

# UMB Zero-Waste Events Guide

A Zero-Waste Event is any event that diverts 90% or more of its waste stream from being landfilled or incinerated.



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## Introduction

### What is a Zero-Waste Event?

A Zero-Waste Event is **any event that diverts 90% or more of its waste stream from being landfilled or incinerated**. This means most of the waste from the event is either reused, recycled, or composted. When providing food for attendees, consider making your event zero-waste.

### Why host a Zero-Waste Event?

Zero-waste events reduce your carbon footprint and divert waste from the incinerator, improving environmental health for our local communities. They are also a great opportunity to start a conversation with guests about sustainability and highlight UMB's Core Values.

Planning a Zero-Waste Event may seem like a lot of work, but it only takes a few small adjustments in your existing planning to make it happen. Please take a look at the following [checklist](#) to get an idea of what you should do [before](#), [during](#), and [after an event](#) to make it a successful Zero-Waste Event!

## Zero-Waste Planning Checklist

### Before the Event

This is where you can make intentional choices to ensure your Zero-Waste Event is successful. Knowing what is going to be disposed of at your event beforehand will help you divert as much waste as possible from the incinerator.

- Identify your “Green Team.”
  - Select members from your event planning committee and other volunteers who will be helping with the event.
- Review this guide and your event goals with your Green Team.
- Highlight your commitment by advertising the event as Zero-Waste.
- Ask your caterer for options that would reduce waste.
  - Encourage pre-registration to get a headcount of attendees, and work with your caterer to minimize food waste. Many caterers add a 5-15% buffer; check in and verify if they do so, and adjust accordingly.
  - Order food that comes in bulk catering trays in place of individually packed items.
  - Ask about bulk options for drinks and condiments.
  - Use reusable or [BPI-certified](#) compostable utensils, bowls, plates, cups, and napkins.
    - Check with your caterer if they provide these for an additional charge.
    - Consider renting reusable wares that can be washed post-event.
- Prep your “Waste Stations.”
  - [Place a request with EVS](#) for recycling and trash toter(s), if needed. Make sure to do this at least two weeks in advance.
    - Toters are wheeled receptacles that can accommodate 64 gallons of waste.
  - Identify a receptacle or multiple receptacles for collecting food scraps and other compostable materials. You can line this with a [BPI-certified](#) compostable liner.
  - Use [signage](#) to help guide attendees on what goes where.
  - Place bins to create a waste station: compost, recycling, and trash.
- Do a walkthrough before your event to make sure bins are placed and lined properly and the appropriate serveware (plates, utensils, etc.) is being used.

### Example Event Waste Signage



## During the Event

In your welcoming address, promote your dedication to hosting a Zero-Waste Event.

- Highlight the impact of green events by explaining that 90% or more of the waste produced will be diverted from the incinerator.
- Include a brief description of how to dispose of items (ex: all cups, utensils, napkins, and plates are compostable, where waste stations are located, and who can help if there are any questions).
- Have members of your Green Team placed at waste stations to help educate guests on proper disposal.

## After the Event

- Collect and store any items that can be used for future events.
  - Ex: name badge tags, banners, table clothes, decorations, unused utensils, have a collection bin for unwanted promotional items.
  - Check with your caterer to see if they come back to retrieve platters, pans, etc. for re-use.
- Transport the bin(s) with food scraps and other compostable materials to one of [UMB's Food Scrap Drop-Off Locations](#).

## Other Considerations

- Consider conducting a waste-audit post event to ensure the right materials were diverted.
  - Bring gloves, an extra trash bag or two, and some trash pickers if you have them handy.
- Avoid printed materials when promoting the event.
  - Take advantage of the [digital displays](#) on campus, [The Elm](#), [Campus Life Weekly](#), [Campus Groups](#), newsletters, and social media.
  - If you need to print, print on recycled content paper.
  - During sign-in, use computers or iPads to check people in instead of paper.
- Opt for more plant-based dishes and consider other dietary restrictions.
  - Information on dietary restrictions should be part of the registration questions.

Opt for reusable linens over disposable tablecloths.

- Check out the other [resources](#) we've created to help you reduce your waste.

## Resources

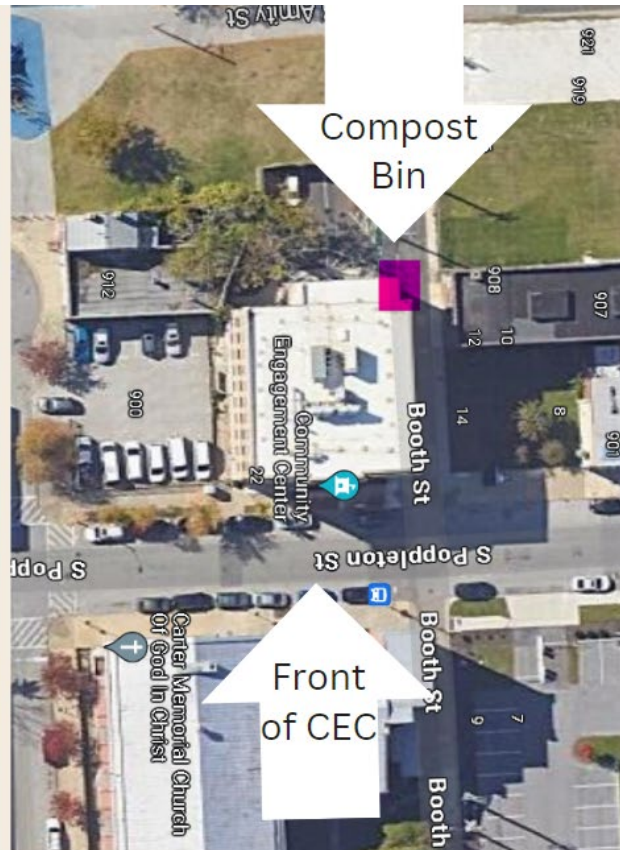
### UMB Food-Scrap Drop off Locations

The University is currently piloting a community drop-off program in partnership with the Baltimore City Department of Public Works through a [USDA Composting and Food Waste Reduction Grant](#). There are two drop-off sites on campus, one at the Community Engagement Center and one at the SMC Campus Center.

#### *Community Engagement Center*

16 S Poppleton St  
Baltimore, MD 21201

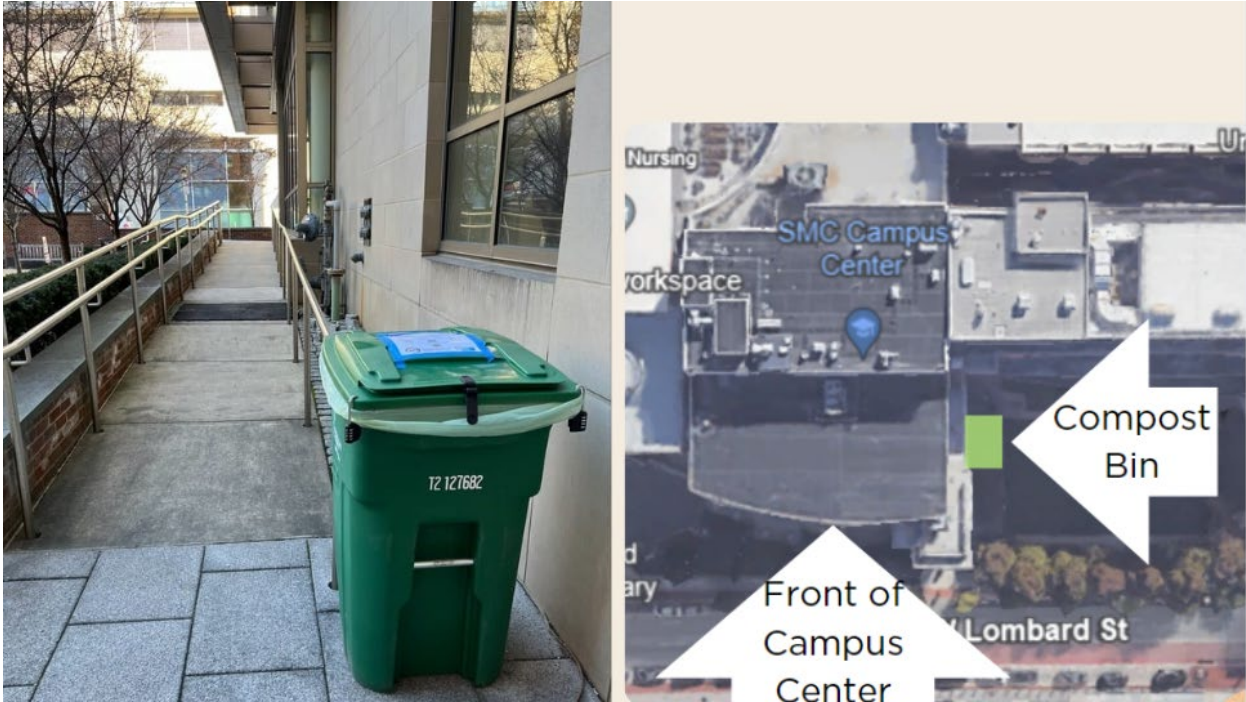
When facing the building, go down the alley (Booth St) on the right to access the bin along the fence.



## SMC Campus Center

621 W Lombard St  
Baltimore, MD 21201

When facing the building, go down the ramp on the right to access the bin by the bike racks.



## Composting 101 at Events

Refer to [Composting at Events](#) to learn more about what can and cannot go into the bins. Share this resource with your event planners.

## Green Caterers

Our office has created a [Green Eats List](#) and [interactive map](#) that can be used next time you are looking for a vendor for a campus event, your next office lunch, or simply a personal meal. All vendors listed are local and within 2 miles of our campus. They were evaluated on their green practices through plant-based menu options, bulk options (food, beverages, condiments) for catering, compostable/biodegradable wares (plates, utensils, cups), and sourcing locally. The information gathered is from businesses' responses. Please note that SMC Campus Center has a list of [Authorized Caterers](#) and other vendors must be approved by Event Services.

## Low-Waste Event Guide

Follow these one-pagers for some quick tips on how to lower the waste at your [small](#) or [large](#) event.

## Swag Guide

Check out our [Swag Guidelines](#) for tips and guidance on how to purchase sustainable swag.

## UMB FREE

UMB FREE (Food Recovery + Environmental Eating) is a food rescue initiative aiming to minimize food waste and feed students at UMB. UMB event planners (faculty, staff, or students) can alert a listserv when there is leftover food after an event. [Learn more about UMB FREE here.](#)

## Event Waste Signage

You can [download PDF copies of event waste signs on our website.](#) Print out and laminate your blank signage and items sheets, and tape the items that will be composted, recycled, or trashed and incinerated after your event. Re-use for your next event and customize as needed!