Zero Waste Party Guidelines

UCAR and NCAR strive to offer zero waste events. Put sustainability in action with simple planning steps to create an event where you and your guest can feel good knowing the festivities are a “green” event.

Food:

- **Think “family style”** and serve platters of sandwiches, bowls of salad or chips and platters of cookies. No more dealing with trash from individual wrappers or packaging.
- **Serve finger food so you don’t need utensils.** Vegetables and dip, cheese, crackers, skewers of fruit or grilled meat all make for great party fare.
- **Save your budget by reducing wasted food** - use smaller-sized plates. Guests get full servings without the food waste issues of “my eyes were bigger than my stomach”.
- **Serve condiments in small bowls.** It looks pretty, is easy to self-serve and saves wrappers. Great for ketchup, mustard, mayo, mustard, sugar, etc.
- Make arrangements to donate any usable leftovers to a local food bank or shelter whenever possible.

Beverages:

- Say No to the red plastic cup! Use reusable or compostable cups.
- Supply bartenders with recycling bins so all glass, plastic, and aluminum containers can be recycled.
- At the bar, provide cocktail napkins, straws and stirrers only upon request.

Set up:

- Use washable and reusable plates, glasses, cutlery, tableware, napkins, linen, and serving utensils.
- If disposables are necessary, easily purchase low-cost compostable-ware from Event Services, conveniently located in your cafeteria.
- Make sure your venue has recycle and compost bins co-located with each trash can, and request temporary bins from the Sustainability team if you need them. Use biodegradable liners in the compost bins for easy clean-up.

Decorations:

- Use cloth or sturdy plastic tablecloths that can be cleaned and reused.
- Avoid disposable decorations (plastic figurines, balloons, glitter, etc). Choose plants, flowers, fruit or evergreen boughs. Offer these to guests to take home after the event or compost.
- If you need party favors, choose ones that are recyclable or compostable at the end of their useful life. Edible favors are always a hit too!

Recycling & Composting

- **Set up clearly labeled recycling and compost bins next to each trash can.** Be sure to use biodegradable liners for the compost bins. If you need extra bins or bin signage, just contact the Sustainability team at sustainability@ucar.edu!
- **Place table tent signs** on tables describing which items are recyclable, compostable, organic, locally grown or produced.

Local Resources

UCAR/NCAR Sustainability  
Sustainability@ucar.edu or x8537

UCAR Event Services  
ML, FL and CG Cafeterias

Eco-Cycle Zero Waste Event Kit  
http://ecocycle.org/zero-waste-events

For more information, contact: Kay Gazaway, Sustainability Outreach Coordinator  
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