

UMB Zero-Waste Events Guide

A Zero-Waste Event is any event that diverts 90% or more of its waste stream from being landfilled or incinerated.



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Introduction

What is a Zero-Waste Event?

A Zero-Waste Event is **any event that diverts 90% or more of its waste stream from being landfilled or incinerated**. This means most of the waste from the event is either reused, recycled, or composted. When providing food for attendees, consider making your event zero-waste.

Why host a Zero-Waste Event?

Zero-waste events reduce your carbon footprint and divert waste from the incinerator, improving environmental health for our local communities. They are also a great opportunity to start a conversation with guests about sustainability and highlight UMB's Core Values.

Planning a Zero-Waste Event may seem like a lot of work, but it only takes a few small adjustments in your existing planning to make it happen. Please take a look at the following [checklist](#) to get an idea of what you should do [before](#), [during](#), and [after an event](#) to make it a successful Zero-Waste Event!

Zero-Waste Planning Checklist

Before the Event

This is where you can make intentional choices to ensure your Zero-Waste Event is successful. Knowing what is going to be disposed of at your event beforehand will help you divert as much waste as possible from the incinerator.

- Identify your “Green Team.”
 - Select members from your event planning committee and other volunteers who will be helping with the event.
- Review this guide and your event goals with your Green Team.
- Highlight your commitment by advertising the event as Zero-Waste.
- Ask your caterer for options that would reduce waste.
 - Encourage pre-registration to get a headcount of attendees, and work with your caterer to minimize food waste. Many caterers add a 5-15% buffer; check in and verify if they do so, and adjust accordingly.
 - Order food that comes in bulk catering trays in place of individually packed items.
 - Ask about bulk options for drinks and condiments.
 - Use reusable or [BPI-certified](#) compostable utensils, bowls, plates, cups, and napkins.
 - Check with your caterer if they provide these for an additional charge.
 - Consider renting reusable wares that can be washed post-event.
- Prep your “Waste Stations.”
 - [Place a request with EVS](#) for recycling and trash toter(s), if needed. Make sure to do this at least two weeks in advance.
 - Toters are wheeled receptacles that can accommodate 64 gallons of waste.
 - Identify a receptacle or multiple receptacles for collecting food scraps and other compostable materials. You can line this with a [BPI-certified](#) compostable liner.
 - Use [signage](#) to help guide attendees on what goes where.
 - Place bins to create a waste station: compost, recycling, and trash.
- Do a walkthrough before your event to make sure bins are placed and lined properly and the appropriate serviceware (plates, utensils, etc.) is being used.

Example Event Waste Signage



During the Event

In your welcoming address, promote your dedication to hosting a Zero-Waste Event.

- Highlight the impact of green events by explaining that 90% or more of the waste produced will be diverted from the incinerator.
- Include a brief description of how to dispose of items (ex: all cups, utensils, napkins, and plates are compostable, where waste stations are located, and who can help if there are any questions).
- Have members of your Green Team placed at waste stations to help educate guests on proper disposal.

After the Event

- Collect and store any items that can be used for future events.
 - Ex: name badge tags, banners, table clothes, decorations, unused utensils, have a collection bin for unwanted promotional items.
 - Check with your caterer to see if they come back to retrieve platters, pans, etc. for re-use.
- Transport the bin(s) with food scraps and other compostable materials to one of [UMB's Food Scrap Drop-Off Locations](#).

Other Considerations

- Consider conducting a waste-audit post event to ensure the right materials were diverted.
 - Bring gloves, an extra trash bag or two, and some trash pickers if you have them handy.
- Avoid printed materials when promoting the event.
 - Take advantage of the [digital displays](#) on campus, [The Elm](#), [Campus Life Weekly](#), [Campus Groups](#), newsletters, and social media.
 - If you need to print, print on recycled content paper.
 - During sign-in, use computers or iPads to check people in instead of paper.
- Opt for more plant-based dishes and consider other dietary restrictions.
 - Information on dietary restrictions should be part of the registration questions.

Opt for reusable linens over disposable tablecloths.

- Check out the other [resources](#) we've created to help you reduce your waste.

Resources

UMB Food-Scrap Drop off Locations

The University offers community compost drop-off sites on campus: one at the Community Engagement Center and one at the SMC Campus Center.

Community Engagement Center

16 S Poppleton St
Baltimore, MD 21201

When facing the building, go down the alley (Booth St) on the right to access the bin along the fence.



SMC Campus Center

621 W Lombard St
Baltimore, MD 21201

When facing the building, go down the ramp on the right to access the bin by the bike racks.



Composting 101 at Events

Refer to [Composting at Events](#) to learn more about what can and cannot go into the bins. Share this resource with your event planners.

Green Caterers

Our office has created a [Green Eats List](#) and [interactive map](#) that can be used next time you are looking for a vendor for a campus event, your next office lunch, or simply a personal meal. All vendors listed are local and within 2 miles of our campus. They were evaluated on their green practices through plant-based menu options, bulk options (food, beverages, condiments) for catering, compostable/biodegradable wares (plates, utensils, cups), and sourcing locally. The information gathered is from businesses' responses. Please note that SMC Campus Center has a list of [Authorized Caterers](#) and other vendors must be approved by Event Services.

Low-Waste Event Guide

Follow these one-pagers for some quick tips on how to lower the waste at your [small](#) or [large](#) event.

Swag Guide

Check out our [Swag Guidelines](#) for tips and guidance on how to purchase sustainable swag.

UMB FREE

UMB FREE (Food Recovery + Environmental Eating) is a food rescue initiative aiming to minimize food waste and feed the UMB community. UMB event planners (faculty, staff, or students) can alert a listserv when there is leftover food after an event. [Learn more about UMB FREE here.](#)

Event Waste Signage

You can [download PDF copies of event waste signs on our website](#). Print out and laminate your blank signage and items sheets, and tape the items that will be composted, recycled, or trashed and incinerated after your event. Re-use for your next event and customize as needed!