



Event Planning Guide for Waste Reduction & Zero Waste

The City of Bellevue encourages groups hosting events at City Hall to reduce their waste and even make them zero waste events, if possible. Below are tips, tools and resources to make environmentally responsible choices for your meetings and events.

Where to Start: Planning is key to creating a successful zero waste event. Identify areas where you can reduce or eliminate waste and then set goals for yourself.

- Be creative and have fun.
- Develop strategies you can use long-term.
- Communicate your goals to organizers and participants.
- Remember that success is a team effort.

Event Advertising Tips:

- Use electronic media (website, email, electronic newsletters) for publicizing the event.
- Offer electronic registration or confirmation.
- Use flyers sparsely and strategically, for example where people congregate (like food lines).
- Design signs that are timeless so that you can reuse them at your next event or use recyclable signs.

Food at Your Event:

- Forecast the head count to avoid food waste. Use RSVPs or registration to assist in forecasting.
- Use finger foods and serve food buffet style.
- Use washable tableware, cups, flatware and linens, or compostable dishware – this would be Chinet® paper plates (they are not “coated” with plastic film) or any other compostable plates, cups and flatware approved by our local composting facility, Cedar Grove Composting (approved products may be purchased directly from them at http://www.gogreenscene.com/Food_Services-list.aspx. Most paper cups have some plastic in them, so these would not be recyclable or compostable.
- Provide incentives for attendees to bring reusable items (mugs, utensils, etc.)
- Seek caterers that can maximize the use of local, seasonal, and organic food and use only recyclable packaging, and as little as possible. Caterers are crucial partners in an effort to make your event zero waste.
- Work with caterers to ensure that packaging being used is compostable at our local composting facility, Cedar Grove Composting (approved products may be purchased directly from them at http://www.gogreenscene.com/Food_Services-list.aspx or their new line of biodegradable products at <http://www.cedargrovetpackaging.com/>).

Avoid	Alternatives
Single serving packets (like Half & Half)	Bulk containers (like a carton or pitcher)
Plastic or Styrofoam dining ware and utensils	Paper dining ware and products (not coated with plastic, for example, Chinet®). Biodegradable utensils, cups, straws, lids, etc. See approved Cedar Grove Composting list at http://www.gogreenscene.com/Food_Services-list.aspx .
Disposable containers for foods	Reusable containers

Excessive quantities of food	Appropriate food portions
Plastic wrappers and films	Paper wrappers and tin foil
Plastic stir sticks	Wooden stir sticks

Collecting Recyclables at the Event at Bellevue City Hall:

- Request recycling and food waste containers when you reserve the meeting room.
- Set up zero waste collection stations strategically at the event (food waste container, recycling container, and a small garbage container for items such as chip bags and lids on plastic bottles, which are not recyclable).
- Clearly mark containers with large, reusable signs (if possible, it is good to have someone at the stations to help people sort...also a good educational opportunity).
- Place small, reusable signs on each table telling people they are attending a zero waste event.
- It's always nice to offer to help take the recycling and food waste to the City Hall loading dock.
- Educate meeting attendees to recycle.

Decorations and Handouts:

- Avoid mass distribution of handouts (printed material). Instead, make the printed material or presentation available electronically.
- Print double-sided copies.
- Avoid lamination, unless you can reuse the publication.
- Keep decorations to a minimum.
- Use real plates, napkins, and tablecloths. It will add elegance to your event and will be a great decorative element. If you use paper table cloths, make sure they are not plastic lined so they can be recycled.
- Use decorations that can be recycled or reused.
- Provide, and later collect, reusable name badges.

Attendance Incentives/Awards/Gifts:

- Consider the environmental impact of prizes and their packaging.
- Give resource or energy efficient products.
- Give items that are usable, such as cloth bags, native plant seeds, and potted plants.
- Select products made from recycled materials.

Links:

<http://www.storyofstuff.com>

http://www.gogreenscene.com/Food_Services-list.aspx

<http://www.cedargrovepackaging.com/>