

# Zero Waste Outreach Event Guidelines



UCAR and NCAR strive to offer zero waste events. Going for zero waste means that we prioritize the conservation of our precious resources by first minimizing the amount of “stuff” we need to use for our events, then making sure the “stuff” we do use can be re-used, recycled, or composted afterwards. We may still have a few things going to the landfill, but we can get close to zero!

Thank you for sharing our commitment to zero waste!

## **Printing**

- **Quantity**: Minimize the number and length of printed materials.
- **Double-sided** (duplex) printing.
- **Recycled Paper**: Use a minimum of 30% post-consumer content. 100% post-consumer content paper is now available in most office supply stores.
- **Paper Color**: Use white or light-colored paper. Dark and fluorescent papers are not recyclable.
- **Uncoated Paper**: Avoid glossy or coated paper, which have low recycle value.
- **Print Shops**: Printers who are committed to using environmentally-preferable materials will source the best quality recycled paper at the lowest price. Some printers who do not regularly source high-quality recycled paper will tell you that printing on recycled paper will give you lower print quality.

## **Signage**

- **Plan for Re-use**: Avoid creating one-time-use signage. Whenever possible, opt for signage that can be re-used without modification, or that can be readily altered to be used in the future.
- **Materials Choice**: Choose sign materials that can be recycled or composted at the end of their useful life. Avoid materials that have toxic components, such as vinyl.

## **Buy Local**

- **Product Transport**: Minimize product transport by purchasing event materials within your community whenever possible. Plan ahead to minimize the number of shipments or shopping trips you make.
- **Materials Source**: Check the origin of the items you’re buying. Choose items produced locally whenever possible.

## **Give-aways**

- **Quantity**: Minimize what you give away – ask if each item has educational value.
- **Value**: Choose items that are truly re-usable and will serve a useful purpose for the recipients. Many things that are “cool” at first glance end up in a trash bin. Ask yourself how much the recipient will value the item a day or a week after the event.
- **Avoid Landfill**: Offer give-aways that are recyclable or compostable at the end of their useful life, or that are edible.
- **Recyclability**: Make sure it can really be recycled – check to see that the item can be recycled in Boulder-Denver metro area curbside recycle collection. Some items that are labeled as recyclable cannot actually be recycled in our area.
- **Packaging**: Minimize – or skip – packaging on handouts. If the item requires packaging, make sure the package is recyclable in standard Boulder-Denver metro area curbside recycle collection.

## **Local Recycling Resources**

### **Eco-Cycle Recycle Collection List**

[http://ecocycle.org/newsletters/pdfs/2008ECTfall\\_pullout.pdf](http://ecocycle.org/newsletters/pdfs/2008ECTfall_pullout.pdf)

### **Western Disposal Recycle Collection List**

[http://www.westerndisposal.com/knowbefore\\_residentialguidelines.html#recyclingguidelines](http://www.westerndisposal.com/knowbefore_residentialguidelines.html#recyclingguidelines)

## **Food & Drink/ Catering:**

- Use water glasses and bulk containers or pitchers for water, iced tea, or lemonade– and in particular do not use bottled or imported water. This is a much cheaper solution for the budget and makes a huge difference in a green event’s success.
- When placing a catering order, decline to use disposable plates, cups, silverware, and napkins. Instead use washable and reusable plates, glasses, cutlery, tableware, napkins, linen, and serving utensils. If disposable is absolutely necessary, provide compostable or recyclable options, and make sure the event center has recycle/compost facilities.
- Serve dishes “family style” to avoid individually packaged products such as: sandwich platters, salad bowls, cookies or chips.
- Whenever possible, use bulk containers for condiments instead of using individually wrapped items (such as: ketchup, mayo, mustard, mints, salt, pepper, or sugar).
- Serve finger foods for snacks and receptions. For example: vegetables and dip, cheese, crackers, skewers of fruit or grilled meat, etc. These items don’t require utensils and trash isn’t created from individual wrappers.
- At a buffet, consider using smaller-sized plates for the food. This encourages guests to take only the food they need, reducing food waste.
- If serving alcohol, supply bartenders with recycling bins so all glass, plastic, and aluminum containers can be recycled with other event recycling.
- Provide cocktail napkins, straws and stirrers only upon request.
- Replace plastic red cups, with clear #1 / #2 plastic cups that can go in regular recycling bins.
- If individual lunches are needed, use recyclable paper bags instead of lined lunch boxes.
- Avoid the use of plastic coffee stirrers, straws, and toothpicks. (or use compostable wooden ones or silverware if they are necessary)
- Make arrangements to donate any usable leftovers to a food bank or shelter.



For more information, contact: Kay Gazaway, Sustainability Outreach Coordinator  
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## **Reduce Paper**

- Speakers can provide a copy of their lecture notes or handout materials online for easy reference or email them to attendees prior to the event.
- If speakers need to write or draw provide multi-use dry erase boards in presentation rooms instead of paper flip charts.

## **Presentation:**

- Use cloth or sturdy plastic tablecloths that can be cleaned and reused.
- Avoid disposable decorations (plastic figurines, balloons, glitter, etc)
- Choose reusable and sustainable centerpieces like potted plants, local flowers, fruit, etc. These can then be offered to guests to take home after the event or composted.

## **Recycling & Composting**

- Set up a recycling and compost bin next to each trash can and line with clear liners to make it easy to check for unrecyclable waste.
- Place well-labeled signs by compost, trash, and recycling bins to educate guests about green efforts and to teach them how to sort their waste.
- Be sure to provide adequate signage explaining which materials are allowed in each bin. Place small, discreet signs on tables describing which items are recyclable and which items are compostable. If serving a sack/box lunch, provide a description of the recycling and composting program in the sack/box.

## **Promoting Your Green Efforts:**

- Educate attendees about all the green practices at the event and encourage their involvement.
- Including recycling/composting station locations on event maps and floor plans is an easy way to advertise recycling efforts without needing additional printed materials.
- Make announcements about recycling and other green efforts in opening remarks and at breakout sessions.