



## **General Greening Guidelines for Events**

**If you are serving food and/or beverages at your event,  
please see page 2 for additional tips and information.**

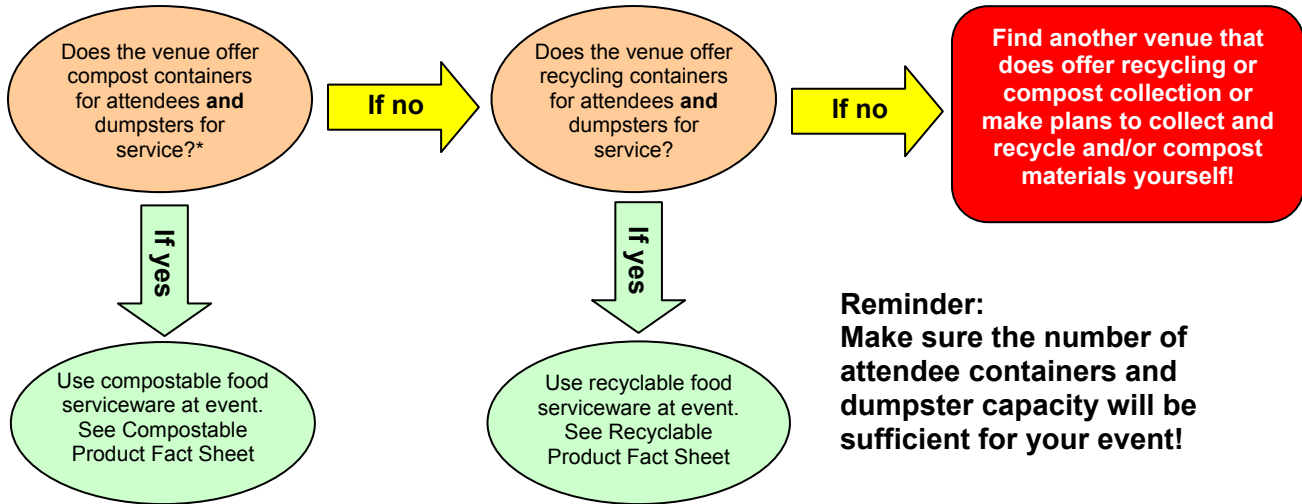
- 1) Let attendees know about your greening efforts in advance and include the information in announcements to attendees
  - a. If using compostable products, show examples and tell them how to properly dispose of the items (hold up actual product examples)
  - b. If collecting recycling, ask attendees to look for recycling bins (describe bins)
  - c. Thank attendees that brought their own refillable water containers, coffee mugs, cloth napkins, etc.
- 2) Use handouts and brochures that are printed in a sustainable manner
  - a. Use 100% post-consumer recycled paper
  - b. Print on both sides of paper
  - c. If documents are printed at a print shop, request soy-based inks
  - d. Limit number of handouts and make materials available online for reference
- 3) Reuse existing signs and select signs made from recyclable or reusable materials
  - a. Print banners or signs without dates, so they can be used year after year
  - b. If you don't already have a banner and it will only be used once, print paper banners for indoor events and recycle the paper banners when finished
  - c. Print signs on paper core instead of foam core. Foam core cannot be recycled but paper core can. However, if foam core is used, it can be donated to RAFT ([www.raft.net](http://www.raft.net)) for reuse
  - d. Print banners on cloth instead of vinyl whenever possible
- 4) Provide give-aways that can be reused again and again (i.e., that won't be thrown away) that are made with recycled content (i.e., refillable water bottles, mugs, bandanas, rulers, pens, etc.)
- 5) Ask vendors to use limited packaging materials when ordering give-aways to reduce waste
- 6) Whenever possible, use reusable tablecloths instead of disposable plastic or paper tablecloths. If you do use plastic tablecloths, wipe them off and reuse them. If you use paper, compost them.
- 7) Ask attendees to use public transit, provide transit schedule information, provide carpool options, and have event activities that can be accessed by walking, biking, etc.
- 8) If the event includes exhibits or displays by other organizations, suggest that exhibitors limit the number of handouts and request that they take back any left over materials. Provide instructions so exhibitors know how to recycle at the event
- 9) Do not provide pre-packaged goodie bags! Let attendees pick up materials they are interested in instead of providing materials that may or may not be disposed of properly (i.e., recycled)
- 10) BEFORE you order items for your event, think about where your materials come from (how they are made and delivered, are they durable, etc.) and if they can be recycled or composted when you are done.

# Greening Guidelines for Events with Food

(Please see page 1 for additional tips)


## Determine the most sustainable food serviceware choice for your event

Whenever possible, reusable serviceware is preferred. If reusables are not an option, the most sustainable food serviceware choice depends on the answers to the questions below.



**\*Important Note:** At all City of San Jose facilities, compost can be collected in green, compostable bags and/or placed in regular trash containers and dumpsters if compost dumpsters are not available. The green compostable bags and compostable materials will be separated from the trash and composted at an off-site facility. See the "Additional Resources" Fact Sheet for distributors of green compostable bags.

## Utilize these tips for preventing and reducing waste

- 1) Let your attendees know that you are producing a green event. Ask them to bring their own refillable water jugs, coffee mugs, linen napkins, etc.
- 2) Use paper plates, napkins and other paper products ideally made with post-consumer recycled content. Typically, these products will state that "post-consumer recycled content" were used. Regular paper products are OK too
- 3) Use finger foods when possible, use reusable utensils as an alternative, and use plastic utensils sparingly (plastic utensils cannot be recycled)
- 4) Use  plastic cups for drinks or serve in individual cans/bottles (these can all be recycled) unless prohibited by City policy
- 5) Provide drinks and condiments (water, tea, sugars, ketchup, salad dressings, etc.) in bulk instead of in individual packages and servings
- 6) Whenever possible, use reusable tablecloths instead of disposable plastic or paper tablecloths. If you do use plastic tablecloths, wipe them off and reuse them. If you use paper, compost them.
- 7) Provide give-aways that can be reused again and again (i.e., that won't be thrown away) that are made with recycled content (i.e., refillable water bottles, mugs, bandanas, rulers, pens, etc.)
- 8) Always place clearly marked recycling and/or compost bins *directly* beside trash bins. When they are not together, people won't take extra steps to put materials in the right place. (see "Guidelines for Eco-station Set-up" Fact Sheet)
- 9) If you use decorations or flowers, donate them to a nonprofit after the event for reuse or reuse them at future events
- 10) Left over food can typically be donated to a local shelter if you make arrangements in advance. See "Additional Resources" Fact Sheet for a list of local shelters and contact them ***in advance***