

# GUIDE TO MAKE YOUR PARTY ZERO WASTE

*\*This guide is intended for private gatherings and events.*

**Zero Waste** philosophy calls for a complete restructuring of our linear system of taking, making, and disposing of materials. It is much more than just recycling and composting as much as possible. A zero waste system is cyclical like the way resources flow in nature. It takes into account the whole life cycle of products to eliminate waste from the start and design products that are meant to be reused and recycled into use. **Learn more about Zero Waste at [recycleannarbor.org](http://recycleannarbor.org)**



A Zero Waste Party is one in which the party planner is committed to planning ahead to **reduce** waste and the use of disposables, choosing **reusable** options as much as possible, and only using disposables that are locally **recyclable** and **compostable**.

**The goals of a Zero Waste Party are to:**

- Reduce the amount of materials that will be discarded – even in the recycle and compost.
- Recover at least 90% of the waste in the recycle and compost.
- Educate the guests about composting, recycling, and zero waste.

**The key to Zero Waste – whether it be for a whole community or for your party – is to plan ahead.** When we begin with the end in mind we can eliminate waste before it exists, reduce our disposable items as much as possible, and use only disposables that are collected locally for recycling and composting.

**Use our Zero Waste Party planning checklist on the back!**

## MENU PLANNING

- ❑ Make a menu that is written down or typed up - not in your head! This is important for when you go grocery shopping so you buy only what you truly need and avoid food waste.  
*Tip: Use an online event meal planner to get exactly the amount you need!*
- ❑ If you're asking guests to bring a snack or dish to pass, let them know what you're already providing and ask them to communicate with you what they plan to bring.  
*Tip: Set up a shared online document for guests to add name and what they're bringing.*
- ❑ Ask guests to bring a reusable to-go container for leftovers at the end of the party.

## FOOD & DRINK SERVING

- ❑ Minimize Disposables – remember the goal is not to just recycle and compost everything.  
*Tip: Check local thrift stores for reusable plates, bowls, cups, cutlery, and cloth napkins.*  
*Tip: Make drinks in a bulk dispenser in place of single-serve containers.*
- ❑ Only use disposables that are locally recyclable and compostable. Be sure to check your local recycling and composting guidelines.  
*Tip: Strive for glass & aluminum containers instead of plastic for single-serve drinks.*  
*Tip: Strive for unbleached, post-consumer recycled content for paper napkins.*

## DECORATIONS

- ❑ Minimize disposables by using decorations that can be saved and reused!  
*Tip: Check local thrift stores for décor and look online for upcycling ideas.*  
*Tip: Get crafty! Search online for easy décor ideas with minimal supplies.*
- ❑ Only use disposables that are locally recyclable and compostable. Be sure to check your local recycling and composting guidelines.  
*Tip: Decorate with sustainably and locally produced plants and cut flowers.*  
*Tip: Decorate with nature from your own yard! One idea - hole punch leaves for confetti.*

## FURNITURE. GAMES. ETC.

- ❑ Borrow before buying new. Ask local friends and family to borrow items you may need, such as tables, chairs, table cloths, yard games, and more!
- ❑ Check local thrift stores for the extra items you need.
- ❑ Avoid disposable table cloths – especially plastic ones!

## WASTE COLLECTION

- ❑ Set up an easily identifiable and clearly labeled waste collection system for returnables, recyclables, compostables, and trash.
- ❑ Be vocal with your guests about your zero waste efforts and explain what goes where. Some people are not visual learners so don't solely rely on your waste collection system signage.
- ❑ Monitor your collection system throughout the event to remove contamination from the recyclables and compostables.

We offer consultation and rental of our zero waste stations equipped with signage for your private event! Please contact Angela Porta for more information at 734-662-6288 ext. 119 or [angela@recycleannarbor.org](mailto:angela@recycleannarbor.org)