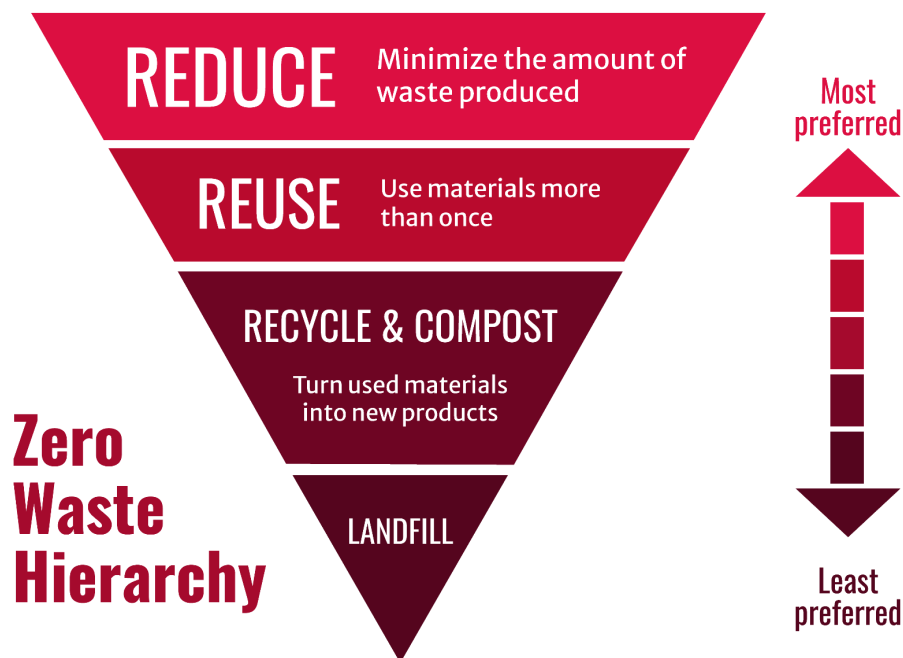


UGA ZERO WASTE EVENTS GUIDE

What is a Zero Waste Event?

Events reflect the culture of your organization. A Zero Waste Event conveys a commitment to sustainability while striving to **divert at least 90% of waste materials** from the landfill. This guide provides tips to plan, purchase, and properly dispose of materials to help you and your guests have the best experience possible.



4 Key Actions

1. Decide in advance that your event will be Zero Waste.
2. Plan food service wisely.
3. Purchase reusable, recyclable, and/or compostable products.
4. Provide convenient waste disposal bins and signage for your guests.





Step-by-Step Checklist

*Event planning is a big task!
We're here to help.*

Key Tip: Compostable items are the way to go for events! While items with food residue can't be recycled as easily, compostable wares can be tossed into the compost bin with any leftover food. This simplifies disposal for your guests!

Before the Event

Planning & Communication

- ☐ Inform everyone involved with event planning - from your internal team members to your caterer and any other vendors - that this is a Zero Waste Event.
- ☐ Evaluate each purchasing decision by asking "can this be reused, composted, or recycled?" Visit our [interactive waste reduction website](#) to find out. If the answer is no, you don't need it at your Zero Waste Event.

Catering & Supplies

- ☐ Providing all compostable plates / cups / utensils is the best way to make your event Zero Waste!
 - ☐ Ask your caterer to provide compostable service wares; here's an [email template](#). Use this [catering list](#) to discover Zero Waste-friendly caterers in Athens.
 - ☐ If you plan to buy your own, here's a recommended [compostable products list](#).
 - ☐ Remind your caterer not to bring plastic utensils / wares if you are purchasing them yourself.
 - ☐ Only purchase BPI-certified products. "Eco-friendly" and "biodegradable" do NOT mean compostable!
- ☐ Don't forget the little things! Single-serving condiment packets, creamers, dressings, etc. will need to be landfilled. Consider using family-sized or reusable containers for these items.

Before the Event Cont.

Bins & Signs

- ☐ Ensure you have appropriate bins for compost, recycling, and landfill. There are three main options:
 - ☐ For the simplest logistics, select a campus building that already offers compost service. Here's a growing list of [venues](#).
 - ☐ Do it yourself (DIY) for free at any indoor or outdoor event.
 - ☐ Complete a [Compost Bin Request Form](#) to coordinate pickup of compost bin(s) from the Office of Sustainability. Use these bins free-of-charge and return them afterwards.
 - ☐ Hire Facilities Management Division (FMD) for large outdoor events.
 - ☐ For outdoor events only, you can complete a [FMD Event Support Work Request](#). FMD Waste Reduction Services will deliver and retrieve compost, recycling, and landfill bins at your event for a small fee.
- ☐ Provide signs to help your guests put waste in the right place.
 - ☐ For DIY events, print out signs to help attendees place the right materials in the right bins. Custom signs tailored to your event's specific food and service wares are most helpful. Click [here](#) for general and customizable sign templates.
 - ☐ If you hire FMD for your outdoor event, general waste signage will be provided for the bins. We recommend you also create customized table-top signs tailored to your event by using [these templates](#).

*Confused about whether your event materials will belong in the compost vs recycling vs landfill bin?
Visit this [interactive website](#) or email sustain@uga.edu for guidance.*

Day-of & During Event

Communication

- ☐ Remind event staff which materials belong in each of the three waste bins and why it's important.
- ☐ Make a brief announcement to all attendees about your waste reduction efforts. Reference the instructional signs and explain why it's important.
 - ☐ Example Why Statement: "UGA is committed to waste reduction. By composting at this event, we are sending less waste to the landfill and helping to grow more food. Help us put waste in the right place by looking at the signs above the bins. Thanks for helping us create a cleaner, healthier, more sustainable campus and community."

Bins & Signs

- ☐ Make sure waste bins are co-located with landfill, recycling, and compost all directly adjacent to each other. This will reduce contamination and make waste disposal simpler for your guests.
- ☐ Place [waste reduction signs](#) on food and beverage serving tables.
- ☐ For indoor events, place [corresponding signs](#) above each waste bin whenever possible.

Volunteers

- ☐ Proper waste disposal can be confusing! If possible, recruit volunteers to stand next to each set of waste bins and help attendees properly sort their waste.

After the Event

Waste Disposal

- ☐ If you submitted a [FMD Event Support Work Request](#) for your outdoor event, FMD Waste Reduction Services will take it from here!
- ☐ If you borrowed compost bins from the Office of Sustainability, dispose of the compostable material at an [ACC Public Compost Drop-off Point](#) (accessible 24/7) and return the compost bin(s) to the [Office of Sustainability](#) during business hours (M-F, 8am-5pm). The closest drop-off point is likely behind MLC.

Helpful Resources

Lists & Links

- [Compostable Products List](#)
- [Sustainable Catering List](#)
- [Sustainable Event Spaces List](#)
- [Event Catering Email Template](#)
- [Compost Bin Request Form](#)
- [Event Support Work Request Form](#)
- [Sign Templates](#)
- [Office of Sustainability / Chicopee Map](#)
- [Interactive Waste Reduction Webpage](#)
- Contact: sustain@uga.edu | (706) 542-1301



Sample Event Sign

Other Planning Tips

- Support local vendors when possible.
- Remember: Reduce, then Reuse, then Recycle (and Compost), in that order!
 - Eliminate unnecessary giveaways - think quality over quantity - and request RSVPs to right-size your catering order.
- Reusable is even better than compostable! The ACC Solid Waste Department offers [Zero Waste Kits](#) with reusable wares (free of charge!) if you have the ability to wash them before returning the kits.
- Bring tupperware to send any leftover food home with volunteers or to take back to your office.
- Want to actually calculate your event's diversion rate? Contact sustain@uga.edu to borrow a scale and receive additional guidance.
- Take pictures and promote your sustainability efforts!

INTRO TO WASTE STREAMS



COMPOST

- Anything *once alive* can be composted!
- Common event items: food, napkins, coffee grounds, & BPI-Certified products
- Food scraps become a nutrient-rich soil additive
- Items in compost bins go to the [ACC Commercial Compost Facility](#)
- *NO regular plastics* in compost bins!



RECYCLING

- All recyclables must be *empty and clean*!
- Food residue is hard to avoid at events, so try to use compostable wares instead
- Recycling creates jobs in Georgia & reduces natural resource stress
- Learn more [here](#) about what *can and can't* be recycled at UGA and in Athens!



LANDFILL

- Items we throw away *never go away*!
- Landfill space is limited, so the less we send to the landfill, the better
- Purchasing event materials that can be readily composted or recycled limits landfill waste

