

ZERO WASTE EVENTS GUIDE



CENTRAL VERMONT SOLID WASTE
MANAGEMENT DISTRICT



CENTRAL VERMONT SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT DISTRICT (CVSWMD)

137 BARRE STREET, MONTPELIER, VT 05602

(802) 229-9383 • CVSWMD.ORG

CVSWMD member towns are: Barre City, Barre Town, Berlin, Bradford, Calais, Chelsea, Duxbury, East Montpelier, Fairlee, Hardwick, Middlesex, Montpelier, Orange, Plainfield, Tunbridge, Walden, Washington, Williamstown and Woodbury. Member towns may change; go to 802recycles.com to see which solid waste district your town belongs to.

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IMPORTANT POINT: Text highlighted in pink is key information — pay attention!

→ ZW TIP

Look for these tips throughout the guide for helpful hints and main points to remember.





INTRODUCTION: MAKING ZERO WASTE EASY

WHAT IS ZERO WASTE?

Zero Waste is a goal that is ethical, economical, efficient and visionary, to guide people in changing their lifestyles and practices to emulate sustainable natural cycles, where all discarded materials are designed to become resources for others to use.”

—Zero Waste
International Alliance

Zero waste events show your commitment to the environment while creating a model of zero waste for your guests. The key to a zero waste event is careful planning so all materials are reusable, recyclable, or compostable. By thinking ahead about the materials your guests will be using and disposing of, it's easy to plan waste out of the event.

Vermont's Universal Recycling Law (Act 148) bans recyclables, food scraps, leaf and yard waste, and clean wood from the landfill. Now is the time to reimagine how to manage waste at your event, both to comply with Vermont law and to offer an added benefit to your participants and the environment.

Zero waste event planning can apply to a block party or a large festival or wedding. Reducing waste follows the same basic principles. Each

opportunity to hold a zero waste event makes a difference both for the environment and by showing others that this is achievable.

WHY ZERO WASTE?

Nearly half of all U.S. landfills are full or have been closed because of groundwater contamination.

At the pace we are tossing trash, we'll fill up Vermont's only permitted landfill in a matter of years. But siting a new landfill is not sustainable due to pollution (methane emissions, other greenhouse gas leaks, groundwater pollution, etc.), high landfill siting and maintenance costs, and the fact that most people don't want a landfill in their backyard.

The linear model of consumerism (extracting virgin resources for products and packaging, then discarding these resources to landfills or incinerators) is a primary cause of global resource depletion and associated environmental, climate, and social problems. Zero waste is an integral part of a circular economy, where everything is treated as a resource.



Landfills can pollute the environment, including the groundwater we drink.



→ ZW TIP

Use this guide to help you plan your event. Not all options will apply to your event—pick and choose the ones that are right for you.



Setting up recycling bins at the Tunbridge World's Fair.



→ ZW TIP

Reserve bins for your Zero Waste Event today! Call the CVSWMD office at 802-229-9383 to get started or visit cvswmd.org. This program is for events taking place within the CVSWMD member towns only (see inside front cover).

1 THE SORTING STATION

TYPES OF SORTING STATIONS

Every event needs a bin for food scraps, recyclables and landfill at the very least. Ideally, the sorting stations will be monitored by trained volunteers or staff.

- **Recyclables:** Clean and free of food debris. Set up rinse station to aid in this process. A separate station can be set up if your event is collecting bottles and cans to return or for charity donation.
- **Food Scraps:** Check with your hauler to know what is accepted based on the food scraps final destination.
- **Fry Oil:** Contact a fry oil recycler (such as Black Bear BioDiesel) to remove used oil at the end of your event..
- **Landfill:** What remains and cannot be reused, recycled, or composted.
- **Reusable:** Bus bins or washing station.

SORTING BINS: Bins and cans should be color-coded to indicate what goes in each bin. For example: all compost bins green, recycling bins blue, and landfill bins black.

Where to get sorting bins? CVSWMD loans out sorting stations along with signage, free with a \$25 deposit, for your event. Go to: cvswmd.org/bin-loan-program

For large – or annually repeating – events, try one of these suppliers:

- **ReCycle Away**, Brattleboro, VT 800-664-5340
- **Clear Stream**, Palos Heights, IL 855-411-4321

Consistency is KEY. It is important that every sorting station at your event looks the same to

ANATOMY OF A SORTING STATION



GOT MORE THAN ONE STATION?

Keep them consistent: same order of bins, same signage, etc.

SIGNAGE

Keep clear and consistent. Use examples if you can.

COMPOST

Food scraps (vegetables, meat, dairy, liquids)

NO milk cartons, paper products, or compostable containers

RECYCLING

Plastic, metal, glass, paper
No Styrofoam

Leave lids on bottles

Clean, dry and empty (NO food-soiled items)

TRASH

Juice & milk cartons, straws, paper cups, wrappers, Styrofoam, food-soiled paper products, plastic silverware, compostable containers...

MONITORS
EDUCATE & KEEP
CONTAMINANTS
OUT!



LOCATION is important: near food or lines of traffic, easy to see. Cover if open to rain.

avoid confusion for your event guests. Same bins, same order at every location.

DETAILS ON SPECIFIC ITEMS

RECYCLABLES: The following items are mandated recyclables in the CVSWMD:

- **Plastic:** #1-6, larger than 2" on any 2 sides
- **Metal:** Aluminum, clean tin foil larger than 2" balled, steel, cans
- **Glass:** all colors
- **Paper:** office paper, box board, etc.
- **Cardboard:** corrugated and other brown boxboard



→ ZW TIP

To recycle properly, empty recyclables out of collection bags when they go into your large roll-off provided by your hauler. If you don't un-bag recyclables they might end up in the landfill.



USE CLEAR BAGS

EMPTY RECYCLABLES
OUT OF BAGS INTO
ROLL-OFF OR DUMPSTER



→ ZW TIP

If composting locally, do not use “bio” bags or “compostable” bags for collecting food scraps. The large-scale composters in our region do not accept materials in bags of any form. Instead, food scraps go directly into the designated bin – WITH NO BAG – and your food scrap hauler will pick up the bins.

FOOD SCRAPS: For a *full* list of specific items, visit cvswmd.org.

ACCEPTABLE FOOD SCRAPS:

- All vegetable waste
- Meat
- Dairy
- Eggshells
- Coffee
- Bread
- Small amounts of waste oil and liquids

NOT ACCEPTABLE:

- Compostable containers and utensils
- Soiled paper products (napkins, plates, cups)
- Straws
- Stir sticks

DO NOT USE BIO-BAGS

FOOD SCRAPS GO
DIRECTLY IN BIN



LANDFILL: Anything headed for the landfill should go in a black trash bag to differentiate it from the clear recyclables bags. This will make it more likely that your volunteers and staff

will get the materials that everyone worked so hard to sort into the correct place at the end of the event. It also makes it clear which bags should be dumped OUT—the clear ones, and which go in the trash—the black ones.



USE BLACK TRASH BAGS
FOR LANDFILL ITEMS

SUPPLIES YOU WILL NEED



☐ SIGNS

Tips for clear, effective signage:

- **Clear wording:** Use as few words as possible, such as RECYCLING, COMPOST, LANDFILL.
- **Large Font:** Make it stand out!
- **Placement:** Be sure signs are at eye level and easy to see from a distance.
- **Photos and Images:** Use colors corresponding to bin color. Put clear photos of what goes in the bin on the sign.
- **Display:** Use a corkboard, poster board or plexi-glass case to display waste items found at the event, or staple these items to the signs themselves. (For example, napkins, hot liquid cups, soda bottles, french-fry trays, etc.)
- **Reusable:** Reuse your signs at other events. Consider using a heavy-duty material or laminate to reuse.



→ **ZW TIP**

We have downloadable/
printable signs on our
website: cvswmd.org!



☐ GLOVES



☐ TAPE



☐ PENS &
MARKERS



☐ HANDHELD
GRABBER(S)



☐ CLIPBOARDS



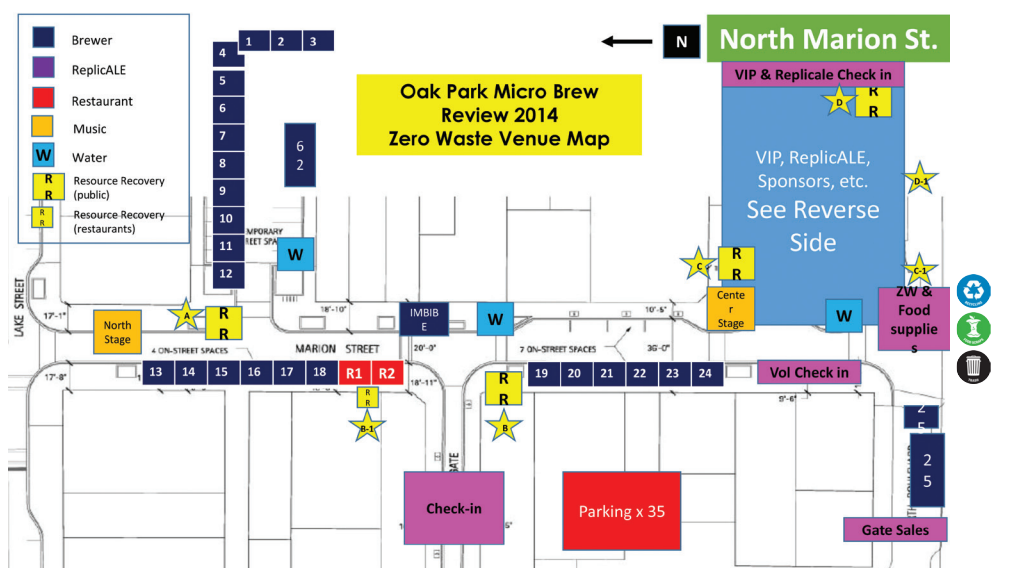
☐ DATA
COLLECTION
SHEETS



☐ VOLUNTEER
ID ITEMS



☐ SCALE(S)



Create a map of your venue with sorting stations clearly marked.

MAPPING: Creating a map of the venue will help determine the number of sorting stations and placement. Sorting stations need to be set up in key locations throughout your event venue, such as by entrances, exits, and eating areas. Mapping will also help you figure out the number of volunteers/staff you'll want to have. Maps can be given to volunteers to help them orient and show up in the right place on time.

→ ZW TIP

Remember: less is more! Having a large event doesn't necessarily mean more stations, but it might mean more bins at EACH station. A few stations DONE RIGHT in key locations will be more productive than dozens of trash cans found everywhere.

VARIABLES TO CONSIDER

WHERE ARE THE CURRENT LANDFILL BINS LOCATED? Consider keeping the stations where people are used to finding landfill bins at previous events. Be consistent year to year to develop habits in event attendees.

WHAT IS THE LAYOUT OF THE VENUE? Typical sorting station locations might include where food and beverages are being served and consumed or along heavy traffic flows.

IT'S THE LAW: If an event is held in a public space, Vermont law *requires* pairing recycling with trash bins.



2 PLANNING DOWNSTREAM

WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO EACH STREAM POST-EVENT?

Pre-event planning includes identifying what happens to the sorted resources after the event. You should identify who will pick up each stream, how often they will be collected, and where they will be taken and stored during the event. Note that there may be different arrangements made for each waste stream.

RECYCLING: Make sure that if recycling is collected in plastic bags, that they are taken out of the bags and dumped into a larger receptacle at the end of the event. Haulers will not accept recycling in plastic bags.

All recyclables **MUST** be free of grease and food debris. Set up rinsing station(s) for ensuring clean recyclables.



→ ZW TIP

All recycling must be emptied from plastic bags before bringing to end site.



Chicken break down food scraps at Vermont Compost in Montpelier.

FOOD SCRAPS: For large events, work with a food scrap hauler to manage food waste. Learn about haulers in your area on our website: cvswmd.org. You will need to set up a contract with a food scrap hauler well before the event is scheduled.

For smaller events, options include:

- Work with a local pig or chicken farmer to collect your food scraps afterward.
- Look for someone who might take your food scraps for composting at their residence or farm.
- For less than 48 gallons of food scraps, drop off at any of the compost facilities listed above in covered 5 gallon buckets. Make sure they are contaminant free (no non-organic matter, no paper, no plastic) and call the facility ahead.

WASTE OIL: Will you collect waste oil or require that food vendors recycle their own? If small amounts, it can be included with your food scraps. Larger amounts can be collected separately either through Grow Compost, or Black Bear Biodiesel. You will need to arrange for waste oil collection well before your scheduled event, and educate vendors about how to do it.

LANDFILL: Any non-recyclable containers, soiled paper plates, containers with food debris, non-compostable items, disposable “compostable” dishware, and other trash.

CHOOSE A HAULER

Find an updated list of haulers by region on our website at: cvswmd.org/licensed-hauler-list.

Options for smaller events:

- If you are planning a smaller event (300 people or less) and you don't want to hire a hauler, you can still find out where to take your streams after the event, by finding a transfer station drop-off location on our website: cvswmd.org/transfer-stations.
- Is someone involved in your organizing team or staff/volunteer who would be willing to haul each stream to its end point?
- Is there a local farmer or homesteader who would take your food scraps?
- Recycling: Make sure that if you plan to haul your own streams that you understand where to take the recycling and what specifics you need to know about sorting or other preparation. All recycling must be emptied from plastic bags before bringing to end site.

PLEASE DON'T
FEED ME MEAT!



→ ZW TIP

If you are working with a local farmer, be aware of Vermont's Swine Feed Laws; no meat or food scraps contaminated with meat may be fed to swine. If feeding to pigs, meat must be kept separate from other food scraps. There is no such policy for feeding food scraps to chickens.

3 WORKING WITH STAFF & VOLUNTEERS

YOU CAN STOP CONTAMINATION!



→ ZW TIP

Contamination refers to any item that is found in a bin where it doesn't belong. For example, a plastic fork in a food scrap bin is considered contamination, just as a dirty paper plate in a recycling bin is contamination.

Staff and volunteers play a key role in the success of a zero waste event. Contamination happens easily: all it takes is one person to put any item in the wrong bin. This visual sends the wrong message to attendees — that “like goes with like” — and others will likely follow suit.

You can stop contamination before it begins, with great signage, color coded bins, clearly marked bins; use of symbols and images instead of text, trained volunteers and staff who regularly monitor the sorting stations.

Each sorting station must feature a trained volunteer who helps attendees by both educating and ensuring that there is no contamination between the bins. Your volunteer isn't just a trash watcher; they are doing vital work, increasing public awareness. Your team of volunteers could include:

- Local student groups or sports teams
- Local businesses
- Community groups or like-minded organizations

RECRUITING VOLUNTEERS

STEP 1: Determine how many volunteers you need, use your map, and identify where and when (pre-event, during, and post-event) people need to be assigned.



STEP 2: Recruit staff/volunteers.

No later than four weeks before your training date, reach out to community groups or local businesses, sooner is better. Use social media and newspaper ads (including



free local listings), your email lists and web pages, and Front Porch Forum.

STEP 3: Train and schedule.

Follow up with interested individuals, get commitment. Let them know when and how long they will be required to work, and what will be provided to them as a thank you (free ticket, snacks, t-shirt, training, etc). Set-up a training date for all volunteers to go over your venue map, schedule shifts and delegate roles, and work out all the details of your event with your team.

Assign volunteer roles in 2-hour time slots.

STAFF & VOLUNTEER ROLES

- Sorting station monitor: prevent sorting mistakes, pull full bins, friendly education
- Set-up and take-down of sorting stations.
- During event: gathering and sorting materials during the event
- Post-event: consolidate materials to be made ready for haulers

Staff and volunteers help sorting stations run smoothly.



→ ZW TIP

Identify an "event captain" or team leader to carry forward your zero waste events. That person can move from station to station during the event to check-in with volunteers, answer questions and make sure sorting is being done correctly.

- Collect and consolidate signage and bins
- Compile waste audit and data tracking info (see appendix B, Waste Audit Summary Form)

By recruiting and training as many volunteers as possible, you will have a Zero Waste Team available to assign to various tasks.

ZERO WASTE LEADER

In addition to your team of staff & volunteers, you should assign a Zero Waste Leader. The Zero Waste Leader trains staff and volunteers, oversees all activity related to your zero waste event, and should have a complete set of event information that can be easily given to another trained person to take over if needed. This set of information should include:

- Multiple copies of the venue map
- Volunteer list and schedule
- Zero waste talking points, FAQ's



→ ZW TIP

Using volunteers enables you to have more hands on deck for a smoothly run event. It also creates an opportunity to educate and spread awareness about recycling and composting.

TRAINING

Staff and volunteers need to be on board with your zero waste program, and know their roles. The training should include information about:

- General requirements for recycling at events
- What materials can (and cannot) be recycled (or composted) — providing physical examples of the types of things they will see at the event will be MOST helpful
- Positive ways to help attendees and vendors get discarded materials into the correct bin
- Where sorted materials belong and how they need to be treated
- A pocket guide to use as a reference if they forget, provide FAQs (see appendix C)
- What the volunteer schedule is on the day of the event, where they are expected to be and at what time
- Contact information for their point person or if anything unexpected arises



4 *FOOD VENDORS & REUSABLE SERVICEWARE*

Whether your event will host food vendors, if you'll be using a caterer or preparing food yourself, you need to gather basic information about what your waste streams will look like. With several food vendors, there may be a confusing variety of similar disposables at your event.

SIMPLIFY AND REDUCE: Require all food vendors use the same types of containers (serviceware) that is recyclable and/or vetted by you. When possible, require that they purchase these items only from you — buy in bulk prior to the event and ask the vendors to provide you with their needs for this order, in advance.

Remember, compostable containers and paper products are NOT accepted at any central Vermont composting facility or food scrap drop-off site.



→ *ZW TIP*

Communicate with vendors **EARLY** to work out how they reduce waste/go zero!



→ ZW TIP

Encourage vendors to serve foods that don't require disposables by using toothpicks or napkins, for example, instead of plates or disposable flatware.

Consider using reusable dishes and borrow or buy a dishwashing (3-bin rinse/soap/sanitize) station.

REUSABLE SERVICEWARE OPTIONS: Go to our website to consider how you can host an event using only reusable serveware.

WHAT OTHER GIVEAWAYS WILL VENDORS BE HANDING OUT? Anticipate the litter that may generate.

FOOD VENDOR GUIDELINES

Please refer to our sample vendor letter (see appendix A) for tips on communicating your requirements to vendors.

- Require vendors to recycle used cooking oil.
- Require or strongly encourage vendors or caterers provide drinks and condiments (water, tea, sugars, ketchup, salad dressings, etc.) in bulk instead of in individual packages and servings.
- Provide vendors with a compost bucket and information both in writing and in a spoken conversation about how your food scrap collection will work. Remember, by 2020, food scraps are banned from the trash in Vermont, so most of your vendors will already be familiar with how this works.
- Provide vendors with a list of acceptable/not acceptable items (see sidebar). This will help prevent unwanted items showing up day of the event.
- Have vendors sign an agreement to follow your guidelines that contains all the above suggestions. Consider tying compliance with guidelines to deposit returns or adding a fine for those vendors who refuse to comply.

SOURCING REUSABLE SERVICEWARE

If your event will have few than 400 participants, use catering supply companies or locally source reusable items for serving and eating food, such as tablecloths, silverware, glasses, mugs, plates and cloth napkins that can be washed

and reused. If reusables aren't an option for the caterer or vendor that you select, use only recyclable materials, when possible.

CATERING SERVICES

If you are working with a catering company, ask them to provide only washable/reuseable containers. Most catering companies are willing and able to comply with requests to compost food scraps, use reusable containers, and limit the amount of waste, when requested.

BRINGING IN REUSABLES

Bring in your own food and serviceware! Here's how you can source your own service-ware such as tablecloths, silverware, glasses, mugs, plates and cloth napkins.

- Use a local catering supply company for serviceware.
- Find serviceware at thrift stores, tag sales, or your grandma's attic!
- If you sew or know someone who does, make your own napkins.
- Host at a local venue that has in-house kitchen and/or serviceware.
- Outdoor event? Set up a simple 3-bin dishwashing station and recruit volunteers to help with washing. Borrow dishwashing bins for free from us at: cvswmd.org/bin-loan-program

Learn more about local resources for hosting a zero waste event on our website: cvswmd.org/local-resources.

If reusables aren't an option for the caterer or vendor that you select, use only recyclable materials that get rinsed, as compostable products are not currently accepted at any central Vermont commercial composting facility.



Reusable plates cut down on landfill waste.



→ ZW TIP

Remember: Compostable dishware and flatware is not currently accepted at any central Vermont commercial composting facility.

5 OTHER AREAS TO THINK ABOUT



→ ZW TIP

Here are more ways to reduce waste for prizes, decorations, and giveaways:

- Limit giveaways.
- Consider non-material giveaways instead of stuff, like a coupon or gift voucher.
- Make sure all items purchased are reusable, recyclable, or compostable.
- Allow participants to select only the items they actually want to avoid unwanted items going into the trash bin.
- Distribute items to attendees that will help them to reduce waste (cloth bags, native plant seeds, potted plants, etc).

DECORATIONS AND GIVEAWAYS

Consider the environmental impact of any raffle prizes, giveaways, centerpieces or decorations to be used at the event, including the packaging they come in. Use natural materials for decorations that can be composted after the event. More tips in the sidebar at left!

WHAT'S LEFT OVER?

LEFTOVER FOOD: Encourage attendees to bring leftover food home using reusable containers. Research opportunities, in advance of the event, to donate untouched, unopened food to local food shelters, food pantries, or churches. Generally, food banks in Vermont may be willing to collect perishable, prepared food that they will then immediately deliver to a food pantry, soup kitchen, or shelter. Consider donating to the Vermont Foodbank. Contact the food bank in advance to make sure arrangements are made for the event.

STORE EXTRA SUPPLIES: Share what you've learned, and, if this event was a one-time only event, pass on things like sorting station materials, reusables, or donate to a local school, church or reuse store.

MEASURING SUCCESS

Report the success of your waste diversion! Consider what information may be useful for future organizers, your board for fundraising, or for marketing. You can report on:

- Volume of food scraps composted
- Amount of materials recycled
- Tonnage (or #) of material landfilled compared to previous years

DETERMINE YOUR MEASURING METHOD: Will you assess the actual weight of amount diverted from landfill, or will you choose a more simple way of evaluating (number of bags of trash vs. last year's number)?

MAKE PREPARATIONS FOR COLLECTING DATA:

Create a form for volunteers/staff to record values of waste collection (see sidebar at right for an example form). You can measure by weight (provide scale), by volume (of known containers or a marked line on dumpster), or even number of bags. Think about what information you want to take out of the event, and communicate this to volunteers and staff.

EVENT DATA FORM

Event: _____

Date: _____

Location: _____

Measurement method: _____

Gallons - Weight - # bags/size
Capacity of collection container
(Circle one of the above)

Recycling	#
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Food Scraps	#
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Landfill	#
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Notes: _____

HUMAN WASTE: WHAT ABOUT BATHROOMS?

Ready to take zero waste ideas into the bathroom? Here are some ways to reduce human waste at your event:

- Rich Earth Institute has great info on their website about urine diversion. They may even come collect for your event! Visit RichEarthInstitute.org.
- Check out the *Humanure Handbook*, by Joseph Jenkins, to learn everything you need to know from building your own to maintaining a composting toilet.
- Check out *Liquid Gold: the Lore and Logic of Using Urine to Grow Plants*, a book by Carol Steinfeld.

Learn more about this topic on our website:
cvswmd.org/CVSWMD.org/composting-toilets.



Rich Earth Institute offers portable toilets for urine diversion.



6 MARKETING, PUBLICITY & INVITATIONS

PUBLICITY CAMPAIGN

Use your publicity efforts to acquaint and remind attendees of zero waste strategies, and to emulate these by using alternatives to printed publicity materials.



PRE-EVENT PUBLICITY:

Pre-event publicity can include the following message: “We are striving to make this a zero waste event with the goal of 90%+ waste diversion.”

Incorporate waste diversion messages by using:

- An official event website, Facebook or event page
- An official event printed material (flyer, poster, postcard, etc. made from recycled content)
- Other publicity through social media, press release, newsletters, ads, etc.

DURING EVENT PUBLICITY: Include the following message: “[Event Name] is helping to reduce our impact on the environment by diverting at least (50% or 75%) of our waste from the landfill. Help us reduce waste by using the sorting stations around this event to compost and recycle. Thank you for contributing to a greener [Community Name].” Instead of creating new signage, add this message to existing event signage where possible.

GO PAPERLESS! INVITATIONS, TICKETS, AND REGISTRATION

To reduce waste upstream, consider online and email invitations. Use an electronic system for guest responses and registration. Here are some other tips:

- If you decide to use paper invitations for a more formal occasion, select those made from post-consumer recycled paper or paper alternatives.
- Make a note in the invitation that the event will be zero waste.
- When applicable, encourage attendees to bring reusable containers in order to bring leftovers home with them.



→ ZW TIP

Here are some ideas for publicity at your event:

- Provide signage at all sorting stations
- Create an educational area(s) with information and activities about event diversion efforts
- Banner made from recycled and recyclable material
- Stage announcements
- Other methods (e.g. mascot, flash mob, stage game helping attendees learn correct sorting methods)

7 TRACKING YOUR SUCCESS

EVALUATION

The post-event evaluation can provide helpful information for future events. Create a way to collect feedback (paper or online Google surveys) from staff and volunteers to give feedback as to what methods were working and how the event could improve. Likewise, provide a survey for attendees and vendors.

If you collected data on your diversion efforts, here's when you put all that together! Add up your data, fill out your spreadsheets, graph out your trends! Next time you host your event you'll be able to track changes and make improvements (see appendix B for Waste Audit Summary Form).

GIVE THANKS AND REPORT SUCCESS

Thank your volunteers, vendors, and attendees for participating.

Consider sharing your zero waste event experience.

- Publicize your zero waste successes and explain how these successes were measured.
- Note any revisions and recommendations for future zero waste events.
- Distribute your observations and experiences via press releases and/or newsletters.
- Make yourself known for your zero waste philosophy.

→ ZW TIP

Pledge to host your next event as zero waste! You can use your survey responses and experience to implement any necessary changes to the event's design and planning to make it even easier and to have an even bigger impact.

APPENDIX A

Sample Vendor Letter

Sample Zero Waste Vendor Letter

Zero Waste Participation Agreement

Dear Vendor:

Thank you for your interest in participating at [event name]! We are proud to announce that this event will be a zero waste event.

The goal at a zero waste event is to plan ahead and distribute only materials that are recyclable, and that all food scraps and food waste (used cooking oils) will be composted. "Zero waste stations" consisting of recycling, compost and liquid collection containers will be available to participants at numerous locations throughout [the event venue]. As a vendor handing out products at this event, you play a vital part in the success of our zero waste initiative.

Vendors attending [event name] are required to hand out only recyclable or reusable materials. Food containers MUST be **recyclable** only (#1, 5, or 7 on the bottom). Please note that compostable containers are NOT currently accepted at commercial composting companies in central Vermont. This includes: brown paper containers, paper napkins, wax bags, and VegWare compostable containers. DO NOT provide these containers at this event.

Remember, if an item is not recyclable locally, we cannot recycle it, even if your supplier has told you it can be recycled. If you have any questions as to whether your items are considered recyclable, please call [event Zero Waste Leader name and contact number]. We will answer your questions and help you understand your important role in this zero waste event. Please note that you will be asked to remove any non-recyclable items from your booth for the duration of the event. You will only be allowed to distribute recyclable or reusable products.

Your signature on the vendor application acknowledges that you will abide by all zero waste guidelines and requirements. Our zero waste goal is simple to attain if you plan ahead of time the kinds of materials you will be providing to the public at the event. Here are some ideas that can help you achieve this goal:

- Use the least amount of packaging possible or remove the packaging before distributing the item.
- Use paper bags rather than plastic bags.
- Use post-consumer (preferred) or recycled content paper for flyers, programs and handouts. Choose to print on paper with the highest recycled content you can find.
- Consider finger foods that do not require silverware.

Thank you for supporting our zero waste goal and we look forward to working with you to make this a successful zero waste event.

Sincerely,

[Event Zero Waste Leader]

Download this letter
at cvswwmd.org

APPENDIX B

Waste Audit Summary Form

WASTE AUDIT SUMMARY – FOR ZERO WASTE EVENTS

To help you assess your diversion efforts: keep track of how much of each type of waste was generated. Collect the information during your event (using data collection sheets) and add up the numbers here.

- 1) Event name: _____
- 2) Event date: _____ Estimated Attendees: _____
- 3) Volume of TRASH generated (in gallons): _____
- 4) Volume of RECYCLING generated (in gallons): _____
- 5) Volume of FOOD SCRAPS generated (in gallons): _____

How were food scraps handled?

- ☐ Composted on Site
- ☐ Picked up by commercial hauler: _____ (provide name of hauler)
- ☐ Event organizer took to a transfer station: _____ (specify location)
- ☐ Event organizer took to compost facility: _____ (specify compost facility)

- 6) Did you use volunteers at your event for monitoring waste? Yes No

If so how many? _____

- 7) Did you use any reuseables (such as cups, plates, bowls, napkins, etc)? Yes No

- 8) What would you estimate your contamination rate for each stream? (Ex. If some items made it into the wrong bin, what percentage would that be for each?)
- Recycling _____ % Food Scraps _____ % Landfill _____ %

- 9) (Optional) Calculate your diversion rate using this formula: *Divide your total gallons diverted (compost + recycling), by the total of all three streams (landfill + food scraps + recycling) x100= your diversion rate percentage:*
- Diversion rate: _____ %

Name of person/or organization providing data: _____

Now plan your next Zero Waste event to compare!



CENTRAL VERMONT SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

Download this form
at cvswmd.org

APPENDIX C

Zero Waste FAQ for Events

Q: WHAT IS ZERO WASTE?

Zero waste means exactly what you might think: Nothing gets “wasted”! A zero waste event is one in which organizers emphasize reusable, recyclable, or compostable materials in order to minimize landfill-bound waste from the event. Diverting 90% or more of your waste from the landfill is considered a success!

Q: WHY IS THIS A ZERO WASTE EVENT?

- It's better for the environment.
- Reduces methane emissions that seep out of the landfill
- The food waste collected will be composted for use by local farmers, and gardeners.
- Reduces dumpster costs by lowering trash volumes.
- It's Vermont law....ACT 148 bans recyclables from the landfill, and by 2020 bans foodscrap from the landfill.

Q: WHY IS RECYCLING BETTER THAN THROWING THINGS AWAY?

Because recycling...

- conserves natural resources by reducing our need to mine for raw, virgin materials,
- reduces energy and water consumption necessary to manufacture new materials from scratch, and
- creates less air, soil, and water pollution that manufacturing processes create.

Q: WHERE DO ALL THE WASTE STREAMS GO?

Haulers of each stream will collect at transfer stations, residential pick-up, and drop-off sites around central Vermont. Here's where they go from there:

- **Trash:** The Coventry Landfill is the only operational landfill in the state of Vermont. This landfill takes more than two-thirds of the 600,000 tons of waste thrown away every year.
- **Compost:** In Central Vermont, to one of four commercial compost facilities: Vermont Compost, Grow Compost, Black Dirt Farm, and Cookeville Compost.
- **Mixed Recyclable Containers:** Are taken to Vermont's Materials Recovery Center (MRF) located in Williston where it gets sorted by type and sent off to separate materials recycling facilities in and out of state.

Q: WHY DO PAPER PRODUCTS & COMPOSTABLES GO INTO THE TRASH BIN INSTEAD OF THE RECYCLING OR COMPOST?

Compostable items are made of [corn, sugarcane bagasse, PLA, etc.] and cannot be broken down by our local compost facilities. Paper products that are soiled with food debris cannot be recycled.

QUICK GUIDE

to hosting a Zero Waste event

Recycling and composting at events doesn't have to be challenging, but it does require some planning. Follow this checklist for starters.

SORTING STATIONS & HAULER

- ☐ Find haulers for all waste streams. Visit cvswwmd.org for a list of Vermont haulers.
- ☐ Have at least one sorting station for every 25 people (for events with 300 people or fewer). Don't forget to count staff, vendors, and volunteers. Don't have bins? Borrow them from us!
- ☐ Create consistent sorting stations. Aim for consistency with the serviceware you provide (one type of cup, one type of plate, etc), as well as the bins you use (same bins, same order, same signage). Use actual images of the containers to be recycled on signage if possible.
- ☐ Assign a volunteer to monitor and empty stations. Monitoring helps increase awareness while preventing contamination.
- ☐ Recyclables must be free of food residue. Set up a rinsing station if you can.
- ☐ If you collect recyclables in plastic bags, you must empty them into the roll-off provided by your hauler before you can send the materials for processing.

FOOD VENDORS & SERVICWARE

- ☐ Consider requiring or incentivising vendors to reduce or eliminate disposable dishware and flatware (serve on napkins or with toothpicks).
- ☐ Provide a list of approved items to recycle and compost to vendors.
- ☐ Smaller events may choose reusable plates, utensils, cups, napkins, and packaging when possible. Consider renting plates and utensils, or purchasing them cheaply at thrift stores. Recruit a dishwashing team.
- ☐ If it is not possible to use reusable serviceware, choose recyclable containers or minimally packaged goods instead.

COMMUNICATION

- ☐ Inform your team. Confirm what can and cannot be recycled or composted and communicate it with everybody involved in the event, including vendors and attendees.
- ☐ Train event staff and/or volunteers as Waste Warriors. Provide FAQs for volunteers if/and when asked about your events waste flows.
- ☐ Educate your attendees. Make sure recycling and composting options are promoted and clearly marked during the event to encourage proper use. Provide educational information for "Why Zero Waste?" Tell folks before and during the event you are aiming for a Zero Waste event, and tell them afterwards how successful you were!