

# Zero Waste Event Planning Guide, 2015

compiled by  
 **zero**waste**neo**

# What is zero waste?

This information about zero waste events was compiled by the Zero Waste Northeast Ohio working group (ZeroWasteNEO), which formed at the first Sustainable Cleveland Summit in 2009.

ZeroWasteNEO's mission is to maximize resource recovery and landfill diversion in Northeast Ohio.

For more information, please visit  
[www.ZeroWasteNEO.com](http://www.ZeroWasteNEO.com)

**Zero waste** refers to the diversion of all non-hazardous waste from the landfill through recycling, composting, reducing, reusing, and upcycling. Zero waste requires thinking about how items can be eliminated from the waste stream and how the remaining waste can be converted into a resource. A **zero waste event or operation** strives to reduce waste generated and capture as much as possible for composting or recycling in order to minimize the amount of waste discarded in a landfill. As a practical matter, an event or operation is typically thought of as zero waste if it diverts 90% or more of its non-hazardous waste from the landfill.

**“If you’re not for zero waste, how much waste are you for?”**

-Gary Liss

## Getting to zero waste is as much a journey as it is a destination

In today's disposable society, it is often easier to throw things in the trash than to take the time and effort needed to properly recycle them. While 90%+ waste diversion may be the goal, steps need to be taken to get there and any reduction in the amount of waste landfilled is a step in the right direction.

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# Why zero waste?

## Economic

- ▮ Zero waste events can result in lower event costs
- ▮ Creates a market for green event products and services

## Environmental

- ▮ Reduces waste and diverts recyclable and compostable materials from going into landfills
- ▮ Reduces methane generation in landfills by diverting and composting organic materials

## Social

- ▮ Planning a zero waste event can promote a positive image, increase visibility and increase participation and turnout for the event
- ▮ Hosting zero waste events shows leadership in waste reduction and can encourage others to do the same
- ▮ Increases public awareness about zero waste events and general waste reduction

# In Northeast Ohio, the following methods are used to handle or reduce waste:

- **Recycling** saves resources, energy, and money by making products from previously used materials. Recycling turns waste into a commodity used to manufacture a product.
- **Composting** generates a useful soil amendment that adds nutrients to soil. Fruits, vegetables, paper, plant-based plastics, waxed paper, other natural products, and in some cases even meat and bones, can be composted under the proper conditions.
- **Landfilling** waste removes it from use, produces methane, a potent greenhouse gas, and potentially causes pollution in surrounding areas. Methane is a powerful heat-trapping gas in the Earth's atmosphere, but it can be captured and burned to produce energy. Landfilling does not make continued use of commodities, but instead ends their life cycle.
- Additional ways to reach zero waste include **minimizing waste** by analyzing how wastes are created and reducing input of items into a system or reusing items that would otherwise be disposed.

## Did you know?

Recycling one aluminum can saves enough energy to power a TV for 3 hours and reduces the energy needed to make a new can by 95% compared to a can made from raw materials.

With the right planning, just about any event, conference, seminar, convention or meeting can be a zero waste event.

**Smaller events** like meetings or seminars are a great opportunity to showcase zero waste initiatives to colleagues and peers. At the start of the meeting, attendees should be reminded about zero waste efforts and how to properly dispose of beverages, refreshments and serveware. **Larger events** require more planning and manpower to execute, but result in a greater impact in waste diversion and awareness.

Zero  
waste  
events  
come  
in all  
shapes  
and sizes!



# 1. Decide to host a zero waste event

- **Set zero waste goals** – it is a good idea to set a goal that is challenging, but also practical. For example, it might not be realistic to set a 100% waste diversion goal for the first event. Be sure to set goals that can easily be measured during the event (i.e. pounds of waste diverted or number of recycling bags collected).
- **Identify a leader and zero waste team** to champion zero waste efforts and keep everyone on track. This role is key to executing a successful zero waste event.



## 2. Review event operations & logistics

- Try to **find a venue** that is willing to work to meet your zero waste goals and determine necessary waste removal services (trash, recycling, composting) – does the event location provide any waste removal services? Next, find a vendor to provide those services (see **Appendix 1** for a list of waste, recycling and compost haulers).
- Determine what reusable, recyclable, and compostable materials are needed for the event and identify vendors to supply those items (see **Appendix 2** for a list of compostable serviceware distributors). Be sure to only use compostable serviceware that meets the ASTM D6400 specification for commercial composting.

### What is ASTM D6400, anyway?

Biodegradable ≠ compostable! ASTM D6400 is the standard specification for labeling of plastics designed to be aerobically composted in municipal or industrial facilities. It's important to make sure the serviceware being sent to a composting facility meets this specification so it will break down properly and won't compromise the quality of the compost. To be certified compostable, products have to break down over a certain period of time and cannot leave any toxic residue. Biodegradable products don't have to meet any eco-toxicity requirements, nor is there a breakdown time requirement. Ask the serviceware supplier if they meet this standard, or to find a supplier, visit <http://products.bpiworld.org>.



### Did you know?

The Cuyahoga County Solid Waste Management District has Zero Waste Volunteer vests available to loan. These vests are a great way to make sure that volunteers are easily recognizable. Contact the District at 216-443-3749 for more information.

- Stay within the event **budget** by determining if costs can be saved elsewhere to make room for the cost of composting. Perhaps consider a zero waste sponsorship or partnership to cover the added cost, especially for nonprofit or public organizations.
- **Identify the number of waste stations** and zero waste volunteers needed. Each waste station should have at least one easily distinguishable volunteer at all times to help attendees sort waste!
- **Think about** where the most waste will be generated. This will vary based on event, but likely wherever there is food, there will be waste. Also, the types of materials used will determine how the waste stations are set up. For example, if most items are compostable, with a few recyclable cans or bottles, it would make most sense to have more compost receptacles.

- **Develop a plan** for tracking and measuring waste generated at the event. Determine whether the waste will be measured in pounds/tons or bags collected. In general, the collection methods for waste, recyclable items and compost will dictate how they are measured. See **Appendix 4** for more information on measuring event waste.
- **Make a greater impact** by evaluating the waste stream. For example, bulk condiments can be substituted for individually packaged condiments such as ketchup, mustard, cream, or sugar to reduce the amount of landfilled waste. Single-use cups, plates, and utensils can be substituted for reusable items. If single-use items are required, compostable cups, plates, and utensils can be used, allowing waste to be composted rather than landfilled.



Only seven bags of trash were generated during EarthFest 2014. Nearly 10,000 visitors attended the event.

## Ditch the plastic bottle!

An easy way to reduce waste at the source is to eliminate single use disposable water bottles at the event. Plastic water bottles are an unnecessary addition to the waste stream and add cost. Depending on the event, the caterer may be able to provide tap or filtered water. For larger events, consider hiring a water distributor to supply water. See **Appendix 3** for a list of water distributors in Northeast Ohio, including the Cleveland Division of Water's Water buggy.



# 3. Communication, promotion & planning

- Consider using **electronic invitations**, such as EventBrite, and e-marketing strategies to promote the event, reducing paper waste.
- **Communicate with vendors and caterers** that the event is zero waste and work with them to source the right materials. See **Appendix 5** for questions to ask potential vendors and caterers and **Appendix 6** for an example message to caterers.
- **Update event marketing material** to indicate that it is a zero waste (or reduced waste) event, inviting attendees to help reach zero waste goals.
- **Recruit and educate volunteers.** In order for zero waste efforts to be successful, it's important to have a training session with volunteers so they know what goes where. See **Appendix 7** for an example guide for volunteers.

## Collecting RSVPs?

if invitations are mailed, consider having guests RSVP through a website, phone call or email instead of RSVP cards.

## Need help finding volunteers?

ZeroWasteNEO may be able to help! Contact ZeroWasteNEO at 216-662-2421 for more information.

- **Prepare signage** that is easy to understand and clearly communicates which items go in which receptacle. Including both words and the physical items on the sign is a great idea! Don't have the budget to print reusable zero waste signage? The Cleveland Office of Sustainability has signs available to loan. Contact the Office at 216-664-3652 for more information.
- Waste can always find a way to sneak into an event. **Have a day-of trouble shooting plan** for any potential issues that may arise during the event.

Even with great signage, each waste station still needs to be staffed by volunteers!



# 4. Execute!

- Ideally, each waste station should have at least one easily distinguishable volunteer at all times to help attendees sort waste. However, on the day of the event, you may find that there are not enough volunteers for each station. **If you find yourself short on volunteers**, try to group waste stations close so that one volunteer can oversee more than one station. Be sure to staff the waste stations with the heaviest traffic first, then as many other waste stations as volunteer numbers allow.
- If appropriate, **make announcements** throughout the event about zero waste. At the end of the event, consider making an announcement about how much (or how little) trash was generated!



## Dealing with unexpected waste streams:

No event is perfect and no matter how much planning and preparation occurs, unwanted waste can find ways to sneak in. Don't stress if an unexpected waste stream pops up at the event. If possible, try to find a way to collect the unwanted waste so that it can be properly disposed of after the event. Be sure to communicate to zero waste volunteers what to do if they come across unexpected waste.

- **Consider donating leftover food.** Coordinate with a local food bank/church/shelter beforehand as not everywhere can accept prepared food from events. The Cuyahoga County Solid Waste Management District website, [www.cuyahogaswd.org](http://www.cuyahogaswd.org), has information on food donation under the 'Business' category.



# 5. Measure & celebrate success

- Following the event, be sure to **measure the amount** of waste your zero waste efforts helped divert from landfills (in some cases, the waste/recycling/compost hauler may be able to provide the final weight of materials collected/diverted).
- Take notes or pictures of **what worked and didn't** work as a reminder for future zero waste events.
- If goals were met (or exceeded), be sure to **communicate your accomplishments** with event guests, sponsors and other stakeholders.

## Didn't meet your goals?

That's ok too! You can still share your waste reduction efforts and use the experience and lessons learned as you plan for future events.



Only one bag of trash was generated during the 2014 Sustainable Cleveland Summit. The two-day event saw over 500 visitors.

- **Give yourself a pat on the back!** A lot goes in to planning and coordinating zero waste events. Your zero waste efforts not only lead to less waste generated at the event, but also demonstrate leadership and set an example for others.



# Appendix 1:

## Local Compost, Recycling and Waste Hauling Companies

Disclaimer: the information below was current at the time of printing. For the most up to date information, please visit the Cuyahoga County Solid Waste Management District's Business Recycling Directory at [www.cuyahogaswd.org](http://www.cuyahogaswd.org).

### Food Composting

#### Barnes Landscape Materials & Organics Recycling

Provides compost services for food waste and compostable products meeting the ASTM D6400 standard. Call for details and pricing information.

[www.barnesnursery.com](http://www.barnesnursery.com)

419-433-1050

#### Organix Recycling

Provides compost hauling services for all food waste and compostable products meeting the ASTM D6400 standard. Contact Matt Myers for details and pricing information.

[www.organixrecycling.com](http://www.organixrecycling.com)

330-415-9707 // [mattm@organixrecycling.com](mailto:mattm@organixrecycling.com)

#### Groundz Recycling

Groundz is a nonprofit 501(c)3 organization dedicated to food waste recycling and education. Provides limited compost services for smaller events, businesses, schools, and restaurants. Cannot accept meat, dairy or compostable serviceware. Contact Greg Jackson for more information.

[gregjackson03@gmail.com](mailto:gregjackson03@gmail.com)

#### Rust Belt Riders

Works with food service providers and guests to separate preconsumer food waste. Using bicycle power, Rust Belt Riders collects and transports food waste to nearby community gardens to be processed into compost. Cannot currently accept meat, dairy, or compostable serviceware.

440-781-1054 // [RustBeltriders@gmail.com](mailto:RustBeltriders@gmail.com)

### Recycling and Waste Hauling

#### Kimble Recycling and Disposal

8500 Chamberlin Road

Twinsburg, Ohio 44087

800-201-0005

Accepts all paper, cardboard, glass bottles & jars, plastic bottles and food containers #1-7, aluminum cans, tin cans, empty aerosol cans, aluminum foil and pans, aseptic containers. Event boxes, like those seen in the photo on page 7 are available. Please contact Kimble Recycling and Disposal at [customerservice@kimblecompanies.com](mailto:customerservice@kimblecompanies.com) <http://www.kimblecompanies.com/>

#### Republic Services

8123 Jones Road

Cleveland, Ohio 44105

216-441-6300

-OR-

40195 Butternut Ridge Road

Elyria, Ohio 44035

440-458-5191

Accepts all paper (not shredded), cardboard, glass bottles, plastic bottles and food containers #1 - #7, aseptic containers, aluminum and bimetal cans <http://www.republicservices.com/Corporate/home.aspx>

#### Rumpke Waste & Recycling Services

3131 E. Royalton Road

Broadview Heights, Ohio 44147

1-800-828-8171

<http://www.rumpke.com>

#### Waste Management

Ted Strenkowski

District Manager

Cleveland Hauling

Wooster Hauling

Cell: 440-343-7096

Toll Free: 866-797-9018

<http://www.wm.com/index.jsp>

## Appendix 2:

### Compostable Material Distributors

Check to see if your compostable material vendor is  
BPI Certified: [www.bpiworld.org](http://www.bpiworld.org)

#### **World Centric**

101 H Street, Suite M  
Petaluma, CA 94952  
866-850-9732  
[www.worldcentric.org](http://www.worldcentric.org)

#### **TrueChoicePack (formerly BioGreenChoice)**

1285 Lyons Road, Bldg. H  
Dayton, OH 45458  
800-307-0681  
[www.biogreenchoice.com](http://www.biogreenchoice.com)

#### **Green Paper Products**

93 Alpha Park  
Highland Heights, OH 44143  
877-341-5464  
[www.greenpaperproducts.com](http://www.greenpaperproducts.com)

#### **Vegware**

1554 Thomas Road, S.E.  
Warren, OH 44484  
330-369-1192  
[www.vegwareus.com](http://www.vegwareus.com)

#### **Eco-Products, Inc.**

4755 Walnut Street  
Boulder, CO 80301  
303-449-1877  
[www.ecoproducts.com](http://www.ecoproducts.com)

## Appendix 3:

### Water Suppliers

#### **Cleveland Water's Portable Water Buggy**

1201 Lakeside Avenue  
Cleveland, OH 44114

The City of Cleveland Division of Water's water buggy is available to provide bulk water for events of 500 people or more. When requesting the buggy for events, a minimum of 2 months' notice is required to allow enough time for application approval. Contact Wanda Dobbins and Marcia Mays at the Division of Water for more information or to submit a request.

216-664-2444  
[wanda\\_dobbins@clevelandwater.com](mailto:wanda_dobbins@clevelandwater.com)  
[Marcia\\_mays@clevelandwater.com](mailto:Marcia_mays@clevelandwater.com)

#### **Dave's Water Delivery Inc.**

P.O. Box 431  
Hinckley, OH 44233  
Supplies bulk water for large events of 1,000 people or more. Contact Samuel for more information.  
330-461-3686  
[daveswaterdelivery@yahoo.com](mailto:daveswaterdelivery@yahoo.com)

## Appendix 4:

### Measuring Waste

#### How is waste measured?

In order to achieve the 90% waste diversion rate, or come as close as possible, developing a set of metrics to measure the amount of waste generated at an event, as well as the amount recycled or composted, is critical. Metrics may include individual measurements of certain commodities such as cardboard, paper, plastic containers, glass bottles, and aluminum and bimetal cans. They may also include a collective measurement of items in a comingled recycling system.

Commodities can be measured in any number of ways, but usually the collection methods for waste, recyclable items, and compost will dictate how they are measured. For example, trash is usually measured in cubic yards (yd<sup>3</sup>) by volume or by weight in either pounds or tons. If the event is small, such as a small office party or seminar, waste may be measured by the number and size of trash bags generated. If possible, the bags can be placed on a scale for accuracy.

#### How are recyclable and compostable items measured?

Since the purpose of having a zero waste event is to avoid and divert waste, focus should be placed on the quantity of recyclable commodities and compost generated.

#### Food Waste Composting

If commercial composting is provided at the event, it may be possible for the compost company to provide an average weight of each of the totes picked up at the event. Weight data should be requested from the compost company in advance, then it should be confirmed that the compostables are weighed and reported on the invoice. Compostables can also be weighed on a scale well depending on the event and convenience.

If food waste is collected in a compactor and it is the only item in the compactor, then you can get a copy of the weight ticket from the hauler. The weight might be recorded on your bill or the customer service office may have the weight as well. If the event is small and compost is only collected in a few bags for a garden or compost bin, the bags can simply be weighed on a scale.

#### Comingled Recycling

If recyclable items are collected separately, such as glass, plastic bottles, and aluminum cans, the containers or bags can be weighed on a scale if they are small enough. If revenue generation on the recyclable material is not expected, comingled recycling may be easier. For some events, including smaller ones, simply counting the number of bags filled with comingled recyclables may suffice.

#### Other Metrics

Besides measuring how much waste is being diverted when planning a zero waste event, cost savings may be measured as well. At the end of the event, add up the total cost of waste removal, recycling, and/or composting. Due to the current price of food waste composting in the Northeast Ohio area, it is possible that there may not be a cost savings or the event may be cost neutral. Other savings may be achieved by not purchasing disposal plates, cups, and cutlery. If the event is large enough, a profit may be made by selling the recyclable material.

#### Average weights:

Trash - 90 lbs/ cubic yard

Comingled recyclables – 40-50 lbs / cubic yard

Food waste compost– 200-250 lbs per 95 gallon tote

## Appendix 5:

### Example Questions for Vendors, Exhibitors & Caterers

#### THIS IS A ZERO WASTE EVENT

**Please provide answers to the following questions so we can make this event as zero waste as possible! If you have any questions, please contact \_\_\_\_\_**

1. What items will be served or available for guests of the event (food and/or giveaways depending on the vendor / exhibitor)?
2. For food vendors and/or exhibitors: How are the items packaged?
3. For exhibitors: Do the items contain any percent of post-consumer recycled content?
4. For exhibitors: Are any of the items recyclable?
5. For food vendors: Can you provide reusable serviceware? (tablecloths, silverware, glasses, mugs, plates and cloth napkins that can be washed and reused)
6. For food vendors: If not, will you be able to obtain Certified Compostable serviceware for the event?

## Appendix 6:

### Example Message to Caterers

#### THIS IS A ZERO WASTE EVENT

Since this is a zero waste event, all materials used when serving customers **MUST** be compostable. This means using paper based products and compostable cutlery. The following are some “do's” and “don'ts” for what should be used when serving our customers.

Do's	Don'ts
Paper Napkins	n/a
Paper Sandwich Wrap*	Aluminum Foil or Plastic Wrap
Paper Cupcake or Muffin Holders*	Foil Lined Cupcake or Muffin Holders
Paper Plates*	Plastic Plates or Styrofoam Plates
Paper Bowls*	Plastic Bowls or Styrofoam Bowls
Compostable Cutlery**	Plastic Cutlery
Bulk Dispenser Jars for Condiments	Individual Condiment Packages

\*Paper wrap or serving dishes can be waxed lined. Chinet also works.

\*\*Compostable cutlery—make sure the product is compostable, not just biodegradable. It will look like plastic, but is made of compostable materials. It must be rated at ASTM D 6400 to be compostable. The rating or label “compostable” is usually on the box or the cutlery. A local vendor that sells compostable products online is [www.greenpaperproducts.com](http://www.greenpaperproducts.com). Visit Biodegradable Products Institute at [www.bpi.world.org](http://www.bpi.world.org) for more information about compostable products and vendors.

For more information please contact: \_\_\_\_\_

I certify that I have read this message and will use 100% compostable products at \_\_\_\_\_ (event name)  
Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Date \_\_\_\_\_

# Appendix 7:

## Example Zero Waste Volunteer Guide

### Zero Waste Crew:

The table below indicates which items go in which bags/receptacles.

<b>Compostable (Greenish Bags):</b> -All food waste (includes bones) -Paper napkins -Paper plates -Paper sandwich wraps -Paper bags -Cardboard pizza boxes -Cups* -Cutlery* -Paper towels**  <i>*Cups and cutlery are special ordered, and are made from organic materials that are compostable.</i> <i>**All paper towels from the bathrooms will be composted.</i>	<b>Recycle (Clear Bags):</b> -Plastic bottles -Glass bottles -Metal cans -Aluminum cans -Paper (Brochures, Postcards, etc) -Cardboard -Plastic Containers #1 - #7 <b>Plastic grocery bags #2 and #4:</b> Keep separate and take to a grocery store for recycling  Note: Aluminum foil and serving tins can be collected in recycle bags if you are using Kimble. Otherwise, you can collect it separately and take it to an aluminum foil recycler.	<b>Trash (Black Bags):</b> -Baby diapers -Styrofoam -Single serving condiment packages
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### Transport Crew:

The Transport Crew's job is to empty waste receptacles as they fill up. The table below indicates which bags go in which containers and dumpsters.

Container	Bag	Dumpster
Compost Containers	Greenish compostable bags	Label dumpster for compost
Recycle Containers	Clear bags	Label dumpster for recycle
Trash	Black bags	Label dumpster for trash
Bathrooms	Greenish compostable bags for paper towels	Label dumpster for compost

If you are unsure about an item, please ask your Zero Waste Team Leader.

# Appendix 8:

## Event Checklist

A digital version of the event checklist can be downloaded at [www.zerowasteneo.com](http://www.zerowasteneo.com). For more information, contact the Office of Sustainability at 216-664-2455

STEP ONE: Decide to host a zero waste event (Getting Started and Venue Selection)			
X	Getting Started Tasks	Approximate Lead Time (ALT) *will vary based on event	Comments and additional information
	Event organizers become familiar with zero waste event concepts and benefits.	Initial Event Planning	See ZeroWasteNEO Zero Waste Event Guide for a list of benefits of hosting a zero waste event.
	Event organizers agree to make the event zero waste.	Initial Event Planning	
	Determine zero waste goals.	Initial Event Planning	Getting to zero waste (90%+ diversion) is a process. Set goals that are bold, but achievable.
	Identify a zero waste team leader and team.	Initial Event Planning	
X	Venue Tasks	ALT	Comments and additional information
	Choose a venue that is near public transportation and/or close to hotels if attendees are from out of town. Make sure to provide instructions for getting to the event using public transportation.	45-60 days	
	Choose a venue that will work with you to meet your zero waste goals (and be sure to document this in the contract).	45-60 days	If possible, choose a venue that includes: recycling infrastructure, reusable table cloths and serviceware available, and reusable decorations available
	If possible, hold the event at an outdoor location or one with natural lighting or in a LEED-certified facility. If lighting is used, make sure it is energy efficient.	45-60 days	
	When marketing the event, encourage carpooling, biking and walking (door prizes can be awarded to those who car pool, bike, or walk).	30-45 days	
STEP TWO: Review event operations and logistics (Food & Beverage and Recycling, Composting & Waste Management)			
X	Food and Beverage Tasks	ALT	Comments and additional information
	Select caterers with sustainable practices to serve food and beverages at the event.	45-60 days	See the ZeroWasteNEO Zero Waste Event Guide for an example message for caterers.
	Sustainably source a percentage of the menu to include local, organic, vegetarian/vegan, and/or certified fair trade food options.	45-60 days	
	Ask caterer(s) to purchase and pack food in bulk to reduce packaging brought to the event.	45-60 days	

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	To reduce unnecessary waste: -Consider use of finger foods or buffet-style serving -Serve beverages in pitchers instead of individual servings -Ensure appropriate ordering and serving portions -Serve condiments in bulk (no individual packets of ketchup, sugar, creamer, etc)	45-60 days	
	Make arrangements for tap or filtered water instead of bottled water. This may be provided by the caterer.	45-60 days	See the ZeroWasteNEO Zero Waste Event Guide for a list of bulk water suppliers for large events.
	Arrange to ONLY use reusable or compostable serviceware (dishes and cutlery), table cloths and napkins.	45-60 days	
	Make arrangements to donate or sell leftover food: -Have recycled/recyclable take-home containers on hand if leftover food will be sold or given to guests to take home; or -Make arrangements to donate excess food.	15-30 days	Not all organizations can accept donations of prepared food from events. Coordinate with a local food bank/ church/shelter to accept any leftovers from the event. Visit the Cuyahoga County Solid Waste Management District's website for more info: <a href="http://www.cuyahogaswd.org">www.cuyahogaswd.org</a>
	Order signage and menu cards to identify sustainable practices and food sources to educate event attendees.	30-45 days	
	Purchase all necessary food and beverage service items. If the caterer is to purchase these items, make sure to provide a list of what should be purchased to make the event zero waste.	15-30 days	See the ZeroWasteNEO Zero Waste Event Guide for a list of compostable serviceware suppliers.
	Forecast the headcount to avoid any unnecessary food waste.	7-14 days	
<b>X</b>	<b>Recycling, Composting and Waste Management Tasks</b>	<b>ALT</b>	<b>Comments and additional information</b>
	Work with vendors and caterers to evaluate all event waste streams.	45-60 days	
	Choose compost, recycle, and waste hauling companies (if location does not have a contract)	45-60 days	
	Determine how many zero waste stations will be needed (a diagram of the event is helpful).	45-60 days	Zero waste stations should be located where trash is generated (such as by food service & eating areas) and should be limited in number.
	Communicate zero waste guidelines to exhibitors.	45-60 days	
	Order compost, recycle, and trash bins along with liners and clearly labeled signage (unless the venue provides these).	30 days	
	Identify team of zero waste assistants/volunteers to help with the event.	15-30 days	

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## Event Checklist

	Determine how to measure waste. Bring in a scale or consult with hauler.	30 days	
	Order compost, recycle, and trash bins along with liners and clearly labeled signage (unless the venue provides these).	30 days	
	Identify a team of zero waste assistants/volunteers to help with the event.	15-30 days	
<b>STEP THREE: Communication, promotion and planning</b> (Invitations, announcements, and promotions)			
X	Invitations, Announcements, and Promotions	ALT	Comments and additional information
	Electronically distribute invitations (or mail them on highest possible 'post-consumer recycled content' paper).	30-45 days	
	If RSVP is required, provide a phone number, email or social media site instead of RSVP cards.	30-45 days	
	Promote the event electronically through social media and existing newsletters (i.e., to reduce paper waste, do not use a separate mailer).	30-45 days	
	Include zero waste information and other sustainable practices in all invitations and announcements and request event attendees' cooperation.	30-45 days	
	Limit giveaways: -Consider the environmental impact of prizes and packaging. -Provide giveaways that are resource or energy efficient products, such as cloth bags or reusable water bottles.	30-45 days	
	Make any poster, banner or signage from recycled materials and plan to reuse it at future events - don't include a date so signs can be reused.	30 days	
	Order printed materials including posters that state the percentage of 'post-consumer recycled content' to educate attendees.	30 days	
	Obtain reusable name tags and collect them at the end of the event.	30 days	
	Arrange for reusable, sustainably made centerpieces that can be given away as door prizes.	30 days	
	Make arrangements for all presentations to be electronic. Coordinate with presenters and arrange for overhead and necessary equipment.	15-30 days	

# Appendix 8:

## Event Checklist

### STEP FOUR: Execute!

X	Event Execution	ALT	Comments and additional information
	Set up compost, recycle, & trash bins in zero waste stations and remove all standalone containers.	Day before event	Compost, recycle, and trash containers should be co-located at each zero waste station. All other trash containers must be removed to avoid improper usage.
	Clearly label each container for proper usage and make sure containers have correct liners.	Day before event	
	Instruct clean-up and kitchen staff on proper bin use. A brief 1/2 page handout is helpful.	Before event opens	
	Train zero waste volunteers.	Before event opens	
	Assign zero waste volunteers to each zero waste station to educate and ensure proper use of containers by attendees.	Before event opens	
	Schedule announcements to occur throughout the event to educate attendees on zero waste.	Before event opens	

### STEP FIVE: Measure and celebrate success (After Event and Other Considerations)

X	After Event/Other Considerations	ALT	Comments and additional information
	Conduct an exit survey about zero waste for participants. This can be done electronically or onsite, or incorporated into an existing exit survey.	Day of event or post-event	
	Take notes or pictures of what worked and didn't work as a reminder for future zero waste events.	During or immediately after the event	
	Measure results by collecting the volume, weight, or number of bags of compost, recyclables and trash and document the results.	Immediately after the event	See the ZeroWasteNEO Zero Waste Event Guide for tips on measuring waste.
	Determine if goals were achieved. Document any "lessons learned" to improve the next zero waste event.	1-15 days post event	
	Celebrate your success! Communicate accomplishments with event guests, sponsors and other stakeholders	2-10 days after the event	
	Extra credit: Calculate the carbon footprint for the event.	Any time	



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