

ZERO WASTE EVENT GUIDELINES

Thank you for your commitment to Cal Poly's goal of Zero Waste.

A “Zero Waste” event requires all materials to be reused, recycled, or composted at the end of the event.

PLANNING YOUR EVENT.

Think about serving options that reduce packaging.

For example, serving finger foods with napkins produces less waste than buffet items that require plates and utensils; tiny dessert tarts don't require a single use plastic cup that would be needed for mini-flan desserts.

Avoid

All single-use plastics that cannot be recycled such as condiment packets, mini plastic dressing cups, plastic utensils, plastic film, plastic cups and clamshells

Compostable dishware - paper, waxed paper, or compostable PLA plastic –there are no facilities in SLO County that accept these compostable items

Boxed lunches – tend to create a high volume of food waste by participants not having a choice in what they put on their plate.

1 Catering

When ordering food, ask your caterer to:



Drop off reusable dishware before event, and pickup after: Real plates, bowls, silverware, glasses, and mugs



Provide condiments in dispensers rather than individual packets



Provide cloth napkins and tablecloths that are washed for reuse after the event



Replace individual water bottles with reusable water dispensers, provide reusable cups for those who don't bring their reusable water



Ensure food is purchased in bulk, or with minimal packaging (e.g. large bowls of chips with serving tongs rather than individual bags)



Serving food buffet style is recommended, rather than individually boxed meals

2 Food Waste

- Have attendees confirm at least 3 days prior to get a final count to caterer to reduce excess food ordered.
- Provide variable portion size (such as half sandwiches, half bagels, or mini muffins) to allow participants to take only what they plan to eat.
- Have a plan for how extra food at the end of the event will be donated or distributed, e.g. baggies for attendees to take leftovers? offered to students? (where & how quickly) Taken to Campus food bank? (designate food runner in advance)

3 Waste Receptacles

At least 2 weeks before your event, place an order for Zero Waste Bins If the event has the potential to generate significant food waste (e.g. Full buffet lunch for over 50 people, finger foods for more than 100 people)

For larger public-facing events, consider asking for assistance from the Zero Waste Ambassadors Team. Student Ambassadors can assist you in preparing for your event by:

- Training your volunteer staff to perform as Zero Waste Ambassadors at the bins
- For very large events (300 people or more), the ZWA team can work to recruit volunteers to staff Zero Waste bins to teach attendees how to recycle & compost properly .
- You can contact the Team by emailing cpzerowaste@calpoly.edu

HOSTING YOUR EVENT.

Most of the work involved in making an event Zero Waste happens in the planning and organizing stage.

But there are a couple things you can do at the event itself to ensure that event waste is properly sorted.

4 Waste Sorting



Recycling is clean cardboard and paper, plastic & glass bottles, metal cans and aluminum serving dishes. NO food-soiled paper.



**mixed
recycling**



clean paper
flattened cardboard

metal
cans, tins

glass
bottles, jars

plastic
bottles only



Compost is food waste and plant/flowers. NO napkins, food-soiled paper or compostable-ware.



**food
only**

no paper no plastic



Landfill is any remaining items that do not meet recycling or composting criteria.



landfill



all plastics
(not plastic bottles)

hot and cold
cups

food containers,
soiled paper products

If you are making announcements at any point during the event, remind attendees that you are trying to make the event Zero waste. To help Cal Poly meet our Zero Waste Goals, they should scrape any uneaten food into the food waste bins, recycle drink bottles, and put any remaining items in landfill.