



## Bellevue Event Planning Guide for Waste Reduction & Zero Waste

The City of Bellevue encourages groups hosting events at city facilities to reduce their waste, and even strive to make them zero-waste events. Below you will find tips, tools, and resources to make environmentally responsible choices for your meetings.

**How to Get Started:** Event planning is the key to creating successful zero-waste events. Identify areas where you can reduce or eliminate waste and then set goals for yourself. Below are a few planning guidelines:

- Develop strategies you can use long-term.
- Communicate your goals to organizers and participants, because success is a team effort.
- If you get stuck, ask for help.
- Be creative and have fun!

### Advertising Your Event

- 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.
- Seek caterers that can maximize the use of local, seasonal, and organic food and use packaging that can be recycled or composted, and as little as possible. Caterers are crucial partners in an effort to make your event zero waste.
- Use durable tableware, pitchers, cups, flatware and linens. Provide incentives for attendees to bring reusable items (mugs, utensils, etc.). City Hall and a few other facilities have dishwashers for events!
- If you need to use disposable items, use compostable – this would be uncoated paper plates (e.g. Chinet®) or any other compostable plates, cups and flatware approved by our local composting facility (a list may be found at <http://cedar-grove.com/commercial/accepted-items/> ).

Avoid	Alternatives
Single serving packets (like Half & Half)	Bulk containers (like a carton or pitcher of Half & Half)
Plastic or Styrofoam dining ware and utensils	Uncoated paper products (for example, Chinet®). Biodegradable utensils, cups, straws, lids, etc.
Disposable containers for foods	Reusable containers
Excessive quantities of food	Appropriate food portions
Plastic wrappers and films	Paper wrappers and aluminum foil
Plastic stir sticks	Wooden stir sticks
Bottled water and single serve beverage containers	Use tap water & encourage the use of reusable thermos, bottles, mugs

## Collecting Recyclables and Compostables at the Event

- Request recycling and food waste collection containers when you reserve the meeting room if you do not see what you need in the room.
- Set up collection stations strategically at the event (e.g. a compost container, recycling container, and a small garbage container for items such as chip bags, which are not recyclable).
- Tell attendees they are at a zero-waste event and you need their help!
- Clearly mark containers with large, reusable signs.
- Research what can and can't be recycled and composted. For instance most coffee cups and lids are coated with plastic, and cannot be *composted* but if they are clean they can be *recycled*. [http://www.bellevuewa.gov/pdf/Utilities/Bellevue\\_Commercial\\_Brochure\(1\).pdf](http://www.bellevuewa.gov/pdf/Utilities/Bellevue_Commercial_Brochure(1).pdf)
- Provide simple instructions and assistance for people on what they can recycle, compost, or throw away.
- Ask what the protocol is for cleaning up after your event. You may need to take your material to the correct dumpster for disposal.

## Decorations and Handouts

- Avoid mass distribution of printed agendas and handouts. Instead, make the printed material or presentation available electronically or on a flip-chart, especially if people might bring their own copies. (Tip: use low-VOC and water-based pens so people don't get headaches).
- Always print double-sided, and avoid color copies unless absolutely necessary to save money.
- Avoid lamination, unless you plan to use the publication for a long period of time.
- Keep disposable decorations to a minimum. Use decorations that can be recycled or reused.
- Provide reusable name badge holders and collect them after the meeting.

## Awards and Giveaways

- Decide whether giveaways are desired and necessary—most quickly become trash.
- If you do give gifts, select environmentally-friendly items such as cloth bags, native plant seeds, CFLs, and potted plants made from recycled and non-toxic materials.

## Bottled Water

- By planning to use cups and pitchers or water coolers, you can help avoid waste and save money. If you need help finding these items, please ask; as the city has them available!
- Bellevue's tap water is rigorously tested, some of the best in the country, and is much less expensive than bottled water.
- Bottled water has serious environmental and human health impacts. If possible, we should avoid it. <http://www.marketwatch.com/story/why-you-should-stop-buying-bottled-water-2014-08-04>

