

# Anoka County Low Waste Event Planning Guide

## Anoka County Resources

### **Receptacles**

- Portable x-frame receptacles for recycling and organics
- Bags for each waste stream

### **Signage**

- Hanging signs for waste stations

### **Technical Assistance**

- Staff answer questions and provide guidance
- Free technical services through Anoka County

### **Additional Resources**

- Sample vendor letter (see Anoka County event recycling page for this resource)

## Pre-Event Planning

Meet with event coordinator, hauler and other applicable people.

### **Set goals for the event**

- Achieve a waste diversion rate of \_\_\_\_%
- (Example: We want to achieve 50% waste diversion at this year's event)
- Increase public knowledge about waste diversion

WHY: This is helpful after the event and before the next event to let volunteers and staff know what they did matters.

### **Brainstorm the expected waste stream**

- Consider what will be served by the vendors and what people may bring in with them
- Include images of the expected waste on your waste station signs

WHY: The items on site will affect what receptacles you need and what education you must provide to vendors, volunteers and staff.

### **Plan the waste stations**

- All receptacles must be located together
  - At least one trash, one recycling, and one organics container (if using)
- Include signage for organics
- Recruit volunteers to stand by each organics container if collecting organics
- Use a layout map of your event to plan the sites of the waste stations
  - Place waste stations near heavy traffic areas, food vendors, and gathering places
  - Only put as many stations as you can have volunteers. A large event doesn't necessarily need 20
- stations. Attendees can walk to a waste station.
- Decide who will set up and take down the waste stations
- Decide who will empty the bags throughout the event and weigh the materials
- Communicate with your vendors
- Share your goals with the vendors, get them excited to contribute to your low waste event

- Ask vendors to only use compostable food service items (paper or plastic made from plants)
- Note: paper plates, cups and bowls are comparable in price to Styrofoam and plastic
- Rewrite vendor contracts or permits so that they include a section on low waste (ex: require compostable food service items)
- Plan for additional hauling
- Contact your waste hauler and find out if they can offer organics hauling or additional recycling carts for your event

## **Event Day**

### ***Communication***

- Have 1-2 lead staff or volunteers assigned as the go-to leads during the event
- Train waste station volunteers right before event if collecting organics
- Answer questions from volunteers and event attendees
- Take advantage of opportunities to engage and educate the event attendees, including website, email, Facebook and Twitter

### ***Waste Stations***

- Place receptacles and signage at each waste station
- Ensure that the bags at waste stations are emptied as needed o **IMPORTANT:** Weigh bags each time they are taken from the waste station (use our scale)
- Relieve volunteers as needed for breaks

### ***Vendors***

- Check in with vendors as they set up. Make sure they are using utensils and food ware they said they would (ie. BPI or Cedar Grove certified compostable)
- If they are not, communicate this to waste station volunteers
- Have a supply on hand vendors can purchase

### **After the Event**

- Calculate the waste diversion rate and share it with event attendees, volunteers, and event staff  $(\text{Organics lbs} + \text{Recycle lbs}) / (\text{Trash lbs} + \text{Organics lbs} + \text{Recycle lbs})$
- Ask volunteers what they noticed or what could be improved
- Reflect on the successes and opportunities for improvement
- Follow-up with staff and volunteers after the event to communicate successes, waste diversion rate and a thank you.