

# Planning a Zero Waste Event

Every year, the City of Durango oversees around 200 unique special events. These events draw thousands of visitors and are part of what makes our community a vibrant place to live, work and play.

## Special events also produce a lot of waste.

This guide was developed to help event organizers reduce the amount of waste produced at events and ultimately work towards the goal of sending zero waste to landfill.

**Zero Waste** is a philosophy and strategy to reduce our environmental footprint by minimizing the amount of waste that must be landfilled through reduction, reuse, recycling, composting and education.

## ↓ REDUCE

- Avoid printing unnecessary materials and use paper with the highest recycled content possible
- Consider finger food that doesn't require utensils and provide water jugs or fill stations instead of plastic water bottles
- Communicate zero waste goals to partners, vendors and participants to avoid single-use, non-recyclable items such as polystyrene cups, plastic utensils and condiment sachets being used.



Contact the City of Durango Special Events Team to find out more about renting one of our bulk water dispensers for your event! (970) 375-7325

## ♻️ REUSE

- For recurring events, consider promotional materials, such as banners, that are not date-specific
- Require or provide reusable cups, dishes etc. or incentivize attendees to bring their own
- Consider investing in or making reusable decorations
- Donate excess edible food to volunteers or a local non-profit.



Organics are often the largest waste stream at events. Plan to donate or compost organic material. Compost collection is available in Durango through Table to Farm Compost

## ♻️ RECYCLE

- The City of Durango requires single stream recycling at events with a special activities permit
- Use materials that can be recycled or composted locally - make sure you and your vendors know in advance what is accepted by your waste provider(s)
- Ensure that trash, recycling and compost containers are co-located at Zero Waste Stations with clear signage and labelling
- Staff Zero Waste Stations with trained volunteers to minimize contamination.

Contact the City of Durango for more information:

Sustainability: [sustainability@durangogov.org](mailto:sustainability@durangogov.org) / (970) 375-5061

Community Events: [alex.wilkinson@durangogov.org](mailto:alex.wilkinson@durangogov.org) / (970) 375-7325



# Zero Waste Event Checklist

## PRE-EVENT PLANNING

### 1. Establish goals

- Create a recycling and waste prevention plan
  - Identify opportunities for waste prevention
  - Create task list with due dates
  - Produce maps with Waste Station sites and signage locations
  - Assign volunteer/employee tasks and shifts.

### 2. Identify waste streams and providers

- Identify key waste streams and provider(s) for disposal
  - Trash, recycle, donation, compost
  - Check with your provider(s) to learn what materials are accepted
  - Rent or develop signage for Waste Stations in collaboration with provider(s)
  - Train zero waste volunteers.

### 3. Communicate to partners, vendors and attendees

- Communicate goals to vendors early
  - Include zero waste clause in vendor applications and contracts
  - Consider banning non-recyclable and non-compostable products at the event
  - Provide guidance on waste prevention as well as how to identify recyclable and compostable materials
  - Instruct vendors not to set up a garbage can for public use.
- Create zero waste marketing campaign
  - Include zero waste language in promotional materials, event programs, press releases etc.
  - Promote zero waste goals on social media.

## ON-THE-DAY

### 1. Set-up

- Set-up waste stations
  - Ensure recycling and compost container set up at every location there is a trash container
  - Place Waste Stations in visible location with clear signage as per was pre-event plan.
- Vendor and volunteer coordination
  - Check vendor materials and collect samples of any non-recyclable/compostable items
  - Provide necessary equipment to volunteers (gloves, maps, t-shirts etc.)
  - Ensure volunteers are aware of any non-recyclable/compostable items.

### 2. During the event

- Monitor Stations
  - Check stations for contamination and re-sort if necessary
  - Empty/remove full containers.
- Publicity
  - Make announcements throughout the event highlighting zero waste and thanking volunteers
  - Mention zero waste goals in interviews, social media updates etc.

### 3. Tear-down

- Final sweep and waste volume measurement.

## POST-EVENT

### 1. Re-use

- Donate leftover food to volunteers/soup kitchen
- Recover decorations, signage etc. for re-use.

### 2. Evaluate and publicize

- Collect feedback from vendors, volunteers & attendees. Identify improvement opportunities
- Communicate diversion rates and success.

Contact the City of Durango for more information:

Sustainability: [sustainability@durangogov.org](mailto:sustainability@durangogov.org) / (970) 375-5061

Community Events: [alex.wilkinson@durangogov.org](mailto:alex.wilkinson@durangogov.org) / (970) 375-7325

