



# ZERO WASTE EVENT GUIDE

## WHAT IS A ZERO WASTE EVENT?

A Zero Waste Event is any one-time program, occasion, or event that diverts 90% or more of the event's materials from the landfill. Now you can have your own Zero Waste Event at Ohio State! All you need to do is follow these simple steps.

## HOW TO HOST ZERO WASTE EVENT

### 1. Set a Realistic Goal

Ohio State is pursuing zero waste efforts across campus. The Zero Waste Event Service is provided to help minimize the impact of events hosted at Ohio State.

Before you begin, set a challenging but realistic goal (over 90% diverted can be considered zero waste). Sharing this goal with event stakeholders may help garner their support for your effort, especially if you can show them how a specific change in event planning will help reach your goal (e.g. purchasing compostable dining ware will allow you to divert X% to composting).

Use the Zero Waste Planning Checklist document to help plan the tasks you need to accomplish.

### 2. Apply for your Zero Waste Event

Now that you have worked with your event planning team to set a goal and considered the following Zero Waste Event Planning Checklist, you are ready to apply for a Zero Waste Event. In order to ensure the success of the program Energy Services and Sustainability shall approve events based on the following criteria:

- The size of the event
- The availability of resources within FOD
- The commitment to follow the Zero Waste Planning Checklist
- The acceptance of liability for any damage to the Zero Waste Package provided by FOD

Complete the Zero Waste Event Application document and email to [recycle@osu.edu](mailto:recycle@osu.edu) prior to the event. We encourage at least two months advance notice but it is not required.

### 3. Acquire the Zero Waste Event Package

Once the Zero Waste Event Application has been approved, the Zero Waste Event Package must be rented through FOD for your event. Please make your request as far in advance as possible to guarantee availability. There is a small charge for this event package. The package includes the waste containers, liners, and signage. The waste containers are specific to the Zero Waste Event, and include containers that separate all three waste streams. The liners provided will be specific to each waste stream. The signage will clearly explain what sorts of waste are appropriate for each waste stream (recyclable, compostable, or trash). At this time you cannot provide your own trash bins. To request the Zero Waste Event Package from FOD, please contact Service to Facilities either through e-mail [service2facilities@osu.edu](mailto:service2facilities@osu.edu) or (614) 292-HELP.

## TIPS AND SUGGESTIONS TO MAKE YOUR EVENT ZERO WASTE

### 1. Location

Events held in the Blackwell Inn and Conference Center, Ohio Union, Faculty Club, Fawcett Center, Ohio Stadium, or Kennedy Commons are well suited to support Zero Waste Events. These buildings already collect organic material.

Other buildings on campus can also support Zero Waste Events on campus, but the process requires a few more steps. Compost must be brought to the loading dock after the event. In most cases, the compost will be picked up by FOD.

### 2. Create a Purchasing Plan

Think about what you are purchasing for the event. The essential aspect of the Zero Waste Event is that you strive to minimize all waste. Begin with the end in mind, and think about the types of waste that will be generated from your event. The majority of what you purchase will likely become waste.

**A). Utilize items with minimal packaging.** Consider using items with minimal or no packaging. Examples include:

- Bulk condiments (e.g. ketchup, mustard, coffee creamer, sugar) instead of individual packets.
- Buffet-style food service instead of individual boxed lunches or other meals.

**B). Use reusable and durable items.** Examples include:

- China, glassware, and silverware instead of disposable plates and forks.
- Cloth tablecloths instead of plastic or paper cloths.
- One large printed or projected (for a limited time) agenda instead of individually printed agendas.

- Reusable signage. Avoid printing dates or locations on event signage so that it can be reused for future events.
- Reusable plastic name-tag holders.

If providing giveaways, ensure that they are environmentally sustainable. For example, gifts could be compostable, Fair Trade, and/or made with recycled content/materials. Also, ensure that giveaways are practical and durable rather than objects that will soon end up in a landfill.

**C). Utilize compostable or recyclable only products.** Examples include:

- Paper and foil wrap, which are recyclable, instead of plastic wrap and bags.
- Paper pamphlets printed on recycled paper.

Most compost sites will only accept plastics that are compostable per the ASTM D6400 standard. When purchasing compostable items, be sure to inquire about the product meeting this standard. Commonly acceptable items include compostable plates, cups, bowls, forks, knives, spoons, brown napkins and general food waste. These items may be more expensive than conventional varieties. Napkins should not be of the chlorine-bleached variety.

It is ideal to encourage attendees to bring their own utensils if reusable serving ware is not available. If this is not possible, providing 100% post-consumer utensils is also a more acceptable option than compostable utensils.

**D). Food.** Use a caterer that specializes in Zero Waste Events. Let the caterer know what your goal is and ensure that they outline how they will meet your requirements.

**Approved Ohio State Caterers**

Check with Ohio State's event guide:

<http://planevents.osu.edu/>

The Ohio State University Alumni Association, Inc.:

<http://www.ohiostatealumni.org/longaberger/Catering/Pages/ApprovedCaterers.aspx>

Wexner Center:

<http://goo.gl/2GkyK>

University Catering:

<http://library.osu.edu/about/locations/thompson-library/room-rental/catering-information/>

**E). Recycle and Compost**

Please familiarize yourself with the "What Can I Recycle" document at [footprint.osu.edu](http://footprint.osu.edu), which explains what items can and cannot be composted and recycled.

Ensure that recyclables at your event fall under Ohio State's recycling policy.

If you are unsure that the materials you are planning on composting are acceptable, contact Energy Services and Sustainability. It is important to remember that the composting facility CANNOT accept and will reject any contaminated product. This program's success and vitality depends on your strict adherence of these guidelines.

**F.) Further reduce environmental impact of the event:**

1. Provide appropriate food portions to avoid food waste.
2. Use electronic tools for promotion and materials.
3. Post event information on a website instead of providing paper copies. Promote the website often and widely.
4. Offer online registration only.
5. Reduce net energy usage by requesting that the caterers utilize as many local ingredients as possible.
6. Try to host event using as much natural light as possible.
7. Encourage attendees to utilize bicycles or public transportation to get to the event. Perhaps offer an incentive.

**3. Acquire Volunteers**

Ensure that you have ample volunteers available to staff the waste stations and provide quality control of the material that enters each waste stream.

A pre-event training with volunteers is strongly suggested to help ensure that the same message will be conveyed by everyone and to answer any questions. Provide volunteers with the Zero Waste Event Volunteer Guide, and review this guide during the training. Tell volunteers exactly what waste stream each specific item belongs in that will be consumed at the event.

As the zero waste concept is new to many people, it is imperative that all waste stations (recycling, compost, trash) are staffed by someone that knows what type of material can go into which bin. For maximum impact, ensure that your volunteers are only responsible for monitoring the waste stations and not other tasks (e.g. ushering, food service, etc.). You may also need staffing for other jobs, including taking filled bags to the dumpster area and lining empty bins. If your event will be longer than 2-3 hours, you may need to sign volunteers up for shifts.

Make sure to provide the Zero Waste Event Volunteer Guide to volunteers during the training session for more information.

#### 4. Marketing

Promote your event!

1. If printing signs, use post-consumer recycled content paper and post on reclaimed cardboard if possible. UniPrint has expertise in environmentally friendly printing services, including soy-based inks.
2. Make signage that includes:
3. Images of examples of items at the event and which bin each item belongs in
4. Informing attendees that they are participating in a Zero Waste Event
5. Contact the Lantern at lanternnewsroom@gmail.com as well as other media or news outlets ahead of time to cover the event.
6. Send event information to sustainability@osu.edu for campus-wide promotion.
7. At end of event, tell attendees how you made it zero waste. Explain how attendees can reduce their environmental impact in their own lives as well.

#### 5. Day of Event

1. For most buildings, FOD will deliver bin liners and containers to loading dock of event location before event. Liners and containers must be wheeled from loading dock to event and back to loading dock after event.
2. Set up waste stations and lined bins with appropriate liners
3. Place waste station(s) in a strategic location where:
  - a. Volunteers have enough room to stand behind bins
  - b. Bins are visible and in a convenient location, but not in the way
  - c. Bins can only be approached from one direction
4. Attach signs properly to waste station
5. Check bins often for contamination and remediate
6. If there is any regular trash or recycle bins in the event space, remove them to avoid confusion.
7. Ensure that volunteers are situated properly and fully understand their roles.
8. Make announcements throughout the event about the zero waste effort and its impact on the environment.
9. Between speakers remind people about the zero waste effort and what is recyclable and compostable.

#### 6. Reporting

After the event, estimate volume of waste produced. Report waste information and verify if your event achieved zero waste credentials.

- How to estimate your diversion:
  - o Each container is 30 gallons
  - o Determine the volume of each waste stream, based on how full the bin is
  - o i.e. the trash is ¼ full = 7.5 gallons
  - o Add all volumes together. Trash+Recycling+Compost = x
  - o Compost+Recycling = y
  - o Divide  $y/x$  = Diversion Rate %

#### 7. Survey

Energy Services and Sustainability will send you a follow-up survey after your event. This survey will help us gain an understanding of how we can improve the program. Your feedback and commitment to the environment is greatly appreciated.