



On the Road to Zero Waste: Hosting a Low-Waste Event

Waste and Resource Recovery



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SUMMARY

The goal of hosting a low waste event is to minimize the creation of waste, divert as much as possible from the waste stream, and maximize opportunities to reuse, recycle, and compost. There are several ways neighborhood councils can avoid using single-use items – which end up going to landfills – when holding an event. The bottom line: be intentional! Seemingly small choices will add up to a big impact as you practice good behavior yourself and model good behavior for others to follow.

BENEFITS

- Potential cost savings associated with long-term use of reusables versus purchasing of single-use items.
- Lead by example and help push for behavior change at the individual level.
- Reduce your single-use plastic consumption and the harmful health effects of plastic use.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR ACTION:

Promoting your event

Employ online methods of promotion, such as:

- Calendar apps (iCal, Google calendar, facebook events, etc.)
- Listing on website, social media pages
- Listing in local publications that provide public event announcements
- Make a sign out of recycled materials (e.g. cardboard box) and hang in a public space
- Text message blasts
- Collect email addresses from all events, if possible on a tablet, phone, or laptop

Live streaming your event

If your event is available for people to attend via livestream, be sure to highlight this feature in your online promotion of the event.

- This has the benefits of increasing participation and reducing vehicle miles traveled and potential waste left behind in person.
- If not, encourage participants to take alternative modes of transportation to the event such as coming by bus or train, walking, biking, scooting.



Planning for refreshments

- Order just enough food for everyone to prevent having excess food left-over. If there are leftovers, encourage participants to bring food containers to take food home or donate to a food rescue organization (learn more at publichealth.lacounty.gov/eh/LACFRI/donate-surplus-food.htm).
- Serve finger foods that do not have individual wrapping or require utensils to eat. Food in edible containers (e.g. tortillas, taco shells) or compostable containers (e.g. corn husks) are another great option.
- You can opt to order food from local green businesses (find a list of businesses certified through LA Sanitation's Green Business Program at greenbusinessca.org/find-green-business/).
- Remind participants to bring their own reusable water bottles. Reduce your footprint by filling water-tight lidded containers (or a water cooler) with LADWP tap water.
- Remind participants to bring their own utensils, plates, and containers. It is better to encourage the use of reusable utensils than to provide compostable or recyclable utensils.



- All paper napkins should be unbleached and contain at least 30 percent post-consumer recycled content with no printing on them for optimal recycling.
- Offer composting and recycling bins. Consider asking volunteers to ensure everyone knows where to dispose of their items. Identify a compost lead to ensure compostable materials are actually composted. Reference the [Food Waste Action Guide](#), which is also part of the Green New Deal Neighborhood Council Tool Kit.

Additional tips

- Use a projector to display the event agenda and other visuals rather than handouts.
- Only give handouts to those who request them.
- All paper used should be made with 30 percent post-consumer recycled content.
- If providing name tags, use reusable ones.

HELPFUL LINKS

- The Los Angeles County Department of Public Works created a Waste-Free Event Guide for venues and events. Access the guide at dpw.lacounty.gov/epd/Roadmap/PDF/Waste-Free_Event_Guide.pdf.
- You can encourage participants to make their own utensil wraps so they can take their reusable utensils on-the-go. Find a tutorial at zerowastechef.com/2019/07/03/plastic-free-utensil-roll/.
- The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Waste Management Hierarchy (shown below) ranks the various management strategies from most to least environmentally preferred. The hierarchy places emphasis on reducing and reusing first, followed by recycling and composting, as key to sustainable materials management.



PARTNERS

Below are some LA-based organizations working to build a zero waste Los Angeles. If you know of other organizations that should be included, please email sustainability@lacity.org.

- **Reusable LA** is a coalition of organizations working to reduce plastic pollution in Los Angeles to safeguard our public health, communities, and environment. Reusable LA completes this mission through legislative advocacy, outreach, and community engagement. Get involved at: reusablela.org/get-involved.

REUSABLE | LA

- **LA Compost** is a network of community composters maintaining compost hubs throughout LA County. Their team of educators and soil enthusiasts build and facilitate cohesive composting communities for individuals and communities in shared spaces. Learn more about composting at lacompost.org/online-workshops.

