

# A PHILADELPHIA GUIDE TO ZERO WASTE EVENTS



## INTRODUCTION

In addition to requiring recycling at public events, the City of Philadelphia is committed to expanding food composting at events as part of a citywide goal to reach “Zero Waste” by 2035. To reach this goal, the City of Philadelphia is proud to offer several options for event organizers who would like to utilize City resources such as municipal compost pick-ups by the Streets Department and the Philacycle Program.

The mission of the Philacycle Program is to empower residents to educate their communities and conduct neighborhood clean-ups using Zero Waste principles. Philacycle Captains and full teams can be deployed to assist event organizers. Philacycle volunteers educate event attendees on how to sort waste properly to reduce contamination and to make your event as sustainable as possible. Philacycle can also provide a three-bin system that separates landfill waste, recycling, and compost.

For more information on Philacycle, please visit [Philacycle.com](https://www.philacycle.com).

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## WHAT YOU WILL NEED TO COMPOST AT YOUR EVENT

Based on the City of Philadelphia's experience operating Philacycle at large public events like the Philadelphia Marathon and Broad Street Run, we have some tips for how your event can compost effectively. The City is proud to be able to offer some of these resources for events that are interested in expanding their sustainable waste management practices.

### 1 Labeled and color-coded three bin system (available through the City)

Sorting waste in the right containers is easier when the bins are well-labeled and easy to differentiate by color. This also helps event attendees understand that they are participating in a green initiative by sorting their waste properly.

### 2 Compost hauler and processing facility (available through the City)

Someone needs to pick up your compost from the event and bring it to the processing facility. There are a limited number of composting facilities in the Philadelphia area that can handle large volumes of waste.

### 3 On-site waste management staff (available through City partners)

To keep bins from overflowing, you will need a waste management team to tote full bags of waste from bins to a designated waste collection area.

### 4 Volunteers (available through the City)

We have found that without volunteers to help direct event-goers, waste will not get sorted properly into the compost bin. Composting facilities have very high standards when it comes to contamination, and they will not accept non-compostable material.

### 5 Supplies

You will need to outfit your volunteers and waste management team with gloves and compost, recycling, and trash bags. The event is responsible for purchasing bags to line the three-bin systems. These bags should be at least 30 gallons large and should be color coordinated in the following way:

Clear = Trash | Blue = Recycling | Green = Compost

As City government, we can't advertise one specific vendor for these bags, but they can be found on office supply/home goods and improvement websites. The event is responsible for final placement of bins once bins are delivered in designated general areas by the Streets Department. The event is also responsible for designating an area where all full bags will be picked up and for transporting full bags from bins to that area during the event.

## EVENT COMPOSTING OPTIONS

The following composting operations and support options are available to your event. For more information on cost, please contact Olivia Gillison in the Special Events Office at [Olivia.Gillison@phila.gov](mailto:Olivia.Gillison@phila.gov) or 215-686-3486.

**Option 1:** City compost pick-up with Philacycle bins and a Philacycle Captain

**Option 2:** City compost pick-up with Philacycle bins, a Philacycle Captain, and Philacycle volunteers (Your event will supply its own volunteers to be led by the Philacycle Captain.)

**Option 3:** Private hauler compost pick-up (Your event will supply its own bins, volunteer corps, and leaders to help manage proper source-separation.)

**Option 4:** Private hauler compost pick-up with Philacycle Captain and Philacycle bins (Your event will supply its own volunteers to be led by a Philacycle captain.)

**Option 5:** Private hauler compost pick-up with Philacycle Captain, Philacycle bins, & Philacycle volunteers.

\*For a list of private compost haulers in the Philadelphia region, look for the document "Zero Waste Event Hauler Options" in the "Downloads" section at [CleanPHL.org/ZeroWasteEvents](http://CleanPHL.org/ZeroWasteEvents).

## OTHER OPPORTUNITIES FOR WASTE REDUCTION

Your event can reduce waste generated and increase waste diverted from landfills through the following Zero Waste practices:

### Refillable Water Stations

Offer your guests fountains or water coolers, and reusable water bottles instead of plastic ones.

### Recyclable and Compostable Materials

Require your food service vendors to eliminate landfill materials, such as plastic-lined paper products and Styrofoam™. Require vendors to use recyclable plastic products. If your event is composting, ask your vendors to use as much compostable material as possible. For example, food service vendors can switch from Styrofoam™ to paper food service items, which can be composted.

### Reusable Materials

If your event will generate large volumes of waste that could be reused, such as construction materials or clothing, set up a system to collect, palletize (if needed), and donate the reusable materials to the appropriate organization.

### Excess Food Donations

If you will have excess food at the end of your event, please provide your phone number or email address to the Food Access Collaborative at the time of filling out the permit to have a volunteer pick up the excess food and bring it to a local food pantry, soup kitchen, or shelter, rather than throwing it away.

## NON-SINGLE STREAM RECYCLING

If your event will generate large amounts of any of the materials below, commit to recycling them by working with the appropriate companies and/or organizations.

### E-waste and Polystyrene/Styrofoam™ (available through the City for residents only)

Northeast Philadelphia Sanitation Convenience Center accepts Styrofoam™ for recycling. The City's six Sanitation Convenience Centers offer free recycling services for Philadelphia residents, including for computers, televisions, and other computer-related equipment.

Northeast Sanitation Convenience Center  
State Rd. & Ashburner St.  
Philadelphia, PA 19136

View all Convenience Center locations [here](#).

### Metal and Wood

There are several Philadelphia-based companies that will pick up metal to recycle, and some will even pay for scrap metal. There are also several local companies that will pick up wood pallets to recycle.

For a list of haulers in the Philadelphia region, please visit [CleanPHL.org/ZeroWasteEvents](https://www.cleanphl.org/ZeroWasteEvents) and look for the document "Zero Waste Event Hauler Options" in the "Downloads" section.

## ZERO WASTE EVENT REPORTING

If your event is interested in being recognized by the City of Philadelphia as a Zero Waste Event, please visit our online Zero Waste Events Waste Diversion Reporting Form and follow the instructions on inputting your event's waste management information.

Find the online form at: <https://form.jotform.us/ZeroWastePhila/Events>

