

# INDIANAPOLIS EVENT WASTE GUIDE

Indy



What's a can worth?  
All proceeds from recycling  
these cans will fund grants  
for teachers in Indianapolis  
public schools. 800 cans  
can buy a basketball!

Also possible by  
The Can-Lap Project

**CANS ONLY**

Please empty cans before recycling. Thank you!

*julia spangler*  
SUSTAINABLE EVENTS CONSULTANT



**MIXED RECYCLING**

Please empty containers before recycling. Thank you!

Plastic Bottles  
leave caps on

Plastic  
Cups

Glass  
Bottles

Clean  
Paper

Clean  
Cardboard

*julia spangler*  
SUSTAINABLE EVENTS CONSULTANT

PRODUCED IN COOPERATION



LAST UPDATED:  
MARCH 2025

# SECTION 1: BEST PRACTICES



## INTRODUCTION

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We're excited that you're bringing your upcoming event to the greater Indianapolis area! We're even more excited that you're exploring ways to make your event sustainable. This guide contains everything you need to get started planning a low-waste event in central Indiana.

### Start Here

Here are our top recommendations for planning sustainable events in Indy:

#### Step 1

Do everything you can to REDUCE waste before it ever exists. Reducing waste saves money and protects the planet! Ways to reduce waste include:

- Ordering accurate quantities of food
- Choosing reusable food & beverage serveware
- Decorating with rentals rather than one-time-use decorations or builds

Learn more about [strategies for reducing waste](#) and find [vendors who can help](#).

Find flyers you can share with external exhibitors and food vendors far in advance of your event in [the Appendix B](#).

After you've reduced waste all you can, move on to Step 2!

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## Step 2

**REUSE** event materials for future events to **save money** over the long term.

If you have items you can't use again, allow the community to reuse them by donating to local organizations. Donating is **free** and keeps valuable food and materials out of the landfill. The Indy area has nonprofit partners that can repurpose almost any type of event supply, including:

- Surplus food (packaged or prepared)
- Floral arrangements
- Promotional items
- Apparel
- Furniture and building materials
- Signs and banners

Your venue or caterer may be able to help you coordinate certain donations. Learn more about the [donation partners the greater Indy area.](#)

Done reducing and reusing? Let's go to Step 3!

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## Step 3

Minimize trash by **RECYCLING**. Here are some tips for how to recycle in the greater Indy area:

- **First, ask your venue if they offer recycling services.** If they do, ask them for a list of what items are accepted for recycling, what receptacles they provide, and if they can provide any data about how much your event recycles.
- If your venue doesn't offer recycling, Indy has **many vendors you can work with to recycle materials from your event.**
  - For the simplest option, work with a recycling hauler like Republic Services or WM that offers "single stream recycling." This means many common recyclables (like plastic bottles, aluminum cans, paper, and cardboard) can be collected in one container.
  - Always ask your chosen vendor for a specific list of the items they accept for recycling.
- **Serving lots of wine, beer, or other beverages in glass bottles?** Ask your venue or recycling vendor if glass bottles can be included with other recyclables. (Some recyclers accept glass in single stream recycling, but others do not.) If not, work with [Strategic Materials](#) to recycle your glass separately.

The Indy area also has vendors to recycle less common items, such as electronics, miscellaneous plastics (including plastic bags and Styrofoam), scrap metals, and more. See a [full list of our local recycling vendors](#).

**Ready to take your recycling to the next level?** Step it up by **composting** any food from your event that can't be donated. Composting at an event is more of a challenge than recycling, so be sure to work with one of our [local compost haulers](#) to make a successful plan.

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## Recycling in Indiana

Recycling is a valuable activity in Indiana, as the state is home to many companies that need recyclable commodities to produce their products. Examples include:

- Pratt Industries, manufacturer of 100% recycled cardboard boxes
- Knauf, manufacturer of fiberglass insulation
- Brightmark, producer of pyrolysis oil

The circular economy supports thousands of jobs in Indiana. When you reduce and divert waste from your event, you help support green jobs and a healthy environment in Indiana.

## How much does going green cost?

The following information is presented as a generalization only. Each venue and vendor can provide specific cost information for their services. Sponsorships are a great way to cover any costs related to your sustainability initiatives.

<b>Reducing waste</b>	Usually <b>saves money</b> in the long-term by minimizing excess and reducing the need to repeatedly purchase event materials.  Using a large-scale cup rental vendor may require a significant investment that could be funded by a sponsor.
<b>Recycling</b>	If provided by your venue, usually included in overall venue costs.  If not provided by your venue, usually requires budget for dumpster rental, recycling bin rental, and potentially staffing.

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<b>Composting</b>	If provided by your venue, usually an additional cost.  If not provided by your venue, usually requires budget for compost hauling, bin rental, and staffing.
<b>Donating food and/or event materials</b>	Usually <b>no cost</b> to donate. May require small budget for staffing and/or transportation.
<b>Purchasing carbon offsets</b>	Depends on scale of the event. Typically a significant investment that may be funded by a sponsor.

## Where to Go From Here

The remainder of this guide contains additional resources to help you reach your low-waste goals. Click these links to jump to each section.

- [Getting Buy-In for Sustainability Programs... and Keeping It!](#)
- [Suggested Timeline for Reducing & Diverting Event Waste](#)
- [Best Practices: Reducing Event Waste](#)
- [Best Practices: Donating & Recycling Event Waste](#)
- [Reducing Your Event's Carbon Footprint](#)
- [Sustainability Offerings at Key Indy Venues](#)
- [Resources Directory](#)
- [Appendix A: Glossary of Sustainability Terms](#)
- [Appendix B: Exhibitor and Food Vendor Waste Reduction Guides](#)

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## GETTING BUY-IN FOR SUSTAINABILITY PROGRAMS... AND KEEPING IT!

### The Business Case for Sustainable Events

When an event doesn't demonstrate consideration of its environmental impact, this can contribute to a negative guest experience marked by feelings of frustration or personal guilt. Sustainability is an especially high-ranking value for millennials and Gen Z.

Lack of action on sustainability creates significant risk to your brand's image and reputation. Stakeholders consider sustainability when determining if your brand is relevant in the marketplace as well as their impression of whether your brand is ethical / good.

The vast majority of event professionals are increasing their sustainability efforts. Taking action on sustainability is a requirement for remaining competitive.

### Keep Your Plans Moving Forward with a Green Team

A green team keeps all stakeholders in your sustainability program engaged and on the same page. The green team format helps ensure all parties feel heard and gives all teams/functions permission to focus on sustainability.

Who should be on your green team? Include representatives from the event planning committees, venues, caterers, decorators & exhibit services, exhibitors, sponsors, and other key vendors. Choose members with operational job functions rather than those focused on sales. Include the attendee perspective as well if possible.

Meet on a regular basis to create your sustainability plan, address questions or roadblocks, and follow through on execution.

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## SUGGESTED TIMELINE FOR REDUCING & DIVERTING EVENT WASTE

**Start of planning phase:** Consider ways to reduce waste in the event design

**8-10 weeks from event date:**

- Ask your venue what options they offer to reduce, recycle, compost, or donate waste materials.
- Assess anticipated event waste to determine where to focus diversion efforts.
- Create first draft of waste inventory.

**8 weeks from event date:** Reach out to potential waste diversion partners

**6-8 weeks from event date:**

- Contact vendors to learn what waste will be generated by their operations.
- Update waste inventory accordingly.

**3-4 weeks from event date:** Coordinate waste diversion labor and equipment (bins, dumpsters, etc.) with venue and/or additional vendors.

**1 week from event date:** Communicate details of waste diversion plan to managers of relevant on-site teams

**1-3 days before event date:** Print signs for waste bins

**Event date (setup):**

- Set up waste diversion infrastructure (bins, sorting area, etc.).
- Communicate details of waste diversion plan to relevant on-site teams (catering, housekeeping, etc.).

**Event date (during event & teardown):**

- Monitor waste diversion process to identify and address issues.
- Measure waste as needed.

**Within 1 month after event date:** Share waste diversion results with stakeholders

**Throughout the whole process:**

- Continually identify opportunities to reduce waste.
- Continually update waste inventory as you gather more information from vendors and waste partners.



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## BEST PRACTICES: REDUCING EVENT WASTE

### Reduce → Reuse → Recycle

**Did you know?** The 3 R's are listed in order of priority: **Reduce** first, then **Reuse**, and then when materials can no longer be reused in their current form, **Recycle** them.

Reducing waste can often result in **cost savings** from procuring less and/or using materials for a longer span of time.

### Ask Yourself These Questions to Inspire Low-Waste Event Design

- 1. Reduce:** Can I design away my need for this item?
  - Example: Choosing menu items that don't require eating utensils. (Sandwiches, wraps, and pizza are just a few examples.)
- 2. Reuse:** How many times will this item be used? Is there an alternative that can be reused more times?
  - Example: Use reusable eating utensils provided by your venue or caterer, instead of disposable utensils
- 3. Recycle:** If a reusable version isn't an option, is there a recyclable or compostable alternative? Does a system exist to recycle or compost the item?
  - Example: Use compostable eating utensils specified by your composting vendor.

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## Low-Waste Event Design Considerations

### Event Branding

- Use the host organization's branding or a multi-year event brand on any durable / reusable materials.
- Use a single-year event brand if desired on digital / recyclable / intangible materials only.

### Signs & Banners

- Omit marketing info like event date & location.
- Create separate recyclable signs for short-term information.
- Use sign boards with windows or sleeves to insert information that changes (ex: session titles & times).
- If using lanyards for a conference, opt for plastic-free name badges and collect the lanyards at the end of the event for use in future years.

### Promotional Items

- Make all promotional items optional.
- Conduct a survey before the event to find out what items attendees like and use.
- Keep branding broad so leftover items can be reused at other events.
- Source truly recyclable promo items made of paper or cardboard.

### Decor & Furniture

- Prioritize rentals over purchase for short-term use items.
- Minimize custom fabrication. Plan to reuse or find a donation outlet before procuring any custom fabrications.
- Specify no floral foam in floral arrangements. If planning to compost, work with your florist to design fully compostable arrangements (no wire, plastic, etc.).

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## Reducing Waste from Food & Beverage

### Choose Reusable Food & Beverage Serviceware

MYTH	TRUTH
Reusables aren't more sustainable than disposables because you have to wash them.	Reusables surpass the "break-even point" after just a few uses, even with the impact of washing factored in.
Real dishes and glasses are dangerous because of breakage.	Unbreakable options like stainless steel or reusable plastic are available.
Attendees will throw away the reusable items.	Deposit systems create a financial incentive to return reusables.
Reusables aren't an option because of the scale of my event.	Some of the biggest festivals in the world have implemented reusables.

#### How to implement reusables:

- If your venue has dishware available, specify in your contract that you want reusable serviceware for all F&B.
- If your venue doesn't offer dishware, work with your caterer to bring in rented reusable serviceware.
- If your event is large like a concert or festival, partner with a reusable cup vendor (see [Resources Directory](#)).

#### Prevent Food Waste

- Require **registration** for every individual meal function.
- Refer to **consumption data** from past events. Start tracking overage now if you haven't before!
- Learn your group's **preferences** and plan menus accordingly.
- Conduct a **food waste audit** to see what guests aren't consuming.

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## For buffets and stations:

- Use smaller plates and serving utensils.
- Allow food to fully diminish before refreshing.
- Serve smaller quantities of each food at once and refresh more often.
- Keep as much food safely in the back of house as possible until it is truly needed so it remains viable for donation.

## For plated meals:

- Don't pre-set. It guarantees food waste at every unoccupied seat.
  - If you must pre-set, set only ~80% of seats to encourage seating density, then bring out additional plates as needed
- Give guests clear instructions for how to obtain meals for dietary restrictions.
- Design portion sizes to be consumable. Use artistic plating rather than size to create a visual impression.
  - 70% of food service food waste comes from post-consumer plate waste. (Source: ReFED)
- Switch full-size desserts to small 1-2 bite desserts.
- Reconsider the number of courses in each meal.

## Donate Surplus Food

Even after making efforts to prevent food waste, sometimes events still end up with more food than they need. Indy has great nonprofit organizations who can **put your surplus food to good use in the community**. Check out the [Resources Directory](#) to learn more about food donation partners in Indy.

## Food donation tips:

- Keep food under proper time and temperature control for safety.
- Food that has been served in the front-of-house on tables or a buffet is typically not viable for donation. Plan your service to keep food safely in the back-of-house until it is truly needed.
- Ask your donation partner what foods they can accept, what food safety procedures you need to follow, and what guidelines they have for packaging and labeling food donations.
- If your event ends at night or on a weekend, you may need to work with your caterer to refrigerate prepared foods until they can be picked up.

Concerned about legal liability related to food donations? Good news! The U.S. has robust federal liability protections for food donors through the [Bill Emerson Good Samaritan Food Donation Act](#). Learn more in this [fact sheet](#) from the Harvard Food Law & Policy Clinic.

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## BEST PRACTICES: DONATING & RECYCLING EVENT WASTE

### Determining Where to Focus

Start by thinking through the waste your event might generate. What items are the most prevalent? What materials will it be feasible to collect?

#### What items will be discarded?

- Surplus food
- Serviceware
- Beverage containers
- Signs & banners
- Florals
- Packaging, etc.
- Lanyards/name badges

#### By whom?

- Your team
- Caterer
- Decorator
- Production company, etc.

#### When and where?

- Setup
- During the event itself
- Teardown

**PRO TIP:** It's important to consider the waste from **all** event vendors, including caterers, decorators, and others. Refer to the [Low-Waste Event Design Considerations](#) — these key areas, plus food & beverage, are typically the main generators of event waste.

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## Festival & Food Truck Events: Where should I focus my efforts?

- **Recycling of beverage containers** is a great action to pursue in festival-style settings. Remember to refer to guidelines from your recycling hauler about what types of beverage containers they accept.
- **If you are planning to collect compost** in a festival-style area with multiple food vendors, the best way to maximize collection and minimize contamination is to **provide all vendors with compostable serviceware** approved by your compost hauler.
  - Providing vendors with a list of approved products for them to purchase on their own is typically **not** effective at guaranteeing compliance.
  - When vendors are tasked with purchasing compostable products on their own, they often end up using a mix of compostable and non-compostable products. This creates a **confusing sorting process** for guests and staff and increased contamination for your compost hauler.
- If you're not able to provide all food vendors with approved compostable products, **composting efforts may be more successful when focused on other areas of the event**, such as meals provided by a single caterer.
- You can encourage your food vendors to evaluate the sustainability of their menu and sourcing decisions in other ways via the guidance provided in the Food Vendor Waste Reduction Guide flyer included in Appendix B.

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## Waste Partners

**Where can waste from your event go?** *(instead of the landfill or incinerator)*

- Recycling facility
- Food banks & hunger relief orgs
- Composting facility
- Anaerobic / methane digester
- Farms
- (food scraps as animal feed)
- Schools / education
- non-profits
- Habitat for Humanity
- Art programs / artists / art non-profits
- Theater programs / non-profits
- Resale shops / marketplaces
- Creative reuse centers
- Anyone who can use your event's materials!

See the [Resources Directory](#) for potential waste partners in Indy.

## Working with Waste Partners

Reach out to potential waste diversion partners **~8 weeks before the event** to learn what materials they accept and coordinate logistical details.

Always ask your partners:

- What materials do you accept?
- What materials do you *not* accept?
- Do materials need to be collected, contained, or labeled in a particular way?

**Don't make assumptions** based on info you've seen online or past experiences with other vendors or organizations. Get your info directly from the partner you'll be working with.

Have these conversations **before you procure any materials** that you want to be able to recycle, compost, or donate.

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## Questions to Ask Your Venue

Your venue can also be a valuable partner in reducing and diverting waste. Ask your venue:

- Do you offer reusable food serviceware and/or any other reusable event supplies?
- What recycling services do you offer? What items are accepted for recycling? What receptacles are provided?
- Do you offer composting services? What items are accepted for composting? What receptacles are provided?
- If I want to add recycling or composting capacity, where can I place additional dumpsters?
- What is the contact information for the person who oversees trash and recycling services for the venue?
- Can you help coordinate donations of surplus food or event materials to local organizations?
- Can you provide measurement data to track how much waste was recycled, composted, donated, or trashed from my event?



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## How to Communicate Your Waste Plan

Everyone (attendees, exhibitors, staff, etc.) shows up to an event with **pre-existing ideas** about recycling. You've done all the groundwork of talking to your waste partners, and that's why it's your responsibility to **clearly communicate what is accepted** in each waste stream specifically at **your** event.

As you collect information from your partners and vendors, organize materials into a **waste inventory table**. This will allow you to easily see at a glance what materials are accepted in each waste stream.

### Waste Inventory Example

Recycle	Compost	Donate	Trash
Plastic bottles	Brown compostable plates	Surplus prepared food	Foil wrappers & snack bags
Glass bottles	Food scraps	Surplus promotional items	Plastic bags & wrap
Aluminum cans	Paper napkins		Plastic cups
Clean cardboard			Straws
Clean paper			

### Waste Bin Signs

The best way to communicate the accepted items for each waste stream is to post **signs on every waste bin**. Signs are important both for **attendee-facing bins as well as staff-facing bins**, since many staff may only receive quick training or may slip through the cracks of training.

Including **both images and words for each accepted item** helps the signs be more clearly and quickly understood, especially if any of the staff or attendees are non-English speakers.

Having a sign on the trash bins (not just recycling or compost bins) is important to **clarify confusing items** that guests or staff might assume fall into one of the other categories.

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## Waste Bin Sign Example:



# RECYCLE



Plastic  
Water  
Bottles



Cans



Paper



Cardboard

Please pour liquids into the provided bucket. Thank you!

## Working with On-Site Teams

Partnering with on-site teams is critical for success. **Any teams that deal with waste as part of their regular work** need to be trained about your waste diversion program. These teams may include:

- Housekeeping / grounds cleaning staff
- Catering staff
- Setup / teardown teams

Communicate any changes to their regular processes, such as:

- Are you adding waste streams they aren't used to, such as composting?
- Do they need different supplies or equipment, such as a certain type of bag?
- Do any materials need to be taken to specific locations different than the venue's standard dumpsters?

**Keep changes as simple as possible for these teams**, and supplement with additional staff or volunteers if needed.

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## How to Collect & Separate Waste

### Determining Your Separation Approach

	Front of House	Back of House	Hybrid
<b>Who sorts?</b>	Attendees sort their waste using waste stations in the front-of-house.	Waste is sorted by trained staff in a sorting area in the back-of-house.	Attendees sort some items (like easy-to-identify recyclables) at the point of disposal.  Trained staff check for contamination and / or separate waste further in the back of house (for example, by pulling out food waste for composting).
<b>Setup</b>	Requires numerous waste stations to cover entire event area.	Requires no front-of-house waste stations, but does require a sorting area in the back-of-house.	Requires some front-of-house waste stations as well as a back-of-house sorting area.
<b>Oversight</b>	Front-of-house waste stations need constant monitoring to manage contamination.	Eliminates need for front-of-house monitoring.	Front-of-house monitoring typically not needed.
<b>Scale</b>	Best for smaller events, or when just separating recycling and trash.  Difficult to implement at very large events.	Practical for both small and large events.	Practical for both small and large events.

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## Waste Stations

A waste station is a group of waste bins for different waste streams. The most common waste station combinations are **Recycling + Trash** or **Recycling + Compost + Trash** (if you're composting).

- Donation waste streams are usually not included in a waste station, since donations are typically handled separately from "waste" materials.

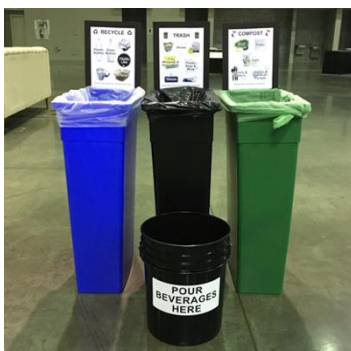
Waste stations make sorting fast and convenient, which is important no matter who is sorting (attendees or staff).

### Tips for setting up waste stations:

- **Always group bins together!** Any standalone bin will automatically become mixed trash because people won't see the alternatives.
- If you're separating waste in the front of house, **place waste stations anywhere you would place a trash bin.**
- If you're separating waste in the back of house, provide waste stations **wherever waste is being handled**, such as the catering tray return area or waste sorting area.
- Remember to **post signs above each waste bin.** Signs are important for both guest-facing and staff-facing waste bins.

Check out the [Resources Directory](#) for organizations who can provide equipment for waste stations.

### Waste Station Examples:



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## Measuring Contamination

Contamination simply means materials that your waste partner doesn't want. Minimizing contamination is important for keeping the materials they do want usable. When materials are too contaminated, waste partners may need to dispose of some or all of the load as trash.

### Tips for managing contamination:

- **Expect it!** There will always be attendees (and staff) who get it wrong. It doesn't mean the program isn't working or that people don't care.
- Manage contamination by:
  - Posting **easy-to-understand signs** on waste bins
  - Assigning **trained staff or volunteers** to monitor waste stations and/or sort waste

## Measuring Waste Results

- When reducing waste, your metric is **avoided waste**. For each waste item you've eliminated or reduced, refer to the quantity of that item you procured for the previous event, then compare to the quantity you're procuring for this event (if any).
  - Ex: 2,000 plastic water bottles avoided by switching to water stations
- To see if you're improving at waste reduction over time across multiple events, calculate the **waste per attendee** for each event. This allows you to compare waste reduction for events that are different in size.
  - Total amount of waste ÷ number of attendees = waste per attendee
- When diverting waste, your metric is the **waste diversion rate**.
  - Waste **diverted** includes all materials that were donated, recycled, composted, or otherwise kept out of landfills and incinerators.
  - Total weight of solid waste **diverted** ÷ Total weight of solid waste **generated** = Waste diversion rate
  - Avoided waste does not factor into the waste diversion rate.

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## Collecting Waste Data

Waste data is typically collected by weight rather than volume. If you're working with an on-site waste diversion vendor, they may collect waste data for you.

### If self-collecting, your options include:

- Reports from waste haulers (typically available for trash and recycling but may not be available for other waste streams)
- Manual weighing (often used for donations, compost, unusual waste streams, and/or to increase accuracy)
- Estimating and extrapolating based on weight info on labels (common on food packaging) or weighing smaller sample amounts

### Recommended equipment for weighing waste:

- Luggage scale with hook for weighing bags
- Bathroom scale for weighing unbagged materials (stand on the scale while holding the materials, then subtract your own weight)
- Gloves
- Printed logbook and pen for recording weights
- Small table for logbook

## Sharing Your Results

Your event gets the **greatest ROI on sustainability efforts** by sharing your results with attendees, sponsors and stakeholders, local and industry media, and relevant industry groups.

Your results communication should be **concrete, credible, and transparent**. Refer to the [glossary](#) to ensure you use any sustainability terms accurately.

Even if your results aren't as good as you hoped, sharing your results **demonstrates your commitment** to action and allows you to **share what you learned** and how you plan to improve.

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## Reducing Your Event's Carbon Footprint

**Did you know?** Reducing and diverting event waste is a powerful way to reduce the carbon footprint of your event! Actions such as reducing food waste, recycling, and composting are climate solutions as well as waste solutions.

**Here are a few more ways to reduce the carbon footprint of events in Indy:**

- Promote land-based transportation options for travel such as buses, trains, and carpooling as alternatives to air travel for attendees.
- Utilize Indy's walkable convention campus, [public transit](#), and [bikeshare program](#) to minimize transportation needs during the event.
- If your event includes overnight lodging for attendees, consider partnering with a hotel that prioritizes energy efficiency in its building and sustainability measures for guests. Look for hotels that are LEED and/or ENERGY STAR certified. If attendees will be driving electric vehicles, look for hotels that have charging stations available.
- Ask your Indy venue if they are enrolled in the [Green Power Option](#) from AES, our local electric utility. This program allows businesses to specify part or all of their monthly electricity use to be generated by an environmentally friendly, renewable resource.
- In your menus, substitute proteins with high carbon emissions such as beef and lamb with [lower-emitting proteins](#) such as poultry and/or plant-based options.
- Include a virtual participation option.
- Work with a knowledgeable partner to measure the carbon footprint of your event, identify areas to improve, and / or purchase carbon offsets to counterbalance some or all of the event's footprint. (see [Resources Directory](#))

# SECTION 2: RESOURCES DIRECTORY



## Event Rental Vendors

### A Classic Party Rental

<https://www.aclassicpartyrental.com/>

Contact: 317-251-7368 | [info@aclassicpartyrental.com](mailto:info@aclassicpartyrental.com)

**Event-related sustainability services:** Event rentals

### Cup Zero

<https://cupzero.com/>

Contact: 929-416-3800 | [Hello@cupzero.com](mailto:Hello@cupzero.com)

**Event-related sustainability services:** Reusable cup & serviceware rental system

### R.world

<https://rworldreuse.com/>

Contact: 612-208-6460 | [hello@rworldreuse.com](mailto:hello@rworldreuse.com)

**Event-related sustainability services:** Reusable cup & serviceware rental system (minimum attendance: 10,000)

### Earthlight

<https://www.earthlight.eco/>

Contact: [Hello@earthlight.eco](mailto:Hello@earthlight.eco)

**Event-related sustainability services:** Plastic-free event badge sleeves, name tags, & lanyards, plus lanyard rental and collection box reuse program



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## Recycling Vendors

### Republic Services

<https://www.republicservices.com/>

Contact: Ben Pearson | 480-213-3567 | [BPearson@republicservices.com](mailto:BPearson@republicservices.com)

**Event-related sustainability services:** Recycling hauling & processing, compost hauling

### Waste Management

<https://www.wm.com/us/en/dumpster-rental>

Contact: Catie Kelly | 317-714-8168

**Event-related sustainability services:** Recycling hauling & processing, compost hauling, on-site waste diversion services  
Local dumpster rentals for recycling, compost, or trash:

### RecycleForce

<https://recycleforce.org/>

Contact: Daniel Rowe | 317-532-1367 | [drowe@recycleforce.org](mailto:drowe@recycleforce.org)

**Event-related sustainability services:** Electronics recycling, miscellaneous plastics recycling, labor for event waste programs

### Quincy Recycle

<https://www.quincyrecycle.com/national-reach/indianapolis-in-recycling/>

Contact: Dan Smolic | 317-268-2280 | [dsmolic@quincyrecycle.com](mailto:dsmolic@quincyrecycle.com)

**Event-related sustainability services:** Industrial recycling hauling & processing

### Sibelco

<https://www.sibelco.com/en>

Contact: Robert Christian | 317-315-9604 | [robert.christian@sibelco.com](mailto:robert.christian@sibelco.com)

**Event-related sustainability services:** Glass recycling

### The Can Lady

<https://www.facebook.com/thecanladyproject>

Contact: Mary Stumpp | 317-716-7056 | [thecanladyproject@yahoo.com](mailto:thecanladyproject@yahoo.com)

**Event-related sustainability services:** Aluminum and scrap metal recycling with proceeds supporting local schools

### Keep Indianapolis Beautiful

<https://www.kibi.org/request/trash-boxes-recycling-bins/>

Contact: 317-264-7555 x100 | [contact@kibi.org](mailto:contact@kibi.org)

**Event-related sustainability services:** Recycling bin rentals, trash receptacles, event sustainability volunteers

### CW Recycling

<https://cw-recycling.com/>

Contact: 317-245-6400 | [info@cw-recycling.com](mailto:info@cw-recycling.com)

**Event-related sustainability services:** Construction and demolition waste recycling

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## Composting & Organic Waste Vendors

### Earth Mama Compost

<https://earthmamacompost.com/>

Contact: Heather Maybury | 317-332-8465 | [info@EarthMamaCompost.com](mailto:info@EarthMamaCompost.com)

Event-related sustainability services: Compost hauling

### Green With Indy

<https://www.greenwithindy.com/>

Contact: Greg Walton | 317-450-0951 | [info@greenwithindy.com](mailto:info@greenwithindy.com)

Event-related sustainability services: Compost hauling

### Indy Go Green

<https://www.317gogreen.com/>

Contact: Audra Boarman | 317-771-3925 | [audra@audsolutions.net](mailto:audra@audsolutions.net)

Event-related sustainability services: Compost hauling

### BioTown Ag

<https://biotownag.com/>

Contact: Sandi Sorensen | 217-855-3319 | [sandi@biotownag.com](mailto:sandi@biotownag.com)

Event-related sustainability services: Anaerobic digester for food scraps

## Food Donation Recipients & Resources

### Second Helpings

<https://www.seconddhelpings.org/>

Contact: Jon Meinert | 317-632-2664 ext. 122 | [jon@seconddhelpings.org](mailto:jon@seconddhelpings.org)

Event-related sustainability services: Food donation recipient

### Gleaners

<https://www.gleaners.org/>

Contact: Brittany Stark | 317-925-0191 ext. 154 | [bstark@gleaners.org](mailto:bstark@gleaners.org)

Event-related sustainability services: Food donation recipient

### Liability Protection Information for Food Donations

- [U.S. Bill Emerson Good Samaritan Food Donation Act](#)
- [U.S. Federal Liability Protection For Food Donation Legal Fact Sheet](#) (Harvard Food Law & Policy Clinic)
- [Global Food Donation Policy Atlas](#) (Harvard Law School and The Global Food Banking Network)

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## Other Event Donation Recipients

### Random Acts of Flowers

<https://rafindy.org/>

Contact: Cheryl Cooper | 317-282-0144 | [cheryl@RAFindianapolis.org](mailto:cheryl@RAFindianapolis.org)

**Event-related sustainability services:** Donation and reuse of floral arrangements and vases

### Teachers' Treasures

<https://www.teacherstresures.org/>

Contact: Zach Hal | 317-254-1758 | [zach@teacherstresures.org](mailto:zach@teacherstresures.org)

**Event-related sustainability services:** Donation and reuse of event materials (promotional items, signs & banners, awards, apparel, etc.)

### Greater Indy Habitat for Humanity

<https://indyrestore.com/frequently-asked-questions/>

Contact: Abby Cederdahl | 317-777-6078 | [commercialdonations@indyhabitat.org](mailto:commercialdonations@indyhabitat.org)

**Event-related sustainability services:** Free donation pick-up & reuse of building materials, furniture, appliances, home fixtures & household goods, and more in good condition and working order

### People for Urban Progress

<https://peopleup.org/>

**Event-related sustainability services:** Event banner upcycling into handmade products, often used as gifts to event leadership, participants, volunteers, etc.

## On-Site Waste Diversion Services

### Zero Waste Event Productions

<https://zerowastefest.com/>

Contact: Tyler Bonner | 740-590-8724 | [info@zerowastefest.com](mailto:info@zerowastefest.com)

**Event-related sustainability services:** On-site waste diversion services

### Waste Management

<https://www.wm.com/us/en/business/sustainability-services/sustainable-events-venues>

Contact: Lee Spivak | [lspivak@wm.com](mailto:lspivak@wm.com)

**Event-related sustainability services:** On-site waste diversion services

### Eco Circle LLC

Contact: Gowri Sundaram | [ecocircle.llc@gmail.com](mailto:ecocircle.llc@gmail.com)

**Event-related sustainability services:** Zero waste event consultants

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## Carbon Footprint Resources

### Carbon Neutral Indiana

<https://carbonneutralindiana.org/>

Contact: Daniel Poynter | 317-721-4587 | [dpoynter@carbonneutralindiana.org](mailto:dpoynter@carbonneutralindiana.org)

Event-related sustainability services: Measure carbon footprint; carbon offsets

### Other Carbon Offset Providers

- [Native](#)
- [Climate Impact Partners](#)
- [TerraPass](#)
- [Bonneville Environmental Foundation](#)

### Net Zero Carbon Events

<https://www.netzerocarbonevents.org/>

An events industry initiative to address climate change

### TRACE by isla

<https://traceyour.events/>

Carbon measurement platform for events

### impactALL

<https://circularunity.com/services>

Carbon measurement platform for events

### Purpose Net Zero

<https://www.purposenetzero.com/>

Tool to measure carbon emissions from group travel

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## Sources for Sustainability Volunteers / Labor

### Keep Indianapolis Beautiful

<https://www.kibi.org/request/trash-boxes-recycling-bins/>

317-264-7555 x100 | [contact@kibi.org](mailto:contact@kibi.org)

**Event-related sustainability services:** Recycling bin rentals, trash receptacles, event sustainability volunteers

### Indiana University

Contact: Jessica Davis | [sustindy@iu.edu](mailto:sustindy@iu.edu)

**Event-related sustainability services:** Event sustainability volunteers

### RecycleForce

<https://recycleforce.org/>

Contact: Daniel Rowe | 317-532-1367 | [drowe@recycleforce.org](mailto:drowe@recycleforce.org)

**Event-related sustainability services:** Electronics recycling, miscellaneous plastics recycling, labor for event waste programs

## Additional Sustainable Events Resources

### Julia Spangler

Developer of the Indianapolis Event Waste Guide

Contact: [hello@hcsustainability.com](mailto:hello@hcsustainability.com)

**Event-related sustainability services:** Sustainability consulting & data management for events, venues, sports, & destinations

### MUSE (Members United for Sustainable Events)

<https://www.museusa.org/>

Membership association for event professionals pursuing sustainability

### Eco Circle LLC

Contact: Gowri Sundaram | [ecocircle.llc@gmail.com](mailto:ecocircle.llc@gmail.com)

**Event-related sustainability services:** Zero waste event consultants

### Broadway Green Alliance

<https://www.broadwaygreen.com/>

Industry-wide initiative to educate the theatre community and patrons pursuing environmentally friendlier practices.

### Earthlight

<https://www.earthlight.eco/>

Contact: [Hello@earthlight.eco](mailto:Hello@earthlight.eco)

**Event-related sustainability services:** Sustainable events consulting, intentional gifts and giveaways, and eco-friendly and rentable lanyards

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## Appendix A

### Glossary of Sustainability Terms

**Zero waste** – In the events industry, the generally accepted definition of “zero waste” is diverting 90%+ of the event’s solid waste from landfills and incinerators. For a deeper dive into zero waste and its guiding principles, check out the Zero Waste International Alliance at [zwia.org](http://zwia.org).

**Recycling** – The process of converting waste materials into usable commodities and objects. In this guidebook, we use the term “recycling” to refer to the process of recovering and remanufacturing commodity materials such as paper, cardboard, metals, glass, and plastics.

**Upcycling** – The process of transforming waste or unwanted materials into new materials or products perceived to be of greater quality than the original material. Also known as creative reuse. In this guidebook, we use the terms “upcycling” and “creative reuse” to refer to creative or artistic uses for unwanted event materials, especially those that cannot be traditionally recycled.

**Waste-to-energy** – The conversion of waste materials into useable heat, electricity, or fuel through a variety of processes, including incineration, gasification, pyrolyzation, anaerobic digestion, and landfill gas recovery. Also known as energy recovery. According to the EPA’s Waste Management Hierarchy, it is more beneficial to reduce, recycle, and compost all potential materials in the waste stream before utilizing waste-to-energy methods.

**Composting** – The process of recycling organic materials into an amendment that can be used to enrich soil and plants.

**Compostable** – Able to decompose into carbon dioxide, water, and biomass within a specific time-frame under specific conditions. Compostable materials break down fast enough and reliably enough to create compost, a nutrient-rich soil amendment.

**Biodegradable** – Able to decompose into carbon dioxide, water, and biomass by the natural action of microorganisms over an unspecified length of time and in undefined conditions. Biodegradable products are not necessarily compostable because it may take many years for them to break down, or they may require unusual conditions in order to break down.

**Bio-based or plant-based:** These terms refer to where material comes from, rather than how it can be disposed of after use. Disregard these terms when categorizing products in a waste diversion program.

**Carbon neutral** – A state in which the greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions released to the atmosphere by an entity have been reduced or avoided, and the remaining emissions are compensated with carbon offsets. The term “climate neutral” may also be used to reinforce the concept that all greenhouse gases, not just carbon dioxide, must be taken into account when pursuing neutrality.

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## Glossary of Sustainability Terms, Cont.

**Net zero** – A state in which a balance between human-caused greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and removals is achieved. This balance can be achieved through reducing and avoiding emissions, and then implementing solutions to capture the remaining emissions at the point of generation or remove them from the atmosphere. To achieve net zero, only carbon offsets generated by projects that capture CO<sub>2</sub> in the long term are accepted.

**Carbon offsets** – A term used to assign a value to a reduction, avoidance or capture of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions achieved by a certified project. Also known as carbon credits. Each offset or carbon credit is equivalent to one metric ton of carbon dioxide equivalent (CO<sub>2</sub>e).

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## Appendix B

### Exhibitor and Food Vendor Waste Reduction Guides

Many event organizers invite outside organizations and companies to exhibit resources and information or act as a food vendor at their event. Use the flyers on the following pages to encourage these exhibitors and vendors to think intentionally about the materials they are providing at the event. Plan to distribute these in advance via email or in-person, preferably multiple months before the event if possible so the organizations have ample time to plan. Or use these as a guide to create your own flyer with information specific about your event.

**Exhibitor Waste Reduction Guide** – At many community-oriented events, the organizers will invite non-profit groups, faith-based organizations, corporate partners, government representatives, and others to provide resources and information at tables. Share the Exhibitor Waste Reduction Guide with them to encourage intentional decision-making regarding any printed or promotional items wherever possible.

**Food Vendor Waste Reduction Guide** – If your event involves external food vendors or food trucks separate from your venue, share the Food Vendor Waste Reduction Guide with them to encourage incorporating sustainability into their menu and sourcing decisions. You can help further by encouraging your event's attendees to bring their own reusable food service items such as bags, straws, utensils, or containers in the promotion of your event.

- **Remember, if you are planning to collect compost** in a festival-style area with multiple food vendors, the best way to maximize collection and minimize contamination is to **provide all vendors with compostable serviceware** approved by your compost hauler. If you're not able to provide all food vendors with approved compostable products, **composting efforts may be more successful when focused on other areas of the event**, such as meals provided by a single caterer. Refer back to page 14.

## For questions about the Indianapolis Event Waste Guide or to request revisions to the document:

Please contact the Indianapolis Office of Sustainability at [SustainIndy@Indy.Gov](mailto:SustainIndy@Indy.Gov).



# EXHIBITOR WASTE REDUCTION GUIDE

INDIANAPOLIS IS A CITY THAT CARES ABOUT SUSTAINABILITY AND MINIMIZING OUR IMPACT ON OUR SHARED ENVIRONMENT. WHEN IT COMES TO “REDUCE, REUSE, RECYCLE,” WE PRIORITIZE **WASTE REDUCTION** AND **PRODUCT REUSE** WHENEVER POSSIBLE.

As an exhibitor at a large event, please consider these questions before distributing promotional items:

1. Are your giveaway items designed for **durability** and **long-term use**?
2. Do your giveaway items serve a **practical purpose** and **fulfill a genuine need** for recipients?
3. Is there any **excess packaging** or material associated with your giveaway items that could be **avoided in the future**?
4. Are there ways to **utilize technology** in a way that reduces waste or paper?
5. Are your giveaway items made from **sustainable, eco-friendly materials**, or **post-consumer recycled content**?
6. Can the giveaway items be **easily recycled** or **composted at the end of their lifecycle**?



WE UNDERSTAND THAT **NO ONE CAN DO EVERYTHING**, BUT **EVERYONE CAN DO SOMETHING** TO MINIMIZE WASTE AND OVERALL IMPACT ON OUR SHARED ENVIRONMENT. CONSERVING ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES, MINIMIZING POLLUTION & GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS, AND DIVERTING WASTE FROM LANDFILLS ALL HELP MAKE LARGE EVENTS LIKE THIS ONE POSSIBLE FOR GENERATIONS TO COME.

**THANK YOU FOR MAKING AN EFFORT TO REDUCE WASTE IN INDIANAPOLIS!**

# FOOD VENDOR WASTE REDUCTION GUIDE

**INDIANAPOLIS IS A CITY THAT CARES ABOUT SUSTAINABILITY AND MINIMIZING OUR IMPACT ON OUR SHARED ENVIRONMENT. WHEN IT COMES TO “REDUCE, REUSE, RECYCLE,” WE PRIORITIZE WASTE REDUCTION AND PRODUCT REUSE WHENEVER POSSIBLE.**

As a **food vendor at a large event**, please consider the following opportunities to incorporate sustainability:

1. **Source eating utensils and wares made of wood, bamboo, or pre- or post-consumer recycled content.** Avoid “compostable plastic” as it can be challenging to compost effectively and often results in the same waste as traditional plastic.
2. Consider **selling beverages in original bottles or cans** instead of cups to make recycling more convenient.
3. Only **provide bags, straws, lids, utensils, napkins, or condiments upon customer request** to minimize unnecessary waste (and costs).
4. **Allow (or incentivize) customers to provide their own reusable food service items** such as bags, straws, utensils, or containers.
5. Consider the lifecycle of any **promotional materials**, ensuring they can be **recycled or reused**.
6. Evaluate how items are packaged, choosing options with **minimal packaging to reduce waste**.



WE UNDERSTAND THAT **NO ONE CAN DO EVERYTHING**, BUT **EVERYONE CAN DO SOMETHING** TO MINIMIZE WASTE AND OVERALL IMPACT ON OUR SHARED ENVIRONMENT. CONSERVING ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES, MINIMIZING POLLUTION & GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS, AND DIVERTING WASTE FROM LANDFILLS ALL HELP MAKE LARGE EVENTS LIKE THIS ONE POSSIBLE FOR GENERATIONS TO COME.

**THANK YOU FOR MAKING AN EFFORT TO REDUCE WASTE IN INDIANAPOLIS!**