In 2011 the University of Michigan established a goal to reduce the amount of waste that is sent to landfill by 40% below the 2006 baseline by 2025. Estimates indicate approximately 40% of what is being sent to landfills is compostable material—even in buildings without food service!

The intent of the Zero Waste Program is to achieve as much waste diversion from the landfill as possible. This includes reduction of waste and use of recycling and composting. Zero Waste events should avoid the use of plasticware, plan for and utilize available compost systems, and educate the campus community on best practices to reduce waste.

This guide will provide a task checklist, give further information based on event size and type (student, staff/faculty, catering), and consolidate resources to be more user-friendly.

The largest program underway to compost food on campus is led by Michigan Dining who is working diligently to institute pre- and post-consumer composting in all residential hall and Union dining facilities. Fortunately, there is growing interest in and momentum for composting across campus even in non-food service areas. This interest in composting has increased, as evident by the overall weight of compost collected from Zero Waste events increasing from 168 tons in FY14 to over 226 tons in FY15. A program led by the Student Sustainability Initiative (SSI) has also seen growing success in providing compostable dishware and compost collection for student events.

The strengthening enthusiasm for composting from both students and staff is accompanied by a need for greater resources to assist in the planning and implementation of zero-waste events on campus.
Planning your zero-waste STUDENT event

PLANNING THE EVENT

☐ Avoid waste by promoting and communicating about event electronically and choosing digital over paper for sharing materials.

☐ Order compostable materials from SSI (3 days in advance if <100 attendees, 1-2 weeks in advance if >100 attendees and up to 500 attendees.)  www.sustainability.umich.edu/ssi/zero-waste

☐ SSI will contact you about picking up materials.

☐ When planning for food purchases, make an accurate estimate of attendees to minimize waste and cut costs.

☐ If available, use reusable plates and cups rather than disposable.

   Consider asking attendees to bring their own mug / plate / silverware if feasible.

☐ Visit www.recycle.umich.edu to learn what is recyclable at U-M.

☐ Make a note of items that cannot be recycled or composted. If possible, create signage indicating such and mark as “landfill” on trash bin.

☐ Identify and train volunteers to staff waste station.

WHEN PLACING FOOD ORDER...

☐ Let the caterer or vendor know you are working toward a zero-waste event and ask for their support by not bringing/using containers or items that are not recyclable or compostable.

☐ Inquire about how the food will be packaged and specify a desire for minimal or recyclable packaging.

   Ask for menu options with minimal packaging, such as those provided in aluminum trays and platters, or whole fruit. Plated dinners or buffets generally result in less waste.

   Opt for bulk rather than individually packaged items (i.e. chips, water, condiments).

   Specifically state plastic silverware or serving ware is not wanted.

   Recyclable packaging includes cans and plastic bottles, plastic tubs, and aseptic containers.

☐ If possible, request “Biodegradable Products Institute (BPI) certified” compostable materials from the caterer, or obtain through Zero Waste Program.

DAY OF EVENT

☐ Take compostable liner(s) and box(es) to event room. Liners can be placed in cardboard boxes ordered through POCC, or can be placed in a trash bin labeled “Compost” for the purpose of the event.

☐ Set out compostable ware, boxes, liners, bin signage, and tabletop signage identifying event as zero waste.

☐ If some items are not provided (cups, silverware), remind participants to bring their own.

☐ Announce Zero Waste goal to attendees and let them know what is compostable and where to place it.

☐ Take pictures and share with us.

☐ After the event, take compost bag(s) to SSI compost carts at loading docks identified on maps at SSI website.

☐ Bring remaining compostable ware to SSI or use for future events.
Planning your zero-waste STAFF/FACULTY event

PLANNING THE EVENT

☐ Let your building/facility manager know you are holding a Zero Waste event, (or the facility manager of the building/venue). Let them know compost collection supplies will be delivered to the dock and if you will be moving any bins around.

☐ Review the Zero Waste Guide.

☐ Place an order for a one-time drop-off of a compost cart/box through POCC. For cost information and steps on how to set up a yearly work order for recurring events, see Compost FAQs in the appendix of this guide. Screenshots of how the POCC order form should appear are also provided in the appendix.

Select “non-general fund” for this request, (regardless of building)

Include in the description field:
- Number of compost carts (on docks)
- Number of boxes/liners for on-site collection--please specify if you need these particular items dropped off in a specific room or location
- Specify if indoor or outdoor
- Bin and materials drop-off date
- Compost pick-up date

☐ Email zerowaste@umich.edu to tell us about your event so we can help.

☐ Avoid waste by promoting the event electronically. Ask presenters to use digital copies.

☐ When planning for food purchases, make an accurate estimate of attendees to minimize waste and cut costs. Consider asking attendees to bring their own mug/plate/silverware, if feasible.

☐ Make a note of items that cannot be recycled or composted. We can help create event-specific signage or you can print standard signs found on the Zero Waste Program webpage.

☐ Visit www.recycle.umich.edu to learn what is recyclable at U-M, and reference the Composting FAQs in this guide for compostable guidelines.

☐ Identify waste station volunteers to ensure quality of compost collected. Volunteers should complete the training on the Program website.

WHEN PLACING FOOD ORDER...

☐ Let the caterer or vendor know you are working toward a zero-waste event and ask for their support by not bringing/using containers or items that are not recyclable or compostable.

☐ Inquire about how the food will be packaged and specify a desire for minimal or recyclable packaging.

Ask for menu options with minimal packaging, such as those provided in aluminum trays and platters, or whole fruit. Plated dinners or buffets generally result in less waste.

Opt for bulk rather than individually packaged items (i.e. chips, water, condiments).

Specifically state plastic silverware or serving ware is not wanted.

Recyclable packaging includes cans and plastic bottles, plastic tubs, and aseptic containers.

☐ If possible, request “Biodegradable Products Institute (BPI) certified” compostable materials from the caterer, or work with OCS to obtain the correct materials.

CONTINUE ON NEXT PAGE
Planning your zero-waste STAFF/FACULTY event

DAILY OF EVENT

☐ Take compostable liner(s) and box(es) to event room. Liners can be placed in cardboard boxes ordered through POCC, or can be placed in a trash bin labeled “Compost” for the purpose of the event.

☐ Set out compostable ware, bin signage, and tabletop signage to identify your zero waste effort.

☐ Remind participants to bring their own cups and silverware if available.

☐ Have a volunteer monitor the station to help inform people of how to sort items into appropriate bins and ensure zero-contamination.

☐ Announce Zero Waste goal to attendees and let them know what is compostable and where to place it.

☐ Take pictures and share with us.

☐ After the event, take compost bag(s) to compost cart at loading dock. The cardboard box used to hold liner may be kept for future use.

*NOTE: Both general and non-general fund buildings are able to be serviced for compost resource drop-off and pick-up if located on campus. The Zero Waste Program is happy to provide the cart/box delivery and pick up at no additional cost.*
CATERING a zero-waste event

PLANNING THE EVENT

☐ Ask customer if they are working toward a zero-waste event and offer to support them by limiting or avoiding items that are not recyclable or compostable. If the customer does not have composting available to them continue to strive for minimal packaging and ensure remaining packaging is recyclable. If composting is available, provide compostable containers, serviceware and utensils.

☐ Provide customer with the link to the Zero Waste Program for assistance with planning and implementing a zero-waste event.

☐ Make a note of items that cannot be recycled or composted. Use approved signage to educate guests as to the impact of recycling and composting.

SUGGESTIONS TO SHARE WITH CUSTOMER WHEN TAKING FOOD ORDER

☐ Work together to determine food and serving products needed, and make sure all are recyclable, compostable, or reusable. It is best if all plastic-looking products are compostable to avoid confusion.

☐ Opt for things in bulk rather than individually packaged items, (i.e. chips).

☐ Choose canned drinks or large 2 liters rather than individually packaged plastic bottles.

DAY OF EVENT

☐ Set out compostable ware, boxes, liners and informational signage, including compost and recycling bin signs, Zero Waste tabletents, etc.

☐ Monitor the station to help inform people of how to sort items into appropriate bins.

☐ After the event, take compost bag(s) to carts at loading dock. The cardboard box that was used to hold liner should be folded and kept for future use.
Planning your zero-waste OFFSITE event

Offsite set-up and opportunities will vary by location. Please email zerowaste@umich.edu to discuss options for your offsite event. For catered events, you may be able to work directly with your caterer for composting service.

*NOTE: Compost box or bin drop-off or pick-up from WRRO for off-campus locations is not available. OFFSITE events that are taking place on campus may proceed through on campus directions. OFFSITE events have two options for U-M Service:

1) Request a cart for your on-campus building and bring the food waste from the event back to place in this cart, which can then be picked up. This order would be placed online through POCC. The 1 time drop-off / pick-up of a compost cart/box could cost $12.50/cart/pick-up, with a $25 flat delivery fee.

OR

2) Drop off bags at the North Campus facility. This option will require coordination with the Waste Reduction and Recycling Office (recycle@umich.edu) to make sure compost is dropped off in the appropriate location and that a cart is placed and available at the North Campus facility. The charge would be $12.50/cart/pick-up, however the $25 cart delivery fee would not apply.

OFFSITE, ON-CAMPUS EVENTS

☐ Communicate your desire for a sustainable event to your event planner. Work with them to identify all opportunities to be sustainable.

☐ Work with the facility to understand how they can support your event and what resources are available to divert waste to recycling or compost items.

☐ Order compostable materials through your event planner, the Student Sustainability Initiative (SSI), or contact the Zero Waste Program for assistance.

DAY OF EVENT

☐ Set out compostable ware, boxes, liners and informational signage.

☐ Make note of any items that cannot be recycled or composted.

☐ Have volunteer(s) monitor the station(s) to inform people of how to appropriately sort items.

☐ Announce Zero Waste goal to attendees and let them know what is compostable and where to place it. Identify volunteers stationed at compost boxes to help avoid contamination.

☐ After the event, take compost bag(s) to compost carts at loading dock. The cardboard box that was used to hold liner should be folded and kept for future use.
Resources

CONTACT INFORMATION

Zero Waste Program
www.sustainability.umich.edu/zero-waste
zerowaste@umich.edu

Waste Reduction and Recycling Office
www.recycle.umich.edu
recycle@umich.edu

Office of Campus Sustainability
www.ocs.umich.edu
ocs_contact@umich.edu

Student Sustainability Initiative
www.sustainability.umich.edu/ssi/zero-waste
ssi-board@umich.edu

EXTERNAL RESOURCES

Compost Product Standards
www.bpiworld.org/BPI-Public/Program
Engaging and Training Volunteers

Volunteers are critical to ensure the success of composting at zero waste events. If the collected compost is contaminated with trash or other non-compostables, the entire bag may need to be taken to the landfill.

Make sure all your efforts do not go to waste! Finding and engaging volunteers might begin with going to members of an office “green team” or connecting with Planet Blue Ambassadors.

1. Engage enough volunteers to have one person staff each waste station to provide quality control of the material that enters each waste stream. Composting, recycling and trash bins should all be grouped to create a single “waste station.” For maximum impact, ensure that your volunteers are only responsible for monitoring the waste stations and not other tasks (ushering, food service, etc.).

2. If the event is very large and requires many volunteers, consider designating a volunteer coordinator to be responsible for recruiting, training, and organizing all of the help. If your event will be longer than 2-3 hours, consider staffing volunteers in shifts.

3. A pre-event training with volunteers is strongly suggested to help ensure the same message will be conveyed to everyone and to answer any questions. Volunteers should be familiar with what waste stream is expected from the event and proper placement of each specific item. A short online training is available on the Zero Waste Program website.

4. The #1 priority for all volunteers: ensuring ONLY compostable materials end up in the compost collection bins.

Once you have found a volunteer willing to dedicate their time to your zero-waste goal, it is equally important to keep them engaged. Communicate with them how meaningful their role is; a task which seems menial such as guiding people at collection stations is critical to making the zero-waste event a success. Further, share that this is part of a larger movement toward reaching the Campus Sustainability Goal for waste reduction.

Following the event, share with the volunteers what they have helped to achieve. Communicating the impact of the efforts made at the event is essentail. Sharing photos and videos can help volunteers as well as event attendees see the result of the commitment toward making the event zero-waste.

Unlike recyclables, compostables are not sorted. As a result, any non-compostable items mixed in stay that way through the composting process and result in compost with bits of trash in it. For this reason, the compost facility will not take compost from U-M if there are ANY non-compostables mixed in.
Composting FAQs

The first priority should be to reduce the waste generated by the event through thoughtful planning. Using reusable items is suggested when feasible. However, often some generation of waste is unavoidable, and as such one should take extra steps to ensure this waste is either recyclable or compostable. Note that items that are acceptable for recycling or composting vary by where the event will be held.

What is recyclable at U of M?
Visit www.recycle.umich.edu.

What is the difference between compostable and biodegradable?
Compostable products break down into a nutrient-rich material and do not contain or release any metals or toxins into the environment.

Biodegradable simply means that eventually the product will break down into smaller components over time. These smaller components may or may not contain harmful substances. As such, often the term “biodegradable” is used in greenwashing products. In short, biodegradable products do not “compost” and will end up contaminating the end product. Only products with the ASTM D6400 or D6868 or the BPI Compostable logo can be added to the compost stream here on campus. Watch this video to learn more about the difference.

How do I know what to compost?
The Zero Waste Event Program will only accept plastics that are compostable per the ASTM D6400 or D6868 standard. When purchasing compostable items, be sure to inquire about the product meeting this standard. If necessary, work with event planners on purchasing compostable items. These items may be more expensive than conventional varieties.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What CAN be composted</th>
<th>What CANNOT be composted</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- All food waste</td>
<td>- Plastics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Napkins and paper towels</td>
<td>- Metal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Compostable plates, bowls, cups, and utensils</td>
<td>- Coffee lids</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Toothpicks and wooden coffee stirrers</td>
<td>- Sugar packets, (lined with plastic coating)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Tea bags, (staples are okay), and coffee grounds and filters</td>
<td>- Plastic ketchup, dressing, and sauce packets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- The green compostable bags that line the compost bins</td>
<td>- Styrofoam cups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Plastic bags</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Foil or plastic bags that individually wrapped tea bags come in</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How do I know what products to buy?
Compost Collection Boxes must be lined with compostable liners. Liners can be obtained as part of the POCC request, through OCS or SSI, or purchased directly through mMarketsite. The most commonly used liners are through Nichols, BioTuf Liners #HE-Y8448YE, 42 x 48 1 mil green. For one-time events the Zero Waste Program may be able to help provide compostable plates, cups, and utensils. For recurring events, staff departments are encouraged to purchase their own supply. These MUST either meet the ASTM D6400 or D6868 standard or feature the BPI Compostable logo.
Composting FAQs

How can I purchase a supply of compostable liners for our office to use?
If your department or group has events frequently enough to warrant having your own stock of compostable bin liners and you chose to do so, you may order them through mMarketsite. This works well if you have frequent events and keep the cardboard “Compost” box(es) for reuse. The liners typically used by U-M Building Services are item number: HERY8448YER01 BIOTUF 42X48 1.0MIL GRN COMPOSTABLE LINER 5/20/C

What if there are non-compostables in the compost collection box?
If possible, remove all non-compostable material. If ANY contamination remains, the entire bag of compost must be landfilled, as there are no systems in place to handle contamination and the finished product, if contaminated, is unusable. Contamination mitigation is the primary concern when collecting compostable materials at an event. It is imperative that volunteers be stationed by boxes to ensure zero-contamination.

Where do I take the compost after the event?
Compostables must be taken to a loading dock or dumpster area for pickup by U-M Waste Management Services.

Where does the compost go?
Once the compostables are collected from building loading docks by WMS staff, the material is taken to WeCare Organics, the private operator of the City of Ann Arbor’s compost site, and mixed with yard waste and formed into long piles, known as windrows, where air can circulate and aid in the aerobic decomposition process. After the material has fully decomposed, the finished compost is tested to assess its potential as a fertilizer or soil amendment.

What costs are included in setting up composting for my event?
The cost for composting at an event is $12.50/cart/pick-up, with a $25 flat delivery fee. If you intend to have recurring zero waste events, place a yearly work order through POCC for a compost cart to remain on location. This avoids the recurring bin delivery fee of $25.

In addition to the cost of the cart and deliver fee, cardboard boxes for collection are $3 each and liners for those boxes are $1 each. If you plan to have recurring events, you may keep the box for future use, and may consider buying your own liners directly to have on hand.

Finally, if you anticipate needing the Grounds or Building Services staff to service bins during the event (pull contents and place new liners), you must obtain an estimate for cost that will depend on the time and hours needed by submitting a separate work order.

How do I set up a yearly work order for recurring events?
The cost is $12.50/cart/pick-up, with a $25 flat delivery fee. If you intend to have recurring zero-waste events, place a yearly work order through POCC for a compost cart to remain on location. This avoids the recurring bin delivery fee of $25. To obtain a yearly work order, customers should fax a work request form to the Plant Operations Call Center at 763.2932. Indicate in the description that you are requesting a yearly work order.
Screenshots of the POCC Order Form: page 1 of 2

1

Plant Operations Call Center

The Plant Operations Call Center (POCC) is the communications hub of Plant Operations and the front line of communications with campus departments. After-hours emergencies for Housing, Parking and Academic properties are coordinated through the POCC. Work Orders are initiated, dispatched, and tracked through our computerized Facilities Management System. You can receive updates on any Plant Work Order by calling the Call Center at 647-2056, emailing POCC@umich.edu or view directly in our Facilities Management System (unique name and keystone password required).

Work Orders can be obtained through one of the following:

- Phone @ 647-2056
- Web Forms (direct link to FMS system)

General Fund Work Order

Non General Fund Work Order

Request an Estimate

- Fax @ 763-2632
- Walk-in Customers @ POCC

2

WEBLOGIN

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

Enter your Login ID and Password

Uniqname or Friend ID

Password

Log In

Need help?

By your use of these resources, you agree to abide by Responsible Use of Information Resources (SPG 601.07), in addition to all relevant state and federal laws.
*NOTE: If you will have recurring events (i.e. weekly), you may place a work order for a cart to remain on location at your loading dock.

1. Establish short code for yearly work order.
2. Submit work order through POCC.
3. On work order, request delivery of boxes to be reused.
Recycling mixed

- paper
- cardboard
- plastic containers
- metal

For more information, visit recycle.umich.edu
Compost
When in doubt, throw it out

- Food waste
- Compostable ware
- Coffee grounds & filters
- Napkins

For more information, visit recycle.umich.edu