**Event Coordinator – Sustainability Recommendations**

**President’s Sustainability Commission – Engagement Group**

This guide is intended to be a resource to departments, student groups, and organizations within Colorado State University who are looking to host a Zero Waste event to engage students. Colorado State University has a Zero Waste Goal in the Sustainability Strategic Plan and is a member of PLAN (Post-Landfill Action Network). The initiative to join PLAN was championed by students in an effort to provide resources to help eliminate waste, divert waste from the landfill, and educate the campus community on zero waste practices.

Tips to host a zero waste event:

* Go paperless and use web, social media, and email to promote the event as well as an online registration system rather than paper invites or RSVPs.
* If you must use paper for marketing materials, such as promotional posters or handouts, choose paper that is made from recycled content, is recyclable, and/or is Forest Stewardship Certified.
* Consider transportation when choosing your event location. If attendees can utilize public transportation to access the event venue let them know in advance and provide whatever incentives you can to encourage alternative transportation (i.e. adequate bike parking, free bus passes, etc.).
* Choose a venue operated with renewable electricity or purchase carbon offsets for the event through a verified non-profit entity (like Colorado Carbon Fund).
* Provide composting and recycling receptacles in addition to landfill bins. Sorting will be most accurate if you have staff or volunteers at each waste station to help attendees sort properly. If you can’t staff the waste sorting station, have signage displayed over each receptacle to help facilitate proper sorting of materials (visual references are very helpful so consider taping the specific items that are available at your event above each receptacle as examples!).
* Provide compostable or recyclable serving ware (sorting will be cleaner if you go with all compostable or all recyclable; the more variation in materials, the harder it is to sort correctly). Styrofoam and non-compostable paper ware is highly discouraged since they cannot be recycled or composted.
* Actively promote the zero waste aspects of your event and remind attendees to reduce waste by only bringing recyclable, reusable, and/or compostable materials with them to the event.
* Serve drinks with a pitcher or self-serving container with reusable or compostable cups rather than disposable water bottles or cans to reduce waste (and skip plastic straws as they often end up in waterways where they are harmful to aquatic species).
* Reduce the amount of food waste by having attendees RSVP so you can give the caterer a more accurate head count. Work with your caterer to develop a plan for leftovers (donate to a local shelter, have participants take home leftovers, make them available to the venue staff, or compost).
* If the event is catered, actively work with the caterer to provide compostable materials and ensure single-serve packets of condiments or individual packets are not provided but rather served in bulk. For example, have chips available in a large serving bowl instead of individual chip bags.
* Ensure that all decorations are recyclable or reusable and are not made out of plastic (i.e. table clothes, centerpieces, or banners). Wherever possible, rent washable/reusable materials to eliminate waste.

CSU has a membership with [PLAN](https://www.postlandfill.org/) (Post-Landfill Action Network) which provides discounts on serving ware and more from different suppliers, which is available to anyone on-campus (with a CSU email address).