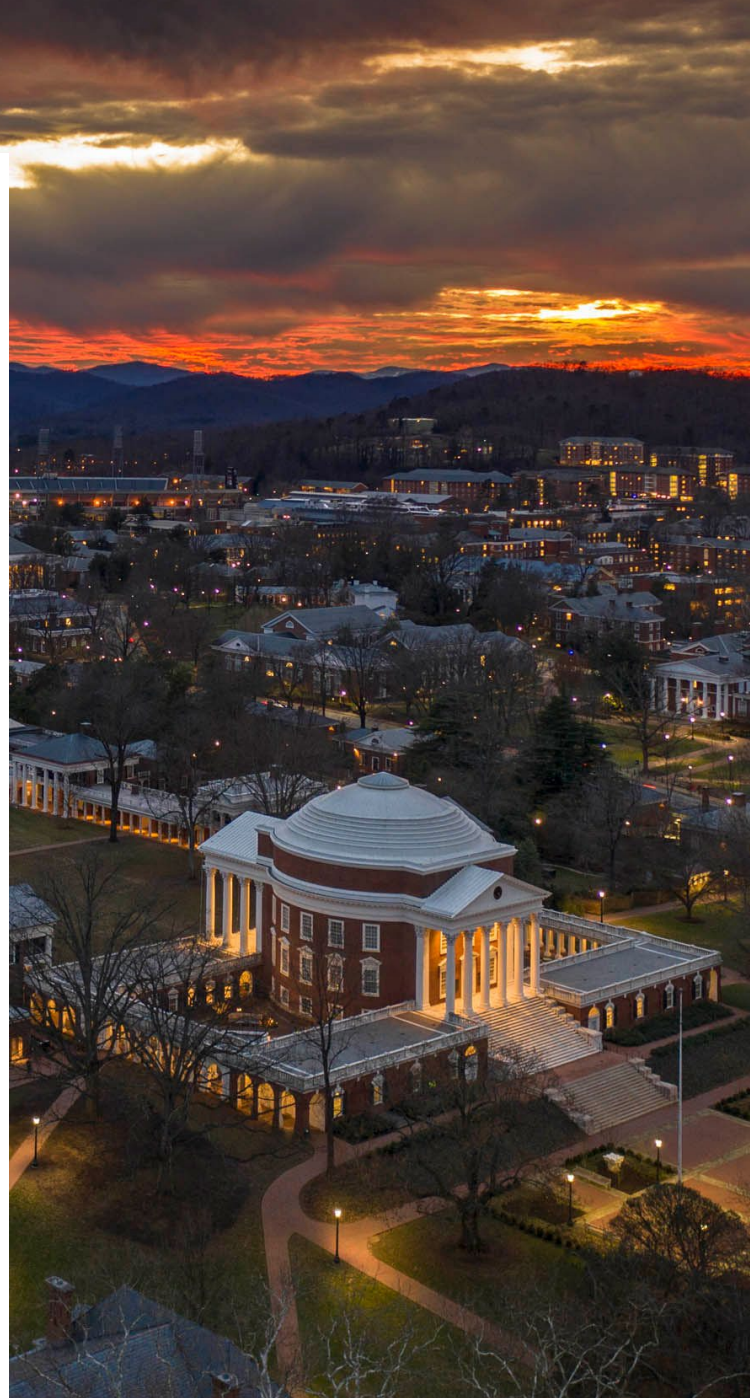


ZERO WASTE EVENTS GUIDE

LAST UPDATED: SEPTEMBER 2022

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SUSTAINABILITY · UVA
From the Grounds Up

Zero Waste Events Guide

Hosting a Zero Waste Event (ZWE) means that at least 90% of waste generated will go to a compost facility or recycling facility. Waste minimization is a top priority at UVA as we work to align with the University's goal to be carbon neutral by 2030 and fossil fuel free by 2050, which includes reducing waste by 70% (relative to 2010 levels) by 2030. Refer to the Office for Sustainability's [Reducing Single-Use Plastics webpage](#) for the most up-to-date information regarding UVA's single-use plastic guidelines. Please review this guide and send any additional questions to UVA's Office for Sustainability at sustainability@virginia.edu or 434-297-7964.

There are four key elements to hosting a successful ZWE:

1. Compostable wares
 2. Appropriate bins
 3. Communication efforts
 4. Contamination prevention
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1. Compostable Wares

A large majority of your event's waste stream will need to be compostable. To procure compostable items:

- Choose a Zero Waste caterer on the America to Go website via UVA Marketplace (log-in required). Zero Waste caterers will automatically provide compostable products. Find the full list by viewing the "Vendors" tab on the America to Go site and selecting the "Zero Waste" feature.
- Student groups hosting an event with less than 150 attendees can request compostable wares through the online [Zero Waste Event Request Form](#).
- Employees can order bulk compostable plates, bowls, cups, and utensils from office supply portals like the Supply Room or Office Max via UVA Marketplace.
- Ensure that the wares are compostable and/or BPI certified. You can check if items are compostable on the [Biodegradable Products Institute](#) website (note: biodegradable does not necessarily mean compostable).

2. Appropriate Bins

Now that you've procured compostable wares, you need a place to put them at the end of your event! To collect the waste, you can:

Order compost bins from UVA Recycling by filling out the [Zero Waste Event Request Form](#). You will provide the basic event details and determine how many compost bins you'll need (we suggest 1 bin/50 attendees for indoor events or 1 large tote/150 employees for outdoor events). It is a best practice to pair compost bins with recycling and landfill bins – we call this co-locating.

3. Communication Efforts

You've gone through the logistical efforts, let's make sure the attendees know what to do... Here are some ZWE communication tips:

- Make note in any promotional materials (Facebook, social media, pre-event emails) that composting will be available at the event.
- Make an announcement at the beginning of the event when all attendees are together. You could say something like: "We are trying to minimize our waste at this event. Please make sure to put all your utensils, plates, cups, and food waste in the compost bins."
- Above each bin, place a sign with taped cut-outs of acceptable waste items for each respective bin. This will give attendees a visual hint at where each item should go. The Office for Sustainability has signs that we'd be happy to provide.

4. Contamination Prevention

Avoiding contamination is the most important step of hosting a ZWE. We must have no contamination (non-compostable items) in the compost bins since this compost will be handled by people and used as organic compost on local farms. Here are some suggestions to avoid contamination:

- Have a designated Zero Waste volunteer who can keep an eye on the compost bins throughout your event. Make sure they know which items are compostable and that they have proper gear (such as gloves or a trash grabber/picker) in case they need to remove items from the bin. For larger events, we encourage groups to have multiple Zero Waste volunteers.
- Co-locate bins. You should have a recycling bin and landfill bin next to every compost bin. This ensures that any items that are not compostable can end up in the right bin.
- Educate your attendees through announcements and signage. Make sure they know what items should be going into which bins.

Other waste minimization tactics:

- If your event will be held outdoors, request a Refill Station (H2O 2 Go) from Facilities Management. Requests can be emailed to fm-h2o2go@virginia.edu.
- Purchase compostable to-go containers or encourage attendees to bring their own containers to take home extra food. This minimizes waste, eliminates cleaning, and puts a smile on attendees' faces!
- Organize a meeting with an Office for Sustainability staff member. We'd be happy to chat with you about best practices for your events, especially with recurring or large-scale events. Inquiries can be sent to sustainability@virginia.edu.

Resources:

- UVA Office for Sustainability- sustainability@virginia.edu – 434-297-7964
- UVA Recycling- recycling@virginia.edu – 434-982-5050
- [Biodegradable Products Institute](#)
- [H2O 2 Go Water Refill Stations](#)