



## Town of Erie Zero Waste Management Plan

As an Event Organizer, you will need to manage the waste produced at your event. The easiest way to start is taking inventory on all aspects of your event that will generate waste. Eliminating opportunities for creating waste during the planning of your event will save time, effort, and money during and after the event. This guide will help you run a low-waste, litter-free event and provide a waste system that is convenient for your guests to use. The Town is here to help and we are confident that your event will be an excellent zero waste event for our community!

### **1. Minimize your event waste from the start.**

Food and drink, plates and cups, and bottles and cans, are the biggest contributors to the waste produced at special events. You can eliminate or drastically reduce the amount of waste you need to handle at your event by providing fewer disposable items to your guests.

- Contact your food vendors and/or caterer.
  - Ask vendors to serve beverages in recyclable or compostable containers.
  - For to-go food, ask vendors to skip the plastic bag and Styrofoam and let them know that these won't be allowed anywhere in the state of Colorado beginning in 2024, Erie is making the transition now.
  - Ask vendors to refill guests' personal water bottles and travel mugs. You can send out communications or even include it on the event's invitations and announcements for guests to "bring your own reusable water bottle or mug".
  - Request that condiments be served in bulk dispensers to cut down on small pieces of trash that are easily littered.
- Reusable and durable dishware is being used at many special event venues in Colorado; consider purchasing these and washing after the event to eliminate waste all together. Provide a collection bin for used commemorative cups in case these are reusable and you'd like to wash them and give them away at the next event.
- Provide fresh fruits or baked goods for volunteer snacks to help reduce packaging waste from single-use/individually packed items.
- [Read](#) *How to Reduce Event Waste from Promotional Items and Giveaways*

**2. Determine what types of waste your event will create.**

**LANDFILL**

- Plastic bags\* (HTR)
- Styrofoam\* (HTR)
- Plastic-coated paper products
- Non-recyclable plastics
- Wrapped & frozen food packages
- Flattened cans and containers\* (SSR)
- Feminine products
- Diapers
- Animal waste & other biohazards

**RECYCLABLES**

- Paper & cardboard
- Containers
- Plastic bottles, tubs, jugs, jars
- Plastic items
- Rigid plastics

**COMPOSTABLES**

- Compostable paper
- Food and plants
- Certified compostable products

**Donation:** There may be significant opportunities to donate unused or used items to the Erie Community Food Bank or the local donation hubs. Items that can be donated are packaged foods, fruits and vegetables, commemorative cups, and decorations.

**3. How will you collect these materials?**

- Event guests will need convenient locations to dispose of their waste. Plan to have your triple bin waste stations near eating areas, stages, port-o-potties, entrances/exits, and water/aid stations.
- On the site map for your event, mark each location you'll want a waste station. Count the number of locations to determine how many receptacles you'll need.
- Organize pickup or delivery of your triple bin waste stations and arrange volunteers to help. Recruit volunteers to set up waste stations, empty receptacles, and clean up after your event.
- Remember that landfill, recycling, and composting bins need to be located side-by-side. This will help guests put the right items in the right receptacle with the help of your volunteers or paid zero waste champions standing at each station.

**4. Decide how many waste stations your event will need.**

The number of guests and type of event determines how many collection stations you will need:

- **Under 50 people:** 1-2 stations
- **50-100 people:** 2-4 stations
- **100-200 people:** 4-8 stations

- **200 or more:** you'll need help. Contact a professional event planner that focuses on sustainability and reducing waste. Bin Rentals, Planning & Consulting Services for Large Community Events, and Eco-Celebrations for Upscale Events can be found on [Eco-Cycle's website](#). Utilize Town staff resources by emailing [SustainableErie@erieco.gov](mailto:SustainableErie@erieco.gov).
- Estimate how much waste you will create at your event. The amount of trash, recycling, and composting you create depends on how many guests and what type of event you are having. For many events, planning for 0.1 gallons of trash and 0.1 gallons or recycling per guest gives a good ball-park estimate. Composting is usually much heavier depending on how much food remains on the containers prior to disposal. Add another 0.5 gallons of compost and 0.1 additional gallons (an average of 1 pound of waste per attendee per meal) of recycling or composting for each meal you anticipate will be served. Adjust these estimates based on the items you plan to serve at your event.

Calculate an estimate of how much waste your event will generate, **multiply the number of attendees by the number of meals you will provide.**

**# of attendees x # of meals = estimated # of pounds of waste**

For example, if you're planning a one-day meeting that provides breakfast, lunch, and dinner, and you expect 500 attendees, your formula would look like this:

**500 attendees x 3 meals = 1,500 pounds of waste\***

\*Half the weight of a mid-size sedan!

- You can adjust this estimate based on your event design. If you know you're providing light meals and using only reusable dishes, you could adjust your calculation to be 0.5 pounds of waste per guest per meal. On the other hand, if you're planning a heavy banquet that could lead to substantial food waste, or if you're serving disposable service ware, you may want to adjust your calculation to 1.5 or 2.0 pounds of waste per meal.
- If you are hosting an annual event, check your notes from last year. How full were your dumpsters? Or, how many bags of landfill, recycling, and composting did you haul away to the transfer stations? If these equations are off, please let us know so we can adjust and help others!

**5. Clear signage is required.** Download the printable signs and display directly above each corresponding receptacle.

- [Compost](#) and [Is It Compostable?](#)
- [Recycling](#) and [Recycling Bin's Dirty Dozen](#)
- [Landfill](#)

**6. Choose how you will dispose of waste after your event.**

After your event, you will need to dispose of the waste you collected from your guests. You may order hauling service, self-haul to a transfer station, or reserve the dumpster through your preferred waste hauler.

- **Hauling Service:** Currently, the Town of Erie has many haulers that operate at different capacities. The service options (landfill, recycling, composting) and size options (residential, commercial, special events) is constantly changing. For a list of haulers that operate in Erie, please visit the [Town’s Utility Providers webpage](#). Be sure to plan well in advance for hauling services as availability and options fill up quick.
- **Self-Haul:** Event Organizer may also self-haul landfill, recycling, and composting to [local transfer stations](#) or even home for disposal. The Town of Erie would like to help in any way possible with disposal. Please contact [SustainableErie@erieco.gov](mailto:SustainableErie@erieco.gov) for options.

**7. Plan for next year.**

If you host an annual event, help next year’s organizers by keeping notes on your waste planning.

- Save copies of your site map, hauler and vendor agreements, and printed signs.
- Note if your dumpsters were over-full or partially empty and adjust size accordingly.
- Ask your volunteers, guests, and zero waste champions for feedback.
- Write down any observation or take photos during the event to reference later.

**Other ways to make your event sustainable:**

- Use reusable dishware.
- Encourage sustainable transit options such as carpooling, public transportation, biking, or walking to and from your event(s).
- Avoid wasted food by not over-purchasing.
- Interested in becoming a sustainable event coordinator or joining the Sustainable Event Entrepreneur Cohort? [Join Now](#)

**See something we could improve upon in making all events in Erie Zero Waste? Email [SustainableErie@erieco.gov](mailto:SustainableErie@erieco.gov) today and we would love to chat.**

**PLEASE SIGN BELOW ATTESTING THAT YOU HAVE REVIEWED THE ZERO WASTE MANAGEMENT PLAN:**

By signing this form, you are attesting that you have a full understanding of your Special Event Waste Management Plan obligations to provide information, list bin locations and amounts on site map, report to, and otherwise fully cooperate with the Town, as detailed in the instructions herein which accompany this form.

\_\_\_\_\_  
AURTHORIZED SPECIAL EVENT ORGANIZER

\_\_\_\_\_  
DATE

\_\_\_\_\_  
NAME