



# ZERO WASTE EVENT GUIDELINES

**These guidelines provide a framework and recommendations to reduce the waste generated by events hosted at the Adams County Fairground.**

Implementation of these guidelines supports the vision and goals adopted in the Sustainable Adams County 2030 Plan and will contribute directly to Goal 6: Achieve 30% waste diversion at county-led events.

Adams County staff involved in planning large events can use this document to guide waste management practices. In addition, Fairgrounds staff responsible for coordinating the rental of Fairgrounds facilities may provide these guidelines to external event planners and hosts.

**The recommendations and low waste practices identified in these guidelines will help reduce waste at the following event types:**

**County-Hosted  
Community Events**  
*e.g., County Fair*

**Large Internal County Events**  
*e.g., Adams County Employee  
Recognition Luncheon*

**Fairgrounds Facility Rentals  
for Large Community Events**  
*e.g., Tiny Homes Festival*

## SUSTAINABLE ADAMS COUNTY 2030 VISION

Adams County is committed to being the most innovative and inclusive county in America for all families and businesses.

## Contracted Waste Services for Large Events

Given the complexity of waste management for very large events such as the County Fair and Stars and Stripes, it is recommended that the county consider contracting out turn-key waste services for a handful of events in 2023 and beyond. In selecting a contractor to manage waste services for these events, the county may use these waste guidelines to communicate expectations around waste reduction, recycling, composting and communication of waste goals.

In addition, the county may consider making turn-key waste services available through facility rental for external hosts of very large events.



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Adams County set a goal to keep 30% of waste generated by events out of the landfill. This means recycling or composting waste whenever possible. Use these guidelines to reduce the waste produced at your event event.

## BEFORE THE EVENT: DEVELOP A ZERO WASTE EVENT PLAN

Develop a Zero Waste Event Plan covering the following:

### 1. Identify anticipated waste materials

Identify the types and quantities of materials you will need for your event (e.g., promotional materials, food, giveaways). For each, consider:

- Are these materials necessary?
- Are zero waste or reusable options available?
- Are locally recyclable/compostable options available?

### 2. Waste stations and signage

Planning ahead to provide easily accessible and clearly labeled waste stations can help reduce the amount of waste that goes to landfill. Each station should include a recycling, and trash bin, plus clear signage.

- Identify the number of waste stations you will need based on your expected participants and whether you will serve food.
- For large events, map out where waste stations will be located, and consider collocating with waste-generating activities (e.g., food vendors, tables with giveaways, exits).
- Determine if additional waste stations or containers are required and order extra containers if needed.
- Review existing waste signage available at the event facility and print or develop additional signage if needed to direct attendees how to dispose of materials specific to your event.
- Recruit staff and volunteers to manage waste stations, educate attendees and help minimize recycling and composting contamination.
- Communicate zero waste goals and provide training to all event staff and volunteers.
- Determine ahead of time how you will track the volume of trash, recycling and compostable material generated.



## COMPOSTING

If food will be available at the event, try to work with a local composting company to divert scraps and any other compostable materials.

*Remember:* Many items labeled as “compostable” need to be composted in special commercial facilities in order to break down. Make sure to get any compostable products approved by your compost vendor ahead of time.



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## 3. Vendor Selection and Communication

*Consider the following when identifying, and communicating with, vendors (including food vendors/caterers).*

- Work with local companies whenever possible to minimize transportation impacts and support local collaboration around waste goals.
- Communicate zero waste goals to all potential vendors early on, and work with vendors to minimize unnecessary waste (e.g., use QR codes instead of flyers, minimize plastic packaging). Provide Waste Reduction Guidelines to all vendors.
- Clearly communicate recycling and composting amenities and guidelines specific to your venue and event. Remind vendors not to set up a trash can container for public use.
- Request reusable, recyclable or locally compostable products if available.

*When working with caterers and food vendors, consider the following additional guidelines:*

- For smaller events, consider using reusable dishes, glassware and silverware.
- Offer “finger food” options that do not require utensils.
- Provide water jugs or fill stations instead of plastic water bottles.
- Minimize packaging, for example by avoiding individually wrapped items, if public health guidelines allow.
- Serve condiments in containers rather than individual packets, if public health guidelines allow.
- Develop a plan to donate viable excess food.

## 4. Event Promotion

*Include zero waste considerations in your event marketing plan, for example:*

- Include zero waste messaging in event description, marketing materials and social media posts.
- Encourage attendees to bring reusable cups and/or containers for self-serve food and drink options.
- Avoid unnecessary printed promotional materials; make use of QR codes and online event advertising.
- Print promotional materials such as posters and flyers on recycled content paper that is locally recyclable.
- Inform event attendees ahead of time that printed agendas, programs and other materials will be limited or unavailable.
- For recurring events, consider promotional materials such as banners that are not date-specific.

*Decoration*

- Reuse decorations whenever possible.
- If decorations are purchased, consider reusable or locally recyclable materials.



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## ON-THE-DAY

### *Vendor Coordination*

- Check in with vendors as they arrive to remind them of zero waste goals.
- Ensure that vendors are aware of and have access to recycling facilities, and composting containers if applicable.
- Collect samples of any non-recyclable/compostable items to inform waste station staff and/or volunteers.

### *Set Up Waste Station(s)*

- Ensure that station(s) are easily identified, accessible, clearly labeled and visible throughout the event space or clearly signposted.
- If trash containers are used, ensure they are co-located with recycling and composting if available.
- Set up a pail for liquids that can later be poured down the drain next to waste stations.
- Ensure that waste staff and/or volunteers are in position, clear of their role and aware of any non-recyclable/compostable items.

### *Communication*

- At the start and throughout the event, remind participants of zero waste goals and practices, for example at event entrance and/or over a loudspeaker if applicable.
- Thank attendees for helping you meet your zero waste event goals.

## AFTER THE EVENT

### *Minimize contamination*

- Check recycling and composting containers for contamination, if public health guidelines allow.

### *Intercept materials for reuse or donation*

- Collect food, decorations and other materials for donation or future reuse.

### *Tracking*

- Record weight or estimated volume of trash, recycling and composting produced.
- Note which, if any, trash items were generated to inform future event planning.
- Note which, if any, items were most frequently placed in the wrong container to inform future signage and event planning.

### *Report progress on waste goals*

- Communicate waste diversion rate, success stories and areas for future improvement to the event team and attendees.