.
- Business card-size cheat sheet for volunteers.

### ✓ TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

- Staff answer questions and provide guidance.
- Free consulting services through BizRecycling.
- Scale to weigh materials.

### ✓ ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- Sample vendor letter.

## Inventory of event equipment

Containers	Frames	Lids	Signs
Recycling (blue)	60	60	25
Organics (green)	30	30	25



# PRE-EVENT PLANNING

✔ **Meet with event coordinator, hauler and other applicable people.**

✔ **Set goals for the event**

- Achieve a waste diversion rate of \_\_\_%.  
(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.

✔ **Brainstorm the expected waste stream**

- 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 station signs.

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

✔ **Plan the waste stations**

- All receptacles must be located together.
  - At least one trash, one recycling, and one organics container (if using).
- Include signage for organics.
- Recruit volunteers to stand by each organics container if collecting organics.
- Use a layout map of your event to plan the sites of the waste stations.
  - 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 cans and bottles from the plastic bags before recycling, or they will not be recycled. The bags can go in the trash.

✔ **Communicate with your vendors**

- Share your goals with the vendors, get them excited to contribute to your low waste event.
- Ask vendors to only use compostable food service items (paper or plastic made from plants).  
*Note: paper plates, cups and bowls are comparable in price to Styrofoam and plastic.*
- Rewrite vendor contracts or permits so that they include a section on low waste  
(ex: *require compostable food service items*).

✔ **Plan for additional hauling**

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



# EVENT DAY

## DURING THE EVENT

### ✓ Communication

- Have 1-2 lead staff or volunteers assigned as the go-to leads during the event.
- Train waste station volunteers right before event if collecting organics.
- Answer questions from volunteers and event attendees.
- Take advantage of opportunities to engage and educate the event attendees, including website, email, Facebook and Twitter.

### ✓ Waste Stations

- Place receptacles 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 (use our scale).
- Relieve volunteers as needed for breaks.

### ✓ Vendors

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

## AFTER THE EVENT

- Calculate the waste diversion rate and share it with event attendees, volunteers, and event staff.

$$\frac{(\text{Organics lbs}) + (\text{Recycle lbs})}{(\text{Trash lbs} + \text{Organics lbs} + \text{Recycle lbs})}$$

- 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.