



# Waste-Free Event

# GUIDE

LOS ANGELES COUNTY PUBLIC WORKS



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# Introduction

Thank you for your interest in hosting a “waste-free” event. Your desire to generate a minimal amount of waste during your event is possible by using the methods and examples described here. This guide supports efforts to reduce the amount of solid waste produced and sent to landfills by venues such as **stadiums, convention centers, amusement parks, airports, race tracks, golf courses, zoos, museums, or by events such as concerts, festivals, fun runs, fairs, sports tournaments, or any type of gathering.**

## Who is this Guide For?

- **INDIVIDUALS** responsible for waste management and citizens who want to help to implement waste reduction at local venues and events in their community
- **EVENT MANAGERS** and promoters
- **EVENT SUPPLIERS** including catering services, concessions, product vendors, consultants, and other providers of materials and services
- **LOCAL AGENCIES** government and nonprofit organizations

## Achieving a Waste-Free Event

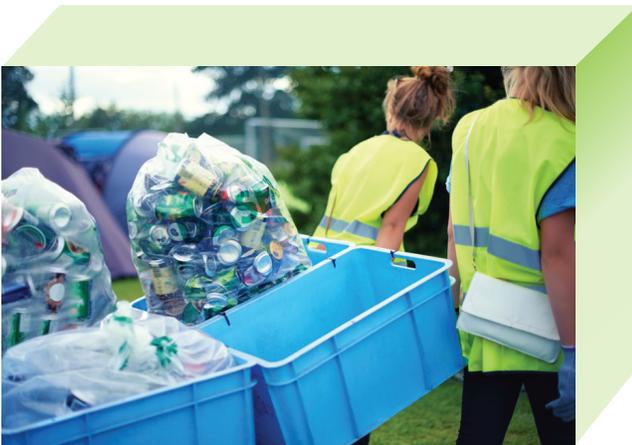
The key is to plan ahead to help reduce the amount of waste generated at your event. The following steps have been divided into four sections to help guide you and your team.

Section 1 ➤ Pre-Event

Section 2 ➤ Event Day

Section 3 ➤ Post-Event

Section 4 ➤ Event Tips



# Background

## Roadmap to a Sustainable Waste Management Future

Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors adopted the Roadmap to a Sustainable Waste Management Future (Roadmap)\* on October 21, 2014. The Roadmap lays out the general framework for strategies and initiatives the County can implement to decrease reliance on landfills by maximizing the recovery of products, materials and energy from waste that would otherwise be disposed of at a landfill.

The County also established a new Waste Management Paradigm (Figure 1) with emphasis placed on maximizing the benefits of materials over disposal. As a result, an increasing amount of materials previously characterized as waste will be reduced, reused, or recycled, thereby minimizing materials remaining for disposal.

\* [pw.lacounty.gov/epd/Roadmap/PDF/Roadmap\\_Appendices.pdf](http://pw.lacounty.gov/epd/Roadmap/PDF/Roadmap_Appendices.pdf)

## Waste Reduction Legislation

In 2004, the State of California passed Assembly Bill 2176 which requires large venues and events of more than 2,000 people each operation day (attendees, staff, volunteers, etc.) to plan for solid waste reduction activities and annually report the progress of their recycling and waste reduction programs to their local government.

In 2011, California set a statewide goal of diverting 75 percent of waste generated by residents, businesses, and industries from the landfill by the year 2020. Many jurisdictions are working towards surpassing this goal and are attempting to attain a waste-free future.

In 2014, California passed AB 1826 that requires businesses to recycle their organic waste depending on the amount of waste they generate per week. Organic waste includes food waste, green waste, landscape and pruning waste, non-hazardous wood waste, and food soiled paper that is mixed in with food waste.

The Roadmap has established the following intermediate and long-term disposal reduction targets:



## Waste Reduction

Waste reduction reduces or completely prevents the generation of waste. To be successful, an event must control the types of waste generated by staff, sponsors, exhibitors, vendors, concessionaires, and event attendees. Purchasing or renting containers and items in bulk can ensure a reduction in waste generation. An example of this is serving condiments in bulk dispensers versus single-serve ketchup, mustard and mayonnaise packages. The less waste generated, the less there will be to handle, store and dispose. Opting to go paperless and use phone apps or monitors throughout the event to provide event agendas and updates is another good example.



## What is Waste-Free?

Waste-free is managing, reducing and diverting solid waste from the waste stream, and maximizing recycling opportunities. This guidebook provides practical ideas to successfully plan and carryout a waste-free event. Although it may be challenging to be 100 percent waste-free, it can be easy to attain 50 percent, 75 percent, and even 90 percent waste diversion for your event. The goal is to minimize waste generation and increase diversion.

## What are the Benefits of Waste-Free Events?

Organizing a waste-free event can make good business and financial sense as indicated below:

**RECYCLING AND COMPOSTING** can save costs in disposal fees.

**DONATING SURPLUS** food will help feed the hungry and may qualify for a tax deduction.

**EVENT MARKETING** as a waste-free event and incorporating an incentive for attendees to participate, such as free entrance to kids who bring in a CRV container or to a family that brings their own reusable water bottles can increase attendance.

**REVENUE CAN BE DERIVED** from the sale of some recyclables such as cardboard and California Redemption Value (CRV) bottles and cans.

**DONATIONS OF OTHER ITEMS** such as construction materials and equipment may also qualify for a tax deduction.

**EDUCATING ATTENDEES** on proper recycling can minimize contamination and the need for staff to do follow-up sorting.

**USING REUSABLE ITEMS** such as cups, plates, utensils, bags, etc., can help reduce costs compared to purchasing single-use items for repeat events.

**MINIMIZING WASTE IS A CIVIC DUTY**, even if the net savings is minimal.

## Waste-Free Objectives to Incorporate into Event Planning Stages

There are specific planning stages to consider when preparing for a waste-free event: pre-event, event day, and post-event. Sections 1 through 4 of this guide provides an approach to planning and executing a waste-free event.

### Section 1 > Pre-Event

Advance planning is necessary for a successful waste-free event. It requires more than just setting up blue bins for collecting beverage containers for recycling.

#### STAGE 1:

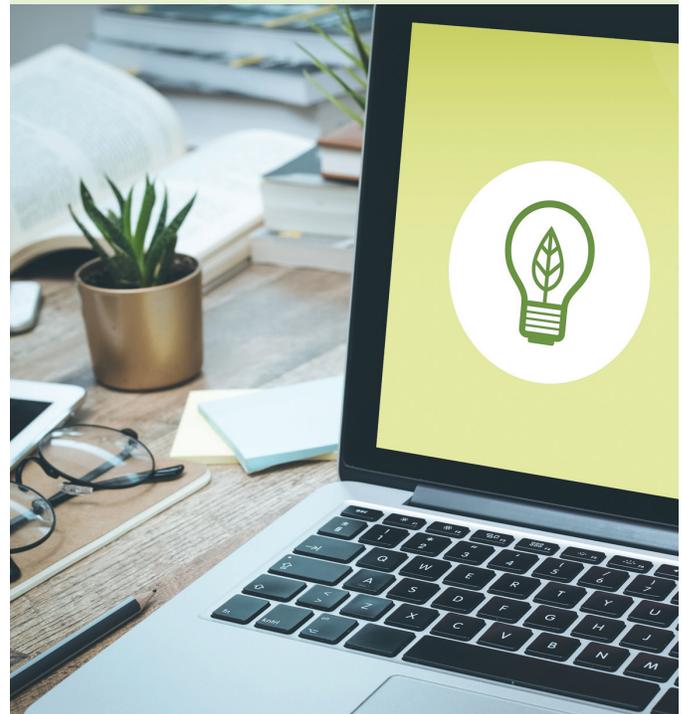
- Management Commitment
- Reuse
- Identify What to Recycle and Compost
- Compostable Products
- Waste-Free Event Promotion
- Green Team | Waste-Free Staff Roles
- Training Staff, Volunteers, and Vendors
- Obtaining Supplies
- Preferred Purchasing
- Vendor Agreements
- Collection Service
- Questions for the Hauler
- Material Generation Locations
- Signage
- Equipment and Supplies
- Donations
- Donation Opportunities
- Additional Resources

### Section 2 > Event Day

Place the collection bins throughout the location either the day before the event or the morning of the event.

#### STAGE 2:

- Setup
- Material Collection and Monitoring
- Attendee Engagement
- Daily Promotion



## Section 3 > Post-Event

Evaluate the feedback to understand challenges and identify solutions for program improvements the following year.

### STAGE 3:

- Clean Cleanup
- Post-Event Sorting
- Record Results
- Recognition
- Feedback

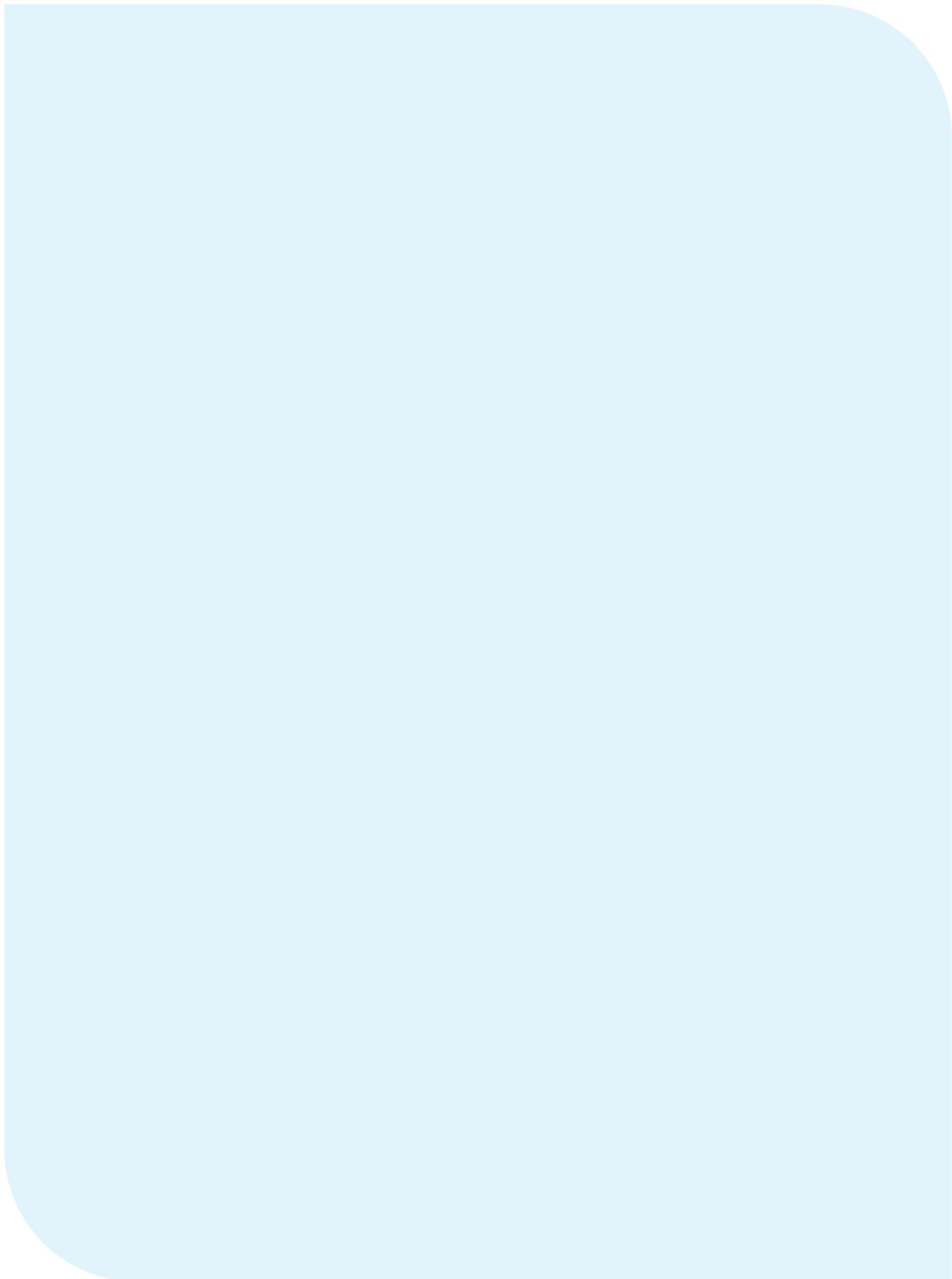


## Section 4 > Event Tips

Identify the types of materials that will be generated at the event and determine which materials are recyclable, reusable, compostable, etc.

### TIPS FOR VARIOUS EVENT TYPES

- Clean General Tips for All Events
- Conferences/Hotels
- Office Meetings and Workshops
- Concerts and Sporting Events
- Banquets
- Flea Markets
- County Fairs, Festivals, and Street Fairs
- Tailgate Parties
- Farmers Markets



# 1 > Pre-Event

Advance planning is necessary for a successful waste-free event. It requires more than just setting up blue bins for collecting beverage containers for recycling. It's thinking about how to reduce or divert waste from landfills by only purchasing what you need, reusing/borrowing items, recycling and organics collection. Identify and determine where waste will most likely be generated. Then, you can establish a way to either avoid that waste from being generated or divert it from going to the landfill.

## Management Commitment

Waste-free efforts are successful with support from top management.

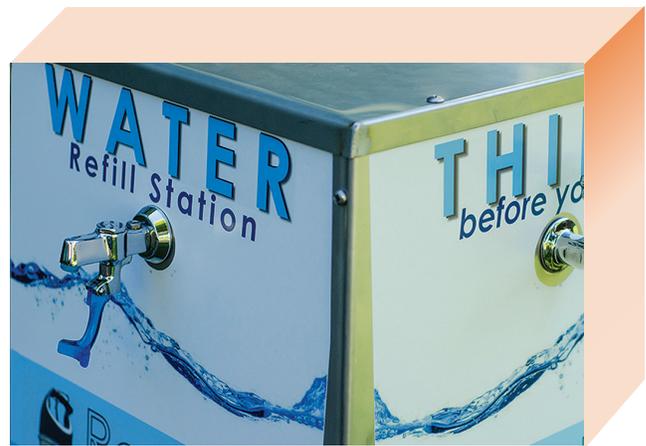
- Identify the decision makers that need to participate in financial and operational decisions.
- Develop and present the event plan with a brief description of the negative impacts of waste (i.e. costs, labor, safety, impact to the environment, landfill capacity, etc.) and the benefits being proposed. Benefits may include cost savings from disposal fees, positive public image, revenue from the sale of recyclables, tax deductions from donating food and environmental stewardship.

## Reuse

Using reusable service ware like cups, plates, and utensils is the most sustainable choice, as they can last for years. Some events organizers charge a deposit for service ware and return the deposit when items are returned. Once purchased, financial savings quickly add up as event management and vendors no longer need to purchase single-serve items. Reusables are also a sound environmental choice given the number of resources necessary to manufacture single-use items.

Water refill stations are a convenient way to hydrate event attendees and encourage the use of reusable water bottles or cups. A water

refill station reduces an event's overall carbon footprint by eliminating the need for single-use plastic water bottles.



## What to Recycle and Compost

Determine what items will be recycled or composted. Recyclables may either be collected, commingled or source separated based on material type. This can be determined based on the cost, ease of collection transportation and what the hauler does or does not accept in their recycling and organics collection program. Generally, mixed recyclables go into a blue bin and food and food soiled paper go into a green bin. Cardboard is a common item that is collected separately because of the large quantity generated by vendors and concessionaires prior to an event. When cardboard is collected, break it down to maximize space.

## Compostable Products

As an alternative to foam and plastic plates, cups, utensils and take-out containers, use compostable or paper products. Compostable service ware helps increase the collection of unwanted food and other organics because event attendees can dispose of the items together.

### Why Use Compostable Service Ware?

- Maximizes food waste diversion
- Helps events reach waste-free goals
- Minimizes contamination from non-compostable single-use products
- Minimizes processing, collection costs and contamination of soil and water

### Resources:

- The US Composting Council developed a compostable plastics toolkit located at [cptoolkit.org](http://cptoolkit.org)
- A service ware quick guide on compostable, degradable, biodegradable and bio-based items can be viewed at [goo.gl/wHf98U](http://goo.gl/wHf98U)



## Waste-free Event Promotion

Incorporating the event's waste-free nature includes appropriate timing and placement of messages about its waste-free efforts in various outreach avenues, such as the following:

- Official event website and web banner ads
- Social media: Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, etc.
- Promotional materials (flyers, posters, postcards, etc. made from recycled content, if printed)
- Press release, newsletters, ads, etc.
- Public and stage announcements
- Event Application (App)

## Waste-free planning Subgroup

The subgroup should determine staff roles and responsibilities and include representatives from various divisions within the event management team who:

- Are knowledgeable in their field, i.e. waste management, procurement, etc.
- Will contribute to the waste-free plan by providing input, support, and feedback
- Will share the waste-free initiatives with colleagues in their division
- Will communicate well with team members before and during the event including identifying potential problems and helping with recommended solutions

The subgroup may also include administrative, operations, engineering, concessions, catering, and waste hauler staff.

## Green Team

**TEAM LEADER** – The team leader is often an event staff member or contracted staff member. They manage the implementation of waste-free activities including logistics, training and contracts. The team leader is the point of contact for event promoters, managers, vendors, volunteers, staff and concessionaire waste-free activities. The team leader may recruit volunteers and train staff to assist in setting up bins, gathering, sorting and consolidating material and tearing down the program when the event ends. In addition, the team leader will determine and schedule the number of staff needed for pre-event, event, and post-event waste-free activities.

**STAFF** – Staff provides the labor needed to set up recycling and organics collection bins, replace bin liners when full and transport diverted materials to staging areas.

**VOLUNTEERS** – Volunteers play a key role in the success of a waste-free event. Their roles may include placing and lining bins, monitoring bins, ensuring no contamination occurs between bins, increasing public awareness on recycling and servicing and transporting materials from bins to a staging area. When recruiting volunteers, develop an alternative staffing plan in case volunteers do not show up. Volunteers can include local school groups, businesses, environmental organizations, like-minded individuals and religious institutions.



## Training Staff, Volunteers and Vendors

Training staff, volunteers, and vendors on waste-free event procedures is essential to the success of the event. Training can be held prior to the event such as the day before or morning of the event.

### Steps include:

**1.**

Educate participants on the items are considered recyclable and compostable and items considered a contaminant.

**2.**

Identify who will collect and transport materials and where materials will be stored.

**3.**

Assign helpers to work in designated event areas.

**4.**

Provide equipment and supplies needed to execute the job.

## Obtaining Supplies

Inform event vendors and suppliers of the waste-free objectives of the event, and recycling and composting plans, such as:

- Benefits of a waste-free event
- Vendor/supplier expectations in the waste flow plan
- Acceptable and unacceptable items to avoid (Styrofoam, plastic water bottles, or single-serve disposable items)
- Waste minimization recommendations
- Use reusable products to minimize waste generation followed by compostable and recyclable products that are made of post-consumer content

## Preferred Purchasing

Six months before the event, develop a green purchasing list of materials and products that will help facilitate recycling and eliminate non-recyclable waste at the event. A comprehensive list of green products can be viewed at [sftool.gov/greenprocurement](https://sftool.gov/greenprocurement).

## Vendor Agreements

Engaging vendors with waste-free expectations is essential as they generate a large portion of the waste. Vendor agreements are a tool to inform and encourage their participation.

Sample vendor language includes the following:



- Our event has a “no foam” policy and a waste-free goal.
- Use paper or other compostable products when it is not feasible to use reusable plates, cups, etc.
- Our event requires the use of only reusable, recyclable, or compostable food service ware and packaging.
- Our event maintains a policy of mandatory recycling. We are doing our part to ensure a clean, environmentally friendly world for future generations to enjoy.
- Please use the recycling bins provided. Other items that can be recycled at this event include glass bottles, plastic beverage containers, and aluminum cans.
- Breakdown (flatten) all cardboard boxes and keep them in your designated area for pick-up.
- Place food and food soiled paper in appropriate organics collection bin.
- Maintain grease bin areas to prevent grease runoff during rain.

## Collection Service

Select a waste hauler who can provide collection service for recyclables and organic materials. Request the hauler to provide an itemized receipt of the weights of recyclable and organic materials diverted from the landfill. Identify where the recyclables and organics will be processed. Determine the necessary level of service, where collection bins and dumpsters will be strategically placed, when they will be delivered to the event location, and when they will be serviced after the event. Waste haulers may also be able to provide temporary collection containers such as bins to collect cardboard and mixed paper.

### Questions/Requests for the Waste Hauler

*We expect XX attendees. How many bins/dumpsters will the event need?*

*Where and when will bins/dumpsters be delivered?*

*How often will dumpsters be emptied?*

*Does the hauler collect garbage, organic waste, and/or recyclables?*

*Should recyclables be mixed or separated?*

*Does the hauler take waste to a materials recovery facility?*

*Does hauler pick up after business hours and/or on weekends? Additional charge?*

*Request reporting (i.e., completed post-event worksheet) after event.*

*Are collected recyclables and organic waste actually diverted from landfill disposal?*

*Ask for an itemized quote.*

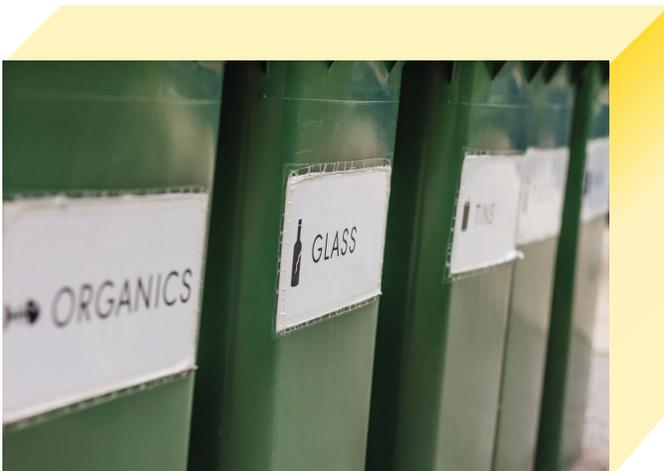
### Material Generation Locations

A high percentage of recyclables and organics may be generated at the following locations:

- **Back of house:** The back of house is the employee-only area, unseen by the public. This is where food is prepared and stored, and may include the kitchen or break room and changing area. A high quantity of food waste, food soiled paper, cardboard, and other recyclable items will be generated in the back of house.
- **Front of house:** The front of house is the event area where the event staff interacts with attendees, vendors, and volunteers. Event attendees typically generate leftover food, beverage containers, single-use items, food and food soiled paper from vendor and concession stands.
- **Restrooms:** Restrooms generate items that may be accepted in the composting program, such as paper towels, tissues, and other paper products.

### Signage

Code waste, recycling and organic waste collection signs to visually remind staff, attendees, vendors, and volunteers where specific items go. Use photographs of acceptable items for recycling and organic waste collection. Place signs at eye level, above the bin and also on the bin. If materials will be mixed and taken to a materials recovery facility, a sign indicating so should be visible.



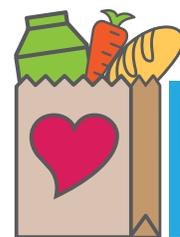
## Equipment and Supplies

There are various styles and functions of recycling and organic waste bins that support the collection of diverted materials. Recycling and organic waste bins should be a different color and placed next to waste bins for convenience. Bin lids can be customized with a hole or slit on top to minimize contamination. Check with the hauler to rent or borrow bins in case they have them available. Create an event map with bin locations so staff and management are aware of the recycling program layout.

Staff and volunteers should be provided additional supplies to support the collection of materials.

### These include:

- Gloves
- Clipboards
- Tape and/or zip ties for posting signs
- Scales, if material will be weighed
- Data sheet for recording material weights
- Camera
- Water
- T-shirt to identify staff working the event
- Extra bags for collection bins



Donation & Recovery Outreach Program

## Donations

Events produce a large number of items that can be donated including food, construction materials, flowers, etc. Research opportunities to donate any untouched, unopened food to local food shelters, food pantries, churches, and other charitable organizations. Identify establishments where your excess items can be donated and contact those establishments to arrange delivery of the donation. Some charitable organizations may offer to pick up the donated items after your event has ended.

Organizations donating food are protected from criminal and civil liability under the Good Samaritan Act. Information on the law can be viewed at:

- <https://www.usda.gov/oce/foodwaste/resources/donations.htm>

The Los Angeles Department of Public Health has food donation guidelines located on their website:

- [publichealth.lacounty.gov/eh/docs/WhatsNew/FoodDonations.pdf](https://publichealth.lacounty.gov/eh/docs/WhatsNew/FoodDonations.pdf)

# Donation Opportunities in Los Angeles County

Below is a list of some charitable associations that accept items for donation and donation resources in Los Angeles County. Arrangements for donations should be made prior to the event. Los Angeles County guidelines can be viewed at: [publichealth.lacounty.gov/eh/LACFRI/](http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/eh/LACFRI/)

Organization	Web Address	Food	Clothing	Office Supplies	Children's Items	Electronics	Flowers	Construction Materials	Household Items
211 LA County <i>Note: type "food" and zip code in website search field</i>	211la.org	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Catholic Charities	catholiccharitiesla.org	✓	✓		✓				✓
Downtown Women's Center	dwcweb.org		✓		✓	✓	✓		✓
Excess Hollywood	excesshollywood.net	✓							
Goodwill	goodwillsocal.org		✓	✓	✓	✓			✓
Habitat for Humanity LA	habitatla.org						✓		
Food Finders <i>Note: transports food donations to organizations</i>	foodfinders.org	✓							
Food Forward <i>Note: may collect fresh produce</i>	foodforward.org	✓							
LA Regional Food Bank	lafoodbank.org	✓							
Los Angeles County Smart Business Program	businessrecycling.com			✓		✓			
Los Angeles County Food DROP Program	foodDROPLA.com	✓							
Los Angeles Mission	losangelesmission.org	✓	✓		✓				✓
Salvation Army	salvationarmy-socal.org		✓	✓	✓	✓			✓
Toy Loan	dpss.lacounty.gov/en/community/toy-loan.html				✓	✓			
Union Rescue Mission	urm.org		✓	✓	✓	✓			✓
Urban Harvester <i>Note: food donation matching service</i>	urbanharvester.org	✓							
Westside Food Bank	westsidefoodbankca.org	✓							

# Additional Resources

These vendors and other vendors and organizations that provide similar services can support your waste-free event goals and objectives. We recommend that you work with your procurement staff to choose the appropriate vendor for your organization's needs.

Products	Web Address	Item
Bio-bags EcoSafe World Centric Various	biobagworld.com/us_en ecosafezerowaste.com worldcentric.org pw.lacounty.gov/epd/eps/doc/Ordinance_Compliant_Single_Use_Foodware.xlsx	Compostable Bags Compostable and Recyclable Foodservice Ware
Ecoproducts VerTerra World Centric Various	ecoproductsstore.com verterra.com worldcentric.org pw.lacounty.gov/epd/eps/doc/Ordinance_Compliant_Single_Use_Foodware.xlsx	Compostable Service Ware Compostable and Recyclable Foodservice Ware
Green Home Ecoproducts World Centric Various	greenhome.co.za ecoproductsstore.com worldcentric.org pw.lacounty.gov/epd/eps/doc/Ordinance_Compliant_Single_Use_Foodware.xlsx	Compostable Cups and To-Go Containers Compostable and Recyclable Foodservice Ware
Princess Paper Seventh Generation Various	princesspaper.com seventhgeneration.com pw.lacounty.gov/epd/eps/doc/Ordinance_Compliant_Single_Use_Foodware.xlsx	Post-Consumer Recycled Paper Napkins and Towels Compostable and Recyclable Foodservice Ware
Water Refill Stations	Web Address	Phone
Arrowhead Water	arrowheadwater.com	(800) 950-9393
Event Water Solutions	eventwatersolutions.com	(844) 928-3711
Paradise Bottled Water	paradisebottledwater.com	(800) 499-9982
Pristine Water	pristinebottlewater.com	(888) 756-0008
Sparkletts Water	sparkletts.com	(800) 201-6218
US Pure Water	uspw.net	(415) 883-9900
Party Rental Stores		
Big Blue Sky Party Rentals	bigblueskyparty.com	(323) 743-1107
Bright Event Rentals	bright.com	(310) 202-0011
Special Events Rent	specialeventsrental.com	(213) 249-9001
Town and Country Party Rental	townandcountryeventrentals.com	(818) 908-4211
Zero Waste Event Consultants		
EcoSet	ecoset.la/contact	(323) 669.0697
Three Squares, Inc.	threesquaresinc.com	(310) 584-7933
Waste Busters	wastebusters.info	(510) 473-2087
Authorized List of Franchised Haulers Servicing the Unincorporated Areas of Los Angeles County		
Los Angeles County Public Works	pw.lacounty.gov/epd/sbr/businesses-hauler-services.aspx	(888) CLEAN-LA

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## 2 Event Day

### Set Up

Place the collection bins throughout the location either the day before the event or the morning of the event. Using a liner may improve collection efficiency and reduce bin washing costs. Use a compostable liner for bins collecting waste to be composted. Other recommendations include:

- Place compost, recycling, and waste bins together in “stations.” A recycling or compost bin alone is likely to be treated as a trash bin.
- Set up bin stations in the same order to avoid confusion for staff, vendors, attendees, and volunteers.
- Place sufficient bin stations near dining and other high traffic areas.

### Material Collection and Monitoring

Establish a meeting station where staff and volunteers congregate to receive further instructions or new tasks. Tasks include:

- Place signs above bin stations
- Assign teams to pick up recyclables once bags are full and transfer the materials to a storage area
- Monitor bins throughout the event’s duration
- Remove contamination whenever possible
- Track weights of materials recycled

### Attendee Engagement

Identify ways to inform attendees about the waste-free program procedures.

- Point out the bin station locations on event maps
- Remind attendees of the waste-free efforts through public announcements and stage announcements
- Host a recycling information booth that allows event attendees to ask questions about how and where to recycle materials

### Event Promotion

During the event, waste-free activities should be publicized through social media, public announcements, stage announcements, media interviews, etc. Ask vendors and concessionaires to display waste-free related signs in their booths. Recycling staff and volunteers should wear distinctive colored t-shirts/hats with program identifying logos.



# 3 Post-Event

## Clean Up

Below are steps to consider for the tear down phase of the event.

### CLEAN

Leave the event venue as clean as possible by using eco-friendly cleaning products.

### COLLECT

Confirm when the hauler is collecting the recyclables and compostable materials.

### RETURN

Return rented reusable items.

### RECYCLE

Break down all the recycling and organic waste bins and place them in a centralized area for collection.

### DONATE

Coordinate the pick-up or delivery of donatable items.

### STORE

Store extra supplies (waste station materials, reusables, etc.).



### Post-Event Sorting

Sorting the contaminants from the recycling and organic waste bins may be necessary to achieve a waste-free event. Set up a table where staff can empty the contents to separate the contaminants from the recyclables and organics.

### Record Results

Tracking the weight of materials collected is necessary to determine the percentage of materials diverted from the landfill.

- Weigh and record all materials on-site or request the hauler to weigh the waste, recyclables, and organics.
- Use information to determine the percentage diverted from the landfill.
- Consider reducing the size of the waste dumpster or frequency of collection by the hauler for next year's event. Reducing services will save time and money.

### Recognition

- Send certificates of appreciation to vendors that successfully participated in the recycling and waste prevention programs.
- Send certificates of appreciation to volunteers.
- Consider offering registration discounts to top performing vendors at subsequent events, or other rewards for their waste-free event efforts.
- When possible, express appreciation to participants in writing (using email) for making the event successful.
- Profile an example or case study in local newspapers, magazines, or websites before or after the event.

### Feedback

Request feedback from staff, vendors, concessionaires, stakeholders, attendees, and the waste and recyclables haulers soon after each event while memories are fresh. Invite comments and criticisms so honest evaluations are received. Evaluate the feedback to understand challenges and identify solutions for program improvements the following year.

## 4 Tips for Various Event Types

This section provides general tips for all events and additional tips for specific types of indoor and outdoor events.

### General Tips for All Events

#### MATERIALS INVENTORY

Identify the types of materials that will be generated at the event and determine which materials are recyclable, reusable, compostable, etc.

#### REDUCE

Purchase food and condiments in bulk, to avoid single-use packaging.

#### COMPOST

Require vendors to separate organic material when organics collection services are established and include language in vendor agreement.

#### ORGANIC WASTE

Set up an organic waste collection program with kitchen staff for food scraps, damaged or rotten produce, food soiled paper and compostable food service ware. Donate edible food to a local food bank.

#### REUSE

Use washable plates, utensils, and cups for refreshments.

#### FOOD AND BEVERAGE

Require food and beverage vendors to use recyclable or compostable food service ware.

#### RECYCLE

Establish a recycling and organics collection system to ensure event participants can properly dispose of recyclable and compostable items.

#### LOCAL AND ORGANIC

Request that the venue offer locally grown or organic food options.

#### STATIONS

Place organic waste, recycling and trash bins together in “stations” in high traffic areas such as entrances, exits, restrooms, and seating areas.

#### SIGNAGE

Place distinctly labeled signs on trash, recycling and organic waste bins.

#### TRANSPORTATION

Encourage attendees to use public transportation.

The City of Pasadena sets up tailgate recycling of beverage containers at UCLA Football and Rose Bowl games.



## Conferences/Hotels

- Provide water glasses for speakers and attendees and a method for refills.
- Donate any uneaten food to food pantries.
- Review the feasibility of a small digester to process organic discards on-site.
- Remind attendees to turn off hotel room lights, heat/air and the television when leaving their room.
- Install automatic hand dryers in restrooms instead of paper towels.



## Office Meetings and Workshops

- Consider using electronic presentations such as PowerPoint, instead of printed handouts.
- Post presentations on a website or send via email so they can be downloaded.
- Encourage attendees to bring reusable water bottles, coffee mugs, etc.
- If hard copies are necessary, use post-consumer recycled content paper, print multiple slides to one page, and print on both sides.
- Use soy-based ink instead of petroleum-based ink for printing.
- Obtain an accurate count of participants to reduce excess print copies.

## Concerts and Sporting Events



- Make recycling announcements on the electronic board and over the public announcement system.
- Set up cardboard recycling for vendors and concessionaires and remind them about the recycling requirement.
- Conduct a “Stadium Sweep” after the event, have the cleaning crew sweep the waste into the aisles and then pick out the recyclables.
- Organize recycling programs for the suites and press box.

### Banquets

- Choose to rent seat covers, table linens, and napkins instead of one-time use items.
- Require food service staff to scrape food waste into organics collection bins.

### Flea Markets

- Require that vendors pack unsold items so they are not left behind.
- Encourage reusable bags for purchases.
- Centralize food vendors to easily capture food waste, compostable products, and recyclables.
- Develop and monitor donation areas where unwanted items can be collected. Contact local non-profit organizations to collect donated materials. Avoid contamination to ensure leftover materials are in saleable condition for non-profit organizations.

### Tailgate Parties

- Set up recycling and organics collection system in tailgate areas.
- Avoid polystyrene and single-use plastic.
- Educate tailgaters on recycling initiatives as they enter parking locations.
- Provide recycling bags to tailgaters and collect from attendees during the event.

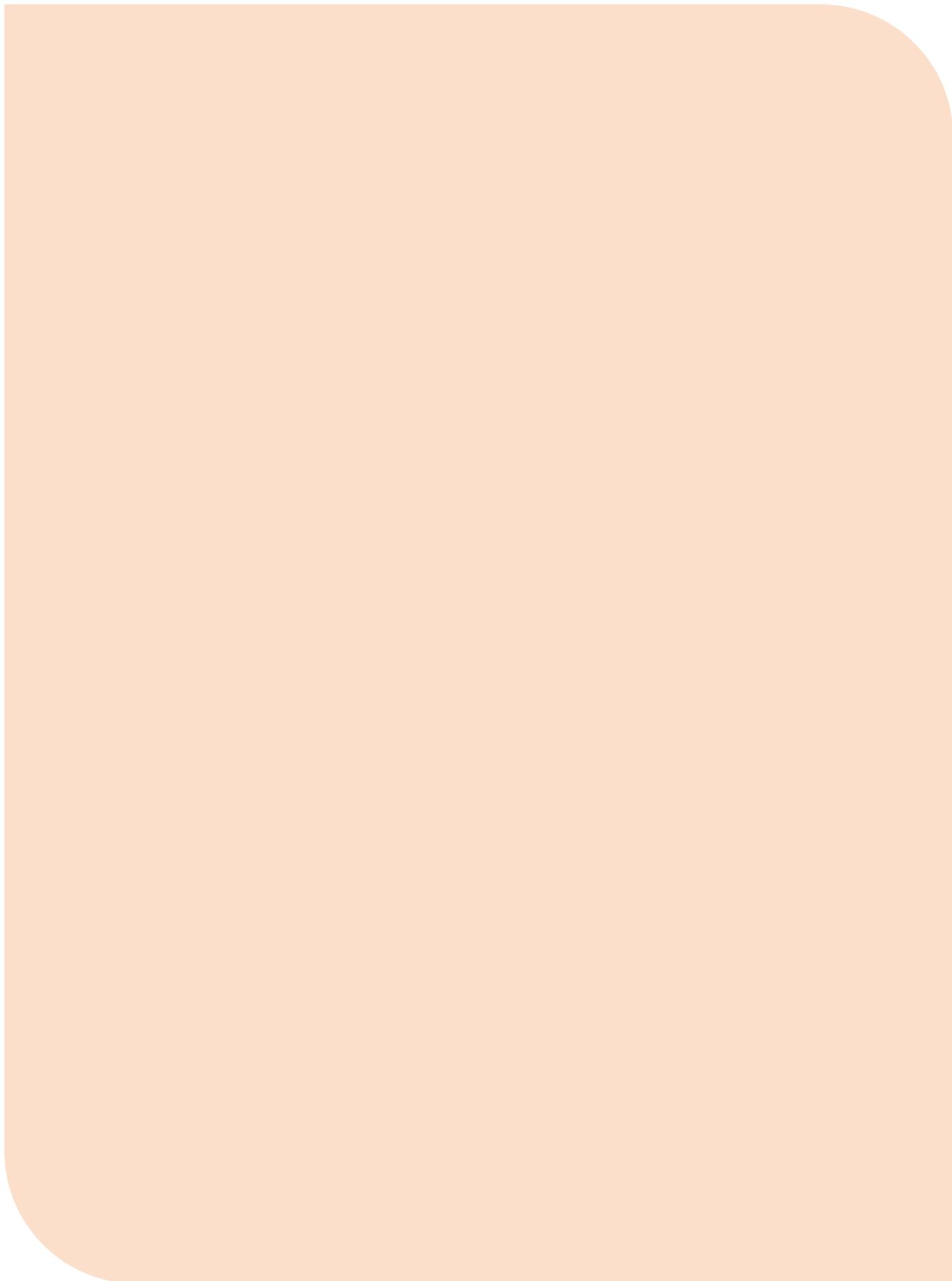
### Farmers Markets

- Organize an organic waste collection program for food scraps, damaged/unwanted produce and food-soiled paper.
- If organic waste collection is not possible, require vendors to take back organic waste, including unwanted produce to their farms to compost.
- Donate unsold food to a local food bank.

### County Fairs, Festivals, and Street Fairs

- Educate vendors and volunteers on recycling procedures.
- Replace single-use items with reusable items.
- Have reusable bags available for purchase at the event.
- Provide bulk water and refill stations and encourage attendees to bring their own bottles or have souvenir bottles available for purchase.
- Implement an animal waste and soiled hay/bedding program at fairgrounds or events where livestock and animals are showcased.





# Appendices

Waste-Free Event

GUIDE

# Appendices

**Glossary of Terms** | Not all of the terms below are used in the Waste-Free Events Guide but these terms may be helpful when implementing a recycling, composting, or reuse program at your event.

**CalRecycle** — California Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery

**Commingling** — mixing of different recyclable materials in one container during collection

**Compactor** — machine used to compress materials to a smaller volume

**Compost** — product resulting from the controlled biological decomposition of organic wastes, which can be source separated from the municipal solid waste stream or at a centralized facility, and includes vegetable, yard, and wood wastes that are not hazardous

**Compostable** — product or materials such as vegetable matter, paper, cardboard, or plastic that must (1) break down to carbon dioxide, water, inorganic compounds, and biomass at a rate similar to paper, (2) disintegrate into small pieces within 90 days, so that the original product is not visually distinguishable in the compost and (3) leave no toxic residue

**Composting** — defined in Public Resource Code (PRC), Section 40116.1 as “the controlled or uncontrolled biological decomposition of organic wastes,” further defined in California Code of Regulations (CCR), Title 14, Section 17225.14 as “a controlled microbial degradation of organic wastes yielding a safe and nuisance free product”



**Construction and Demolition Waste** — any waste resulting from construction, remodeling, repair or demolition operations on pavement, buildings, or other structures, which can include lumber, drywall, concrete, pipe, brick, glass, electrical wire, and rubble

**Contaminant** — a material that is harmful or undesirable to the recycling process when it is included with a recyclable material

**Corrugated Cardboard** — paper product made of unbleached kraft fiber, which is used to make box packaging, that has two heavy outer layers and a wavy inner layer to provide strength

**County** — Los Angeles County, with the Board of Supervisors as the legislative and executive body of government

**County Green Purchasing Policy** — Los Angeles County Policy P-1050, Purchase of Environmentally Preferable Products, that established objectives for the purchase of products commonly used by county departments, which includes environmental considerations in procurement decisions, along with traditional concerns of price, performance and availability, that will help the County to remain fiscally responsible while promoting practices that improve public health and safety, reduce pollution, and conserve natural resources



**CRV** — California Redemption Value (CRV) is a deposit paid on sales of certain recyclable beverage containers in California that can be redeemed after use when taken to an approved recycler

**Disposal** — the final deposition of solid waste onto land, into the atmosphere, or into the waters of the state; the management of solid waste through landfill disposal or transformation at a permitted solid waste facility

**Disposal Rate** — the amount of waste materials disposed per person per day

**Diversification** — disposal waste stream to prevent certain materials from being buried in a landfill

**Diversification Rate** — the amount of waste materials diverted per percentage of all materials generated

**Environmentally Preferred Purchasing (EPP)** — a source reduction strategy used by purchasing managers to select products that create the least amount of waste and toxicity

**Food Waste** — vegetable, fruit and animal food wastes resulting from food preparation, storage or serving activities

**Generator** — An individual, company, organization, or activity that produces wastes or recyclable materials

**Green Waste** — waste consisting of vegetative matter such as leaves, grass clippings, brush, and tree trimmings resulting from landscaping, maintenance, and land clearing operations

**Hauler** — a company that collects trash and/or recyclable materials

**Hazardous Waste** — material requiring special precaution in its use, collection, storage, transportation, treatment, or disposal to prevent injury to human health, animals, marine life and/or the environment including those that are flammable, corrosive, ignitable, reactive, toxic, radioactive, volatile and pathological

**HDPE** — high-density polyethylene, or #2 plastic resin used for the manufacture of milk jugs, laundry product containers, margarine and butter tubs, and some plastic bags

**Hydration Station** — water fountain with a filtration unit designed to facilitate the filling of reusable water bottles, promoting reuse and reduction of disposable plastic water bottles used

**Large Event** — event attended by an average of more than 2,000 individuals each day of operation and charges an admission price or is run by a local agency (AB2176)

**Mixed Paper** — types of paper that are not included in the high-grade category, such as envelopes, manila folders, junk mail, greeting cards, wrapping paper, glossy inserts, catalogs and LA magazines

**Organic Waste** — food waste, green waste, landscape and pruning waste, nonhazardous wood waste and food-soiled paper waste that is mixed in with food waste

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**Pallet** — a platform placed underneath large items so they may be picked up and moved by a forklift

**PET** — polyethylene terephthalate, or #1 plastic resin, typically transparent in color, used in the manufacture of soda and liquor bottles, and some food containers, such as peanut butter jars

**Post-Consumer Waste** — materials generated after the sale of a product to retail customers such as weekly household trash.

**Pre-Consumer Waste** — scrap from industrial and manufacturing processes generated previous to initial sale of a product, which may also include wholesale packaging waste from retail businesses

**Processing** — operations performed to make recyclable materials more marketable, which may include sorting, baling, grinding, chipping or crushing

**Recycled Content** — the part of a product that has been manufactured using pre-consumer or post-consumer recycled material

**Recycling** — the process of collecting, sorting, cleaning, treating and reconstituting materials to return them to the economic mainstream in the form of source material for new, reused or reconstituted products which meet the quality standards necessary to be used in the marketplace

**Reuse** — the use of a product more than once in its same form for the same or similar purpose

**Roll-Off** — wheeled materials container with a capacity ranging from 10-to-50-cubic yards container at a site

**Source Reduction** — strategies that reduce the total amount of the toxic materials that become waste, which is also referred to as “waste prevention,” and may include reducing the use of nonrecyclable materials, replacing disposable materials and products with reusable materials and products, reducing packaging, and increasing the efficiency of the use of materials

**Source Separation** — the process of segregating various materials by type at the point of generation in order to manage them through recycling, composting or other waste handling system

**Sustainable** — ability to meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs

**Waste Audit** — an on-site assessment of waste from an individual business, industry, institution, or household identifying materials in that waste with potential for recycling or diversion from landfill

**Waste Generation** — production of waste, which can be determined by assessing the waste bins on-site and reviewing waste management services utilized

**Waste Reduction** — actions taken before waste is generated to either reduce or completely prevent the generation of waste

## References

- City of Burbank – Zero Waste Guide
- City of Denver – Sustainable Event Planning Guide
- City of San Jose – Zero Waste Strategic Plan
- City of Santa Monica – Waste Event Planning Guide
- Alameda County – Special Event Best Practices Guide
- Marin County – Zero Waste Event Planning Guide
- Seven Generations Ahead – Zero Waste Event Planning Guide
- Zero Waste Alliance
- Zero Waste International Alliance
- SF Environment – Zero Waste Checklist for Events

## Contact Us

Los Angeles County Public Works – Environmental Programs Division  
WasteFreeEvents@pw.lacounty.gov  
(888) CLEAN-LA



# Sample Planning Timeline for a Waste-Free Event

## ONE YEAR PRIOR TO EVENT

- ☐ Identify event decision makers and organizational functions
- ☐ Identify waste, recycling, and organics haulers
- ☐ Determine where waste can be eliminated at the source such as digital agendas, renting items, reusable service ware, etc.
- ☐ Identify recycling, diversion, and sustainability goals
- ☐ Identify potential materials entering the waste stream
- ☐ Determine where the largest amount of materials will be collected
- ☐ Determine where and who generates the most waste (suppliers, staff, vendors, attendees, etc.)
- ☐ Identify items to collect for diversion
- ☐ Research procurement opportunities (buying durable, reusable, repairable or recyclable products)
- ☐ Research equipment/containers for collection
- ☐ Identify education/outreach opportunities

## SIX MONTHS PRIOR TO EVENT

- ☐ Determine when to buy recycled and recyclable products keeping storage needs in mind
- ☐ Determine if vendor items are recyclable, compostable, reusable or disposable
- ☐ Insert recycling, diversion, and sustainability requirements into the vendor agreements
- ☐ Decide which materials will be source separated versus commingled
- ☐ Meet with vendors to discuss recycling and waste reduction opportunities
- ☐ Determine ways to minimize disposable packaging
- ☐ Select and order equipment (bins, stickers, etc.)
- ☐ Research donation opportunities for unwanted food, construction materials, promo items, etc.
- ☐ Identify staff/volunteers to assist in implementing waste reduction and recycling procedures
- ☐ Organize education and outreach components (i.e. information in event program, vendor packets, press release, signage, etc.)
- ☐ Identify local non-profits to assist with collection of recyclables or to receive donations after the event
- ☐ Research the feasibility of securing hydration/water refill stations for the event to encourage the use of reusable bottles, cups or canteens

## TWO MONTHS PRIOR TO EVENT

- ☐ Publicize the event as a waste-free event through displays, social media, and promotions
- ☐ Coordinate collection activities with event site facility manager
- ☐ Inform the media of the waste-free event
- ☐ Arrange for a recycling/waste service hauler
- ☐ Organize volunteers and an action team
- ☐ Include waste reduction and recycling procedures in the vendor packet
- ☐ Confirm equipment and drop-off schedule
- ☐ Create diagram of recycling staging area for vendors

## ONE WEEK PRIOR TO EVENT

- ☐ Confirm logistics for donations
- ☐ Confirm equipment and outreach deliveries
- ☐ Confirm recycling/waste service hauler schedule (date, time, location)
- ☐ Confirm staff and volunteers
- ☐ Distribute recycling procedures to vendors
- ☐ Strategically place organic waste, recycling, and trash bins next to each other to create collection stations
- ☐ Limit the number of giveaways (i.e. free samples, paper fliers)
- ☐ Ensure all items purchased for the event such as banners, display materials, and operational materials are reusable, recyclable or compostable
- ☐ Train staff on recycling procedures, and edible food storage, as needed
- ☐ Vendors/volunteers should be trained and know where bins are located and the type of materials that belong in each bin

## DAY OF EVENT

- ☐ Monitor collection stations regularly
- ☐ Publicize and encourage recycling throughout the day with announcements
- ☐ Monitor collection stations and re-sort any contaminated bins. Stations should be clearly marked and color-coded, such as black for trash, blue for mixed recyclables, and green for organic waste material.
- ☐ Place bin signage at eye level with pictures of acceptable items
- ☐ Empty and remove full bins as needed
- ☐ Measure and record diversion

## POST EVENT

- ☐ Ensure bins and food donations are picked up on time
- ☐ Collect weight tickets and receipts from haulers
- ☐ Prepare post-event diversion reports
- ☐ Gather feedback from vendors, volunteers, staff and attendees.
- ☐ Evaluate results
- ☐ Determine what did and did not work
- ☐ Prepare recommendations for next event
- ☐ Publicize results

# Success Stories

## WOMEN IN GREEN

Three Squares Inc. produces the annual Women in Green Forum (WIGF) to highlight women's impact on the environmental industry and provide a venue to encourage more women to enter the field. The Los Angeles based conference was the first event in the U.S. to achieve compliance with ISO 20121 Event Sustainability Management System, winning the IMEX Green Meeting Award in Germany for this achievement. The WIGF places 3-bin Eco Stations with educational signage throughout its venue to capture compostables, recycling, and landfill items. It also employs a strict sustainable procurement strategy that emphasizes purchasing items that can be reused for future events. Because it utilizes items (furniture, décor, signage, name badges, linens, etc.) that are reused and encourages attendees to properly dispose of items through Eco Stations, event producers are able to divert an estimated one-ton or 2,000 lbs. of waste every year. Learn more about the WIGF by visiting [womeningreenforum.com](http://womeningreenforum.com).

## RIPCURL PRO

With the help of Wastebusters, a specialist waste diversion company, RipCurl Pro surf competition achieved a staggering 98 percent waste diversion rate for pre-event, event and post-event activities. Rip Curl Pro places event banners "upcycled" into board bags and tote bags in San Diego county. Zero waste event services can be found at [wastebusters.info](http://wastebusters.info).

## 2014 LACI CLEANTECH GLOBAL SHOWCASE

Hosted by the Los Angeles Cleantech Incubator (LACI), the annual Cleantech Global Showcase brings together an international group of industry leaders as they explore the cutting edge of cleantech investment, entrepreneurship and innovation. LACI is a private nonprofit founded by the City of Los Angeles to accelerate the commercialization of clean technologies in the region. The 2014 Showcase engaged environmental consulting firm Three Squares Inc. to implement a comprehensive event sustainability plan, which included a focus on waste diversion. In order to minimize the amount of waste sent to be landfilled, 3-bin Eco Stations with educational signage were placed throughout the venue to capture compostables, recycling and landfill items. Learn about the annual Showcase by visiting [glosho.la](http://glosho.la).

## DAVIS WHOLE EARTH FESTIVAL

The Whole Earth Festival is held annually in Davis, California, and attracts over 30,000 attendees. Vendors are charged a 100 dollar deposit to encourage compliance with a policy requiring use of recyclable and/or compostable materials. Paper cups and #1 plastic cups were used for beverages. Biodegradable bags and utensils were supplied at cost for vendors, costing each vendor between 20 to 30 dollars. Food scraps, biodegradable bags and utensils were collected for composting. Although most of the festival trash was brought in from outside the event by attendees, the waste diversion rate was 81 percent.





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