



The WasteNot Project: Food Vendor Guide for Community Events



The WasteNot Project is proud to be working with you on reducing the waste from this event. As a vendor, your choice of containers for food service greatly affects waste volumes. We appreciate your support and participation in this effort!

Recycling Information and Waste Reduction Tips

1. **Recycling Bins** will be placed throughout the event area and volunteers will ensure these containers are regularly emptied. Check with the event organizers for what type of recycling they are collecting. These bins are available for loan for other events. Call the WasteNot project at 756-8993 for information on this.
2. **Recycling Containers will be co-located with trash containers** to encourage and facilitate recycling. Additional educational material on recycling will be available at the information booth and on the recycling bins themselves.
3. **Water Refill Stations** are a great way to reduce waste! Stations can be placed throughout the event area and all event participants should be encouraged to bring their own refillable water bottles and cups. Vendors could consider offering reusable/refillable water bottles for purchase at the event.
4. **Event participants and organizers are encouraged to plan for a waste-free day** by bringing refillable water bottles and cups, using reusable containers for snack or other foods, bringing a bandana that can double as a napkin and snack plate, and decorating with materials that can be reused or recycled easily.

Locally Recyclable Materials

- **#1 and #2 plastics.** Please check for the number inside the triangular recycling symbol on each piece of plastic. If the container is a #3-#7 or does not have a recycling symbol, place it in the trash. Please remove bottle caps and place in trash. **No plastic bags.**

Plastics can only be recycled if they have a symbol like  or  on the container.

- **Aluminum, Tin, and Steel cans or containers.** These should be empty with no food residue. You do not need to remove labels or crush cans.
- **Mixed Paper.** This includes office paper, magazines, catalogs, & junk mail. Staples and paper clips do not have to be removed.
- **Flattened Corrugated Cardboard Boxes and cereal box type or other paperboard cartons.** Boxes must not be wax coated (i.e. milk cartons) and should be free of plastic packaging inserts, Styrofoam, wood, etc. At most events limited containers for cardboard recycling will be available unless we are advised that the event expects to use a large volume of cardboard.
- **Glass.** Must be taken to Target or New World Recycling. If your event does not have bins to collect glass, we encourage you to collect it and drop it off yourself.



Suggested Vendor Purchasing Guidelines

- **Reusable is always best!** If you have the option to provide reusable/washable containers for food service, please do.
- **Avoid Styrofoam:** Please avoid using all Styrofoam cups or plates. It never breaks down in a landfill or the environment.
- **When in Doubt, Go With Paper Products:** If you can't find #1 or #2 plastics, use paper plates or cups. Plastics #3-7 are not locally recyclable. Paper breaks down more easily than plastic in the landfill process, especially when not coated with plastic. A variety of uncoated paper plates & takeout containers are available locally.
- **Question Compostable or Biodegradable Product Claims:** Flathead County does not currently have any commercial composting facilities that can generate the heat needed to compost "biodegradable" products. It is better to purchase a #1 or #2 plastic products that can be locally recycled.
- **Choose recycled content:** Where possible, choose products that contain recycled materials. Recycling only works when each of us chooses to purchase items made with recycled materials.
- **Use reusable bulk condiment containers:** Individual condiment packets are not recyclable. Providing condiments in bulk will help reduce waste generated at the event.
- **Please do not give out straws or lids unless requested:** They increase the waste stream.
- **Encourage your customers to recycle** during the event by reminding them that recycling containers are located throughout the event grounds.
- **Offer locally or Montana grown products, when available.** It's another customer-pleasing feature to brag about. And most customers appreciate that locally grown foods are often fresher, support local jobs, and reduce energy cost for transport.
- **Consider donating unused food.** Unused food can be donated if it has been stored properly and maintained at the proper temperature. Food cannot be donated if it has been on the service (or buffet) table, even if it has been kept at the correct temperature. Contact a local food bank to make arrangements for donations.
- **Don't forget to brag about your efforts to reduce waste at this event!** Post a sign describing your commitment. More and more customers are choosing vendors who incorporate green efforts into their business practices.

Share your ideas! We would love to hear of additional ways you have found to reduce waste. Please give us a call at 756-8993 or send us an email at WasteNot@flatheadcitizens.org with questions or ideas. Share photos of your booth with us to encourage others to be creative at reducing waste.

Thank you for doing your part to help make this a Zero Waste Event!

The WasteNot Project: Working to reduce waste and increase recycling in the Flathead since 1995

If you have questions or concerns, please contact Allison or Mayre at the WasteNot project.
Phone: 756-8993 • Email: WasteNot@flatheadcitizens.org



WASTE MANAGEMENT—FOOD VENDOR SURVEY (PLEASE RETURN)

Food Vendor Name: _____

Contact: _____ Telephone: _____

Email: _____

1. When did you learn that vendors at this event were being requested to help reduce waste and encourage recycling at the event?

4+ weeks before 3 2 1 A couple days before Never

2. Did you find this handout helpful for planning to help reduce waste from events?

(Not helpful) 1 2 3 4 5 (Very helpful)

3. Which of the following materials did you generated at your booth?

___ #1 Plastic ___ #2 Plastic ___ Other Plastics (#3-7) ___ Cardboard ___ Metals
___ Mixed paper (non food contaminated) ___ Other Non Recyclable-Describe: _____

4. Check the guidelines you were able to meet.

___ We provided reusable items like dishes, silverware, glasses, mugs. Circle items.

___ We did not use Styrofoam.

___ We used paper products when recyclable or reusable products were not available or practical.

___ We purchased products that contained recycled content.

___ We provided condiments in bulk containers, not individual packets.

___ We did not give out straws or lids unless requested.

___ We used signs to tell our customers about our efforts to reduce waste at this event .

___ We reminded our customers to recycle.

___ We offered some locally or Montana grown food at this event.

___ We made arrangements to donate unused food.

___ We used the recycling bins for the waste we generated at the event.

5. Comments or Questions: