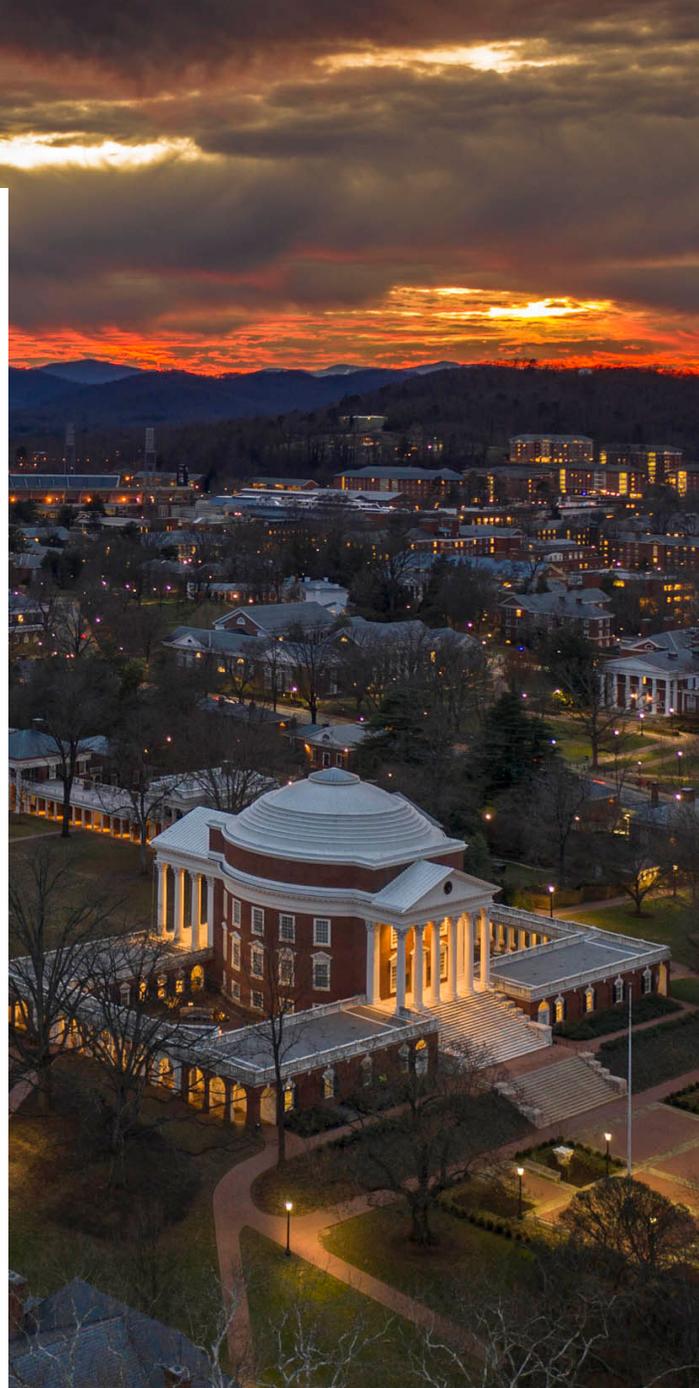


ZERO WASTE EVENTS GUIDE

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UVA SUSTAINABILITY
Authored by: Lela Garner



SUSTAINABILITY · UVA
From the Grounds Up

Zero Waste Events Guide

How to host a zero waste event

Hosting a zero waste event (ZWE) means that at least 90% of waste generated will go to a compost facility or recycling facility - review this guide or call the Office for Sustainability (434-297-7964) to learn about various landfill minimization practices.

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 waste stream will need to be compostable. To procure compostable items you can:

- Call UVA Recycling at 434-982-5050 and request compostable wares. They can give you free utensils, plates, and cups for up to 150 attendees. Give them at least a weeks' notice if you would like to utilize this resource.
- Choose a Zero Waste Caterer (ZWC) on the America to Go site. ZWC will automatically provide compostable products, and you can find the full list by viewing the vendors tab on the America to Go site.
- Collect compostable wares in the Student Council Sustainability cabinet in the PAC (note: this option is only available to CIOs who have completed the Zero Waste Training).
- 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 your waste you can:

- Order compost bins by calling UVA Recycling. Give them the basic event details and 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's also good to pair compost bins with recycling and landfill bins - we call this co-locating.
- Grab a compostable bag from the Studco Sustainability cabinet, collect your waste, and drop the bag off in the Newcomb compost bin (note: this option is only available to CIOs who have completed the Zero Waste Training).

3. Communication Efforts

You've gone through the logistical efforts, let's make sure the attendees know what to do with their waste. 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 yellow compost bins."
- Place signs above each respective bin and tape the waste items onto the signs. 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. It is crucial that we 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'll 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:

- 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 come chat with you about best practices for your events, especially with reoccurring 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](#)