

# 3 Steps to a Low-Waste Event

## 1. Control Your Waste

### Use Reusable Items

The most important thing you can do is to not create waste in the first place! Start by using reusable items and eliminating waste whenever possible.

- Use reusable plates, glasses, cutlery and napkins
- Serve locally grown and produced food
- Purchase in bulk to minimize packaging waste

### Use Compostable or Recyclable Items

If reusable items are not possible for your event, make sure you purchase recyclable or compostable products. All paper napkins are compostable, but if you are choosing cutlery, plates, cups, or other products ensure that they are BPI-certified.

### Collect Organic and Recyclable Material

Set up one or multiple stations with trash, recycling and organics collection containers near major entrances/exits and food stations. For your organics receptacles, use BPI-certified compostable bags. Compostable bags and plates can be purchased at most stores like Target and Home Depot or at Litin Paper Co. (make sure they are BPI certified!) For a small amount of organics material, it can be dropped off at The Mulch Store in Rosemount for \$2/any size bag. Recycling can be dropped off at The Recycling Zone in Eagan. For more than several bags of material, you will want to work with your event hauler for recycling, organics and trash pickup.

## 2. Advertise

### Announce

Make sure your guests or event attendees know that the event is low waste! Consider adding a few words about low-waste on handouts or event website, and make an announcement at the beginning and during the event. In the announcement, clarify which items go where.

### Signage

Ample signage is needed at the waste stations. Make a sign for each receptacle that states the waste category in large print (i.e. trash/recycle/organics). Color-code the signs (black/grey for trash, blue for recycling and green for organics) and consider including pictures of which waste items go in which receptacle. A minimum of one sign per receptacle is needed. It is best to have multiple signs: on the front, on the lid, on the sides, and above the receptacle at eye-level.

## 3. Recruit Help

Recruit a few other guests to support the low-waste goal. Teach them how to sort their waste so they can model the proper sorting behavior and answer questions for the other guests. For a large event, consider having a person continually posted at the waste station as a monitor and educator.

### Compostable Food Service Items

- ✓ BPI certified compostable products (plates, cups, bowls, and utensils)
- ✓ Paper napkins and towels



*Look for this logo*



# Free Dakota County Resources

## Receptacles

- Portable x-frame receptacles
  - Recycling: 75
  - Organics: 30
  - Trash: 30
- Bags for each waste stream
- Signs for each x-frame

## Signage

- Tall banners for waste stations with weights or stakes (10)
- Hanging banners for waste stations (6)
- Table tops tents
- Vendor window signs
- Labels for permanent containers

## Staff

- Intern to help plan and day-of help
- Volunteer network for day-of help

## Additional Resources

- Volunteer “Green Squad” vests (10)
- Litter grabbers (22)
- Tents for waste stations with sandbag weights (5)
- Digital scales to weigh collected materials (3)
- Volunteer training materials
- Template contracts to work with food vendors



## Helpful Best Practices

Dakota County [www.dakotacounty.us](http://www.dakotacounty.us)

Rethink Recycling Event Planning Guide [www.rethinkrecycling.com](http://www.rethinkrecycling.com)

Hennepin County, Event Recycling Toolkit [www.hennepin.us/eventrecycling](http://www.hennepin.us/eventrecycling)

Eureka Recycling Zero Waste Event Resources [www.eurekarecycling.org](http://www.eurekarecycling.org)