

# ZERO WASTE



# EVENTS

## WHY ZERO WASTE?

The University of California system has pledged to be zero waste by 2020.. That means 90% of materials go in the compost or recycling bin, or ideally, no bin at all!

UC has also committed to a 50% per capita waste reduction by 2030

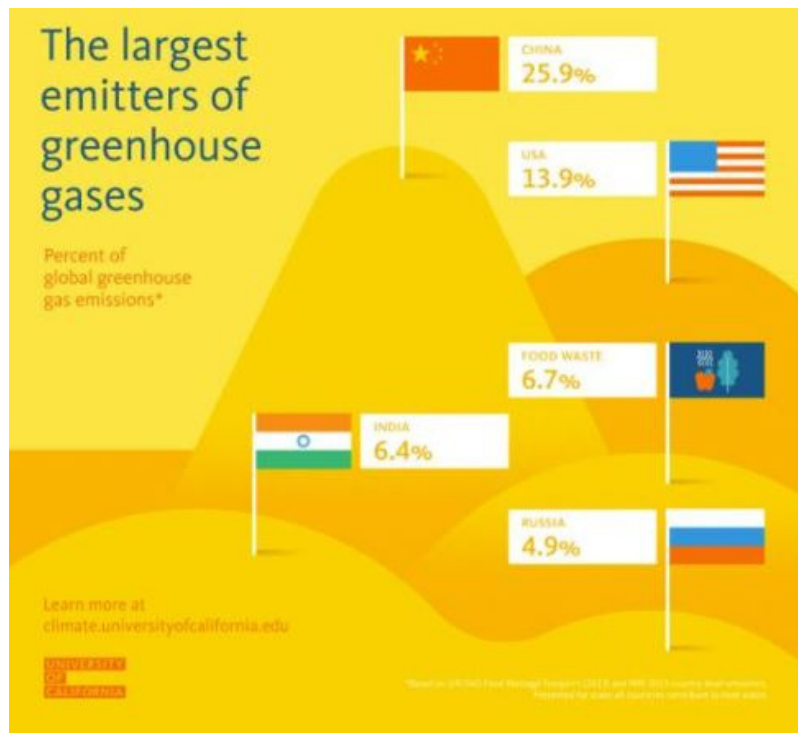
We need everyone to pitch in to help us meet our goals, and events present a huge waste reduction opportunity

### Why Zero Waste?

42% of GHG emissions from the production and use of goods

15.4% of US methane emissions come from landfills

Diversion and reduction of waste are easy ways you can directly reduce UC's climate impact



## WHAT IS A ZERO WASTE EVENT?

A zero waste event is one that minimizes the amount of materials produced for and disposed of in the landfill bin at a meeting or event

Hosting a zero waste event does not mean extra work or making sacrifices! It can easily be done by planning ahead and using some of the tips in this guide

Planning a zero waste event shows that you are committed to the environment and helping UC meet its climate goals!



## BEFORE THE EVENT

### EVENT LOGISTICS

Avoid printing handouts for each attendee! You can make them available online or display them on TVs or projectors in the room. if you cannot avoid printing, have attendees share and make sure to print double sided

Provide reusable name badges and table tents you can collect and reuse during future events instead of stickers

Let guests know it will be a zero waste event, and ask them to bring their reusable mugs, flatware, plates, and Tupperware for leftovers in the event invitation

### DECOR

Use table linens and centerpieces that can be reused at future events. You can even use recycled materials as centerpieces to highlight that it is a zero waste event

Avoid paper banners or signage that cannot be reused, instead see if you can display the information on screens in the room

Create signage for waste bins if not already present, this will help guests properly sort their refuse

### FOOD AND REFRESHMENTS

Encourage guests to bring their own food and drink vessels to minimize the amount thrown away

If you have one, let your caterer know that you are planning a zero waste event, and see if they offer any packages to support this goal

## Minimize packaging!

Avoid individually packaged condiments, sugars, snacks, drinks, utensils, and meals. Instead serve these items in bulk or large containers so participants can take what they need

Consider serving food items that don't require utensils, like sandwiches or hors d'oeuvres

Ask about reusable plates, cups, napkins, and utensils, if those aren't available, ask your caterer for compostable options. Make sure participants know they are compostable!

Offer reusable spoons or stirrers for coffee and tea

Consider offering a vegetarian or vegan meal which have fewer greenhouse gas emissions and water usage associated with its production

Try to avoid over ordering food when providing an attendee estimate

Have a plan in place for leftovers, encourage participants to bring to-go containers or partner with an on campus food pantry or similar organization. Ask your caterer about their leftover food policy

## **DURING THE EVENT**

### **ATTENDEE ENGAGEMENT**

Let attendees know that you are aiming to throw a zero waste event, ask for their support to minimize waste

Show announcements and meeting information on screens in the room

Only distribute paper handouts upon request

Provide and encourage the use of scrap paper for notetaking

Encourage attendees to take home leftover food

### **WASTE MANAGEMENT**

Inform meeting attendees where they can dispose of common items

Have someone stationed at waste bins to help with waste sorting, some campuses have Trash Talkers you can have join your event

Keep bins for all waste streams in the same place, avoid lone garbage bins

## AFTER THE EVENT

### DIVERT WASTE

Remind attendees to take home leftover food!

Collect reusable name tags from attendees as they exit for future use

Collect reusable and unused items like serving spoons, tableware, and food containers that can be washed and used again

Double check all the bins and sort out any contamination you may see

Have guests take any decorative centerpieces

Donate excess food to organizational partner to avoid food waste

### REFLECT

Share your story with the Sustainability Office!

Go through successes and setbacks with your team to identify ways to reduce even more waste at your next event!

# ZERO WASTE EVENTS PLANNING CHECKLIST

## Ask Your Caterer

- To avoid individually packaged condiments, sugars, snacks, drinks, utensils, and meals, opt for buffet style
- Ask about meal options that don't require utensils
- Ask if they offer reusable tableware, if it's not an option, request that they be compostable
- Ask about their leftover food donation policy
- Consider offering a vegetarian meal
- Try to give most accurate RSVP count possible, don't over order food and drink!

## Event Prep

- Prepare reusable name badges and place cards
- Prepare virtual handouts, signage, and presentations
- Contact food pantry or food donation site
- Enlist trash talkers for your events to help with waste sorting if needed
- Ask attendees to bring their own tableware and tupperware
- Avoid disposable decor and tablecloths