

Zero Waste Events Talking Points - updated 11/4/2016

What

- Zero waste events are events with the goal of diverting as much waste as possible from the landfill. The standard is to divert at least 90% of event waste.
- Zero waste events aim to reduce waste at every possible point. They avoid the use of plastic ware, utilize available compost and recycling systems, and educate the campus community on best practices to reduce waste.

Why

- In 2011, the University of Michigan adopted campus-wide sustainability goals. One of those goals is to reduce the amount of waste being sent to landfills by 40% by 2025.
- Approximately 35% of campus waste being sent to landfills is compostable material, with the majority of the waste originating from university events. U-M community members can make a significant impact toward achieving our waste reduction goal by choosing to host zero waste events.
- In FY 2015, more than 375 tons of food waste was diverted from the landfill and garbage disposals through the composting stream. FY 2016 is on track to send almost 440 tons to the compost site.
- In 2015 President Schlissel tasked a committee of staff, faculty and students with identifying the best way to make progress toward our sustainability goals.
- Following the committee recommendations, President Mark Schlissel announced additional campus sustainability initiatives including plans for increased composting across campus and a Zero Waste Program to address food waste on campus.

Who

- Anyone on campus can host a zero waste event. The program is designed for staff events ranging from informal, small staff luncheons and meetings, to large external events a department may be hosting.

How

- Visit the Zero Waste Program website for helpful tips and to place a work order for compost resources and service.
- The Zero Waste Guide has tips on waste-less event promotion, event planning and day-of checklists, and how to plan and communicate food orders.
- On the program website is contact information to request technical assistance and support for composting at your event.

<http://sustainability.umich.edu/zero-waste>

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