

# TOWSON UNIVERSITY

## ZERO WASTE EVENT PLANNING CHECKLIST

## WHAT IS A ZERO WASTE EVENT?

Zero Waste Events are defined as events producing 10% or less of landfill waste. This means 90% or more waste produces must be either composted or recycled. Another great focus on zero waste is taking what you'll eat to reduce the amount of food waste from the event. Zero Waste Events reduce your carbon footprint, divert waste from our landfills, and improve environmental health.

## HOW DO I HOST A ZERO WASTE EVENT?

Hosting a Zero Waste Event can be just as easy as hosting any other event. Towson University provides students, faculty, and staff a number of resources to ensure a successful Zero Waste Event. Follow these simple steps to make sure your planned event is sustainable and environmentally conscious.

For any questions on how to green your event, or to learn more about Zero Waste Events, please feel free to contact the Office of Sustainability or Eco-Reps at: [sustainability@towson.edu](mailto:sustainability@towson.edu) or [ecoreps@towson.edu](mailto:ecoreps@towson.edu).

## ZERO WASTE PLANNING CHECKLIST

### BEFORE THE EVENT

- Identify your "Green Team"
  - Review this handout and your event goals
- Highlight your commitment by advertising the event as Zero Waste
- Ask Black & Gold catering for Zero Waste options
  - Work with your caterer to minimize food waste
  - Avoid bottled or canned beverages, especially water
  - Ask for beverages that can be served from reusable dispensers and compostable cups
  - Order in bulk to avoid individually packaged items
- Purchase reusable or compostable utensils, bowls, plates, cups and napkins or request from caterer
- Ensure compost and recycling bins will be provided during the event
  - If you need a compost bin and compostable bags, contact your ECS Event Manager
  - Make sure each type of bin is placed adjacent to each other with appropriate signage
- Do a walkthrough before your event to check the proper bins are in place, and the appropriate serveware is being used.

### DURING THE EVENT

- In your Welcoming Address, promote your dedication to hosting a Zero Waste Event and the actions you have taken to plan a sustainable event—you deserve the recognition!
  - Highlight the importance of green events for environmental preservation
  - Highlight the importance of green events for the Towson community
  - Include brief information on proper disposal procedures (i.e.—all cups, utensils, and napkins are compostable; where to find the proper waste bins, etc.)
- Have members of your Green Team placed at waste stations to help educate guests on proper disposal—this will help increase accuracy

## AFTER THE EVENT

- Collect and store any items that can potentially be used at a future event
  - Collect name badges for reuse
  - Collect banners, decorations, unused utensils
  - Have collection bin for unwanted promotional items
- Consider conducting a waste audit (see Appendix A)
  - The Office of Sustainability or Eco-Reps can provide training
  - Let the Office of Sustainability know your results, we'll provide you with an electronic Certificate of Participation for successfully hosting a Zero Waste Event!

## OTHER SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES TO CONSIDER

- Avoid or reduce printed materials when promoting the event
  - Instead, utilize digital media to promote the event (Towson Tigers Today, social networks, email flyers, e-vites)
  - If printed materials are necessary, contact Printing Services and ask about sustainable printing options (recycled content paper and soy-based ink)
  - During sign in, use computers or iPads instead of sheets
- Offer local, organic, and/or vegetarian dishes
- If event will take place in daytime, try to host the event in a location open to natural light (This could be outdoors, or indoors in a room with windows)
  - Utilizing natural light reduces the amount of energy consumed during the event by requiring less electrical lighting
- Utilize reusable decorations
  - Avoid putting dates on banners/posters and re-use them at a future event
  - Augment with natural, compostable decorations
- Avoid or reduce promotional items and free giveaways
  - These items have the potential to generate large amounts of unnecessary waste
  - However, if these items are necessary, utilize sustainable options (i.e. reusable or recycled content items)
  - Have a collection box available for participants to return unwanted items
- Encourage attendees to utilize alternative transportation methods when they travel to the event
  - Walking or Biking
  - Off-Campus shuttles
  - MTA public transportation services
  - Carpooling
- Sustainable Event Planning
  - Be sure to turn off any lights or unplug devices that are not necessary
  - Appropriately heat or cool the space per TU guidelines
  - Keep outside doors closed to keep space conditioned
  - Turn off all lights and any other equipment once the event is over and you are ready to leave
  - Consider sending out an electronic survey to attendees for feedback on the sustainability efforts