

# Kane County Zero Waste Events & Meetings Guide

*Zero Waste means Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, and Compost!*

Kane County strives to reduce waste associated with office meetings and events planned in the course of business, through rethinking, reducing, reusing, and recycling. Please use the following guide to help you minimize waste and responsibly use resources. Thank you!

## **Paper: Use paper as efficiently as possible.**

### Best Choice – Go paperless

- We live in a digital world, and that means that we don't necessarily need to print meeting packets, binders, paper manuals, and other documents while at work.
- Consider e-mailing documents to attendees ahead of time, posting online, or making documents available on the "cloud" so people can use their electronic devices to follow along instead of receiving paper copies.
- Post signs about Internet availability and advertise the availability of the Internet in all of your event publicity.

### Next Best Thing - using less resources when printing

- Change your default font to 11-pt. Century Gothic, which uses 30% less ink than similar fonts, according to research from the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay.
- Narrow your margins. The 1-inch default margins can easily be reduced by half.
- Dual sided printing is possible on most printers. Select this option under "Printer Properties."
- Use print preview to save yourself from needing to re-print things that don't line up correctly.

### Always – Reuse and Recycle

- After an event a lot of people will want to dispose of their handouts.
- If your handouts only had printing on one side then have a collection box for it and bring attention to that option at the close of the event so it can be used as scratch paper later.
- Make sure to have a recycling bin out at your event. It helps to have a sign letting people know they can co-mingle their recyclables (containers and paper all go in the blue bin).

## **Food Serviceware: Moving beyond throw away products, to reusable or compostable.**

### Best Choice - Reusable Products

- Some offices that frequently host events and meetings may want to consider purchasing reusable products to keep on hand. Over time this will result in savings!
  - Use refillable water pitchers and glasses instead of bottled water.
  - Buy large juice or diet soda bottles and use glasses instead of individual servings.
- Consider requesting co-workers bring their own silverware, and maybe even raffling off a prize for people who BYO-forks and coffee mugs to your event or meeting.
- Consider renting re-usable products; sets of napkins, plates, forks, and glasses can be rented for less than \$2.00 a person. Coffee pots, water pitchers, and serving utensils are also available.
  - Unique Party Rental St. Charles- <http://uniquepartyrentalstcharles.com/index.php>
  - Castle Party Rentals LLC, St. Charles- <http://castlepartyrental.com/>
  - Parties with Pizzazz, Batavia <http://www.partiespizzazz.com/>
  - Preserve <https://www.preserveproducts.com> several local stores stock this brand, use the store finder on the webpage.

### Next Best Thing - Compostable Products

- Compostable products are available through Warehouse Direct. Not all products marked with the "greener choices" logo are compostable so make sure to read the full product description. Cups, plates, bowls, silverware, and napkins are all available at cost reasonable rates.
  - Compostable coffee cups (DXE-2338PLA Hot Cups x 1000) are cheaper per cup than their non-compostable equivalent (DXE-5338DX Dixie Perfect Touch Hot Cups x 500).
- If you DO use compostable products, and plan to compost those along with any food scraps, please note that they can be delivered to one of the area compost facilities that accepts food scrap. These facilities may charge a fee to accept compostable materials. So please take that into account when you are planning your event or meeting. See details on **compost facilities** below.
  - **Elburn – Erehwon Farm** ♦ 40W248 Hughes Rd., Elburn, IL ♦ 630-485-9963 ♦ [timf7@yahoo.com](mailto:timf7@yahoo.com) (please email or call to give Tim an estimated arrival time) ♦ [www.erhwonfarm.com](http://www.erhwonfarm.com) ♦ 9-5 including weekends ♦ Accepts Food scraps (no meat) ♦ free of charge ♦ Also fresh farm vegetables for sale in season
  - **South of Kane – Green Organics in Kendall County** ♦ 1270 E Beecher Rd., Bristol, IL 60512 ♦ 630-553-6409 ♦ [www.greenorganicinc.com](http://www.greenorganicinc.com) ♦ M-F 7-4 (Summer Sat 7-12) ♦ Accepts Food scraps (no meat) ♦ call for pricing

### Making the Best of Single Use Products

- If you can't supply reusable or compostable service ware, the next best option is to purchase paper products that are made with sustainably forested paper.  
**Dixie products (or any brand with colored prints) are frequently coated in petroleum-based plastic and are not recyclable or compostable.**
- Plastic plates and silverware can be re-used. Consider collecting plastic products, washing in hot soapy water, and reusing at future events.  
**Note that plastic plates and utensils are NOT recyclable** (even though they have the chasing arrows, they are not currently acceptable in most recycling programs, including Kane County programs).
- Recycle what you can: aluminum cans and glass or plastic drink containers, foil, paper agendas. Make sure to have a recycling bin next to every trash can at your event, with clear signage hung directly above or ON the bins. Posters are available from the Recycling Coordinator at [recycle@countyofkane.org](mailto:recycle@countyofkane.org) or 630-208-3841.
- Aluminum cans are better than plastic bottles when it comes to recycling. In fact, recycling just one aluminum can saves enough electricity to run a laptop for 10 hours! So wherever possible select canned drinks over those in plastic or glass bottles, and be sure to recycle the cans.

**CHECKLIST: When planning a Zero Waste Event where food is being served, ask yourself these simple questions:**

1. Food Service Supplies
  - a. Napkins only for finger foods – food scraps and napkins are compostable.
  - b. Plates, utensils, cups – choose reusable, compostable, recyclable, or single-use.
  
2. Bins for Separation and Collection
  - a. Prepare the appropriate number and size of clearly labeled bins for all trash, recycling, and compost materials.
  - b. **Always place bins in sets with clear signage** hung directly above or ON the bins. Never place a lone trash, recycling, or compost bin as they will become catch-alls.
  
3. Composting Food Scraps
  - a. If you plan to compost food scraps, purchase the appropriate sized compostable Bio-bags for the bins.
  - b. Arrange to deliver compostable materials to a local facility, check with them beforehand and make sure you know what you can and cannot put in the compost.
  - c. If the event is being held at a venue, ask the management if they can offer this service.
  
4. Information and Education
  - a. Clearly label bins with signs that read Landfill, Recycling, and Compost. Images of the materials specific to your event are very helpful.
  - b. Inform attendees at the point of Welcome that your event is Zero Waste and what they can do to participate. Ask them to be mindful of what material goes in each bin.
  - c. Advertise the event as Zero Waste so attendees know what to expect. And if you have a follow up email, tell them how much was diverted from the landfill. (This will entail noting the volume or weight of each waste stream.)

**For assistance or any questions you may have, please contact the Kane County Recycling Coordinator at [recycle@countyofkane.org](mailto:recycle@countyofkane.org) or 630-208-3841.**

This document was prepared in August 2015 by the Kane County Division of Environmental and Water Resources, as a guide to best practices for staff events and meetings.

Thank you for your efforts towards greater sustainability and zero waste.