



Waterfront Park

Special Event Recycling and Waste Reduction Best Practice Guide



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Why is Event Recycling Important to Me?

Louisville Metro Government has a renewed commitment to environmental stewardship and recycling is a vital component in achieving the city's goal to divert 90% of waste from the landfill by 2042. As part of that commitment, Louisville Metro Government now *requires* large events with 500 or more attendees (and encourages smaller events) to develop a "Recycling and Waste Reduction Plan" as part of the Special Event Application process.

You can make a difference! Every year, thousands of tons of recyclable materials are unnecessarily taking up vital space in our local landfills. Special events frequently generate a significant number of empty bottles, cans, and plastic cups that can easily be recycled. By encouraging recycling at your event, you can help extend the life of our landfills and prevent our community from having to build additional landfills.

Event participants will appreciate your efforts to provide recycling containers. Today, there is a growing expectation that recycling bins will be available in public spaces and at special events. Recycling extends the life of our landfills and sends a positive message to the community that you take interest in the well-being and cleanliness of our community and the environment. Your efforts to provide abundant recycling opportunities will be recognized by event participants and will encourage positive reviews of your event.

You can help preserve our natural environment and you may save money in the process. Clearly marked and conveniently located recycling containers will help divert significant amounts of waste from the landfill and may save you money on garbage disposal costs!

Recycling is easy and we're here to help! This guide will help you prepare your Recycling and Waste Reduction Plan and ensure you have the tools necessary to provide ample and convenient recycling opportunities during your event.



Make recycling easy: Clearly labeled bins make recycling more convenient for event participants.

Your Mission:

To encourage event participants to recycle by providing easily accessible and clearly identifiable recycling bins.

Remember that your Recycling and Waste Reduction Plan must include the following elements:

1. A **drawing or site map** of the festival or event area, showing the location and size of garbage and recycling collection dumpsters (Note: it is not necessary to show the location of *individual* garbage and recycling containers within the event area)
2. A **disposal location list** where all recycling and garbage will be disposed of in an approved manner (only relevant if you are using a private vendor or providing recycling services yourself)
3. The **names and contact information** of individuals and/or groups responsible for managing recycling and garbage services during and after the festival or event (only relevant if you are using a private vendor or providing recycling services yourself)

See Page 5 for an example of a Recycling and Waste Reduction Plan.

Keep in mind that recycling is only one component of the overall waste reduction equation. As the event manager, you are in the unique position to control the waste generated at your event. When working with vendors, consider the following techniques to reduce the amount of disposable materials generated and encourage recycling:

- **Provide incentives.** Offer preferred placement or reduced fees to vendors who *minimize unnecessary packaging* or *use only recyclable products*.
- **Develop voluntary or mandatory requirements.** Consider requirements within vendor contracts that will increase the amount of *reusable, recyclable,* and/or *compostable products* and *reduce the amount of landfill-bound material* generated at your event.



Reduce waste: A water filling station was set up for event patrons to fill up their own water bottles at Forecastle Festival in 2013.

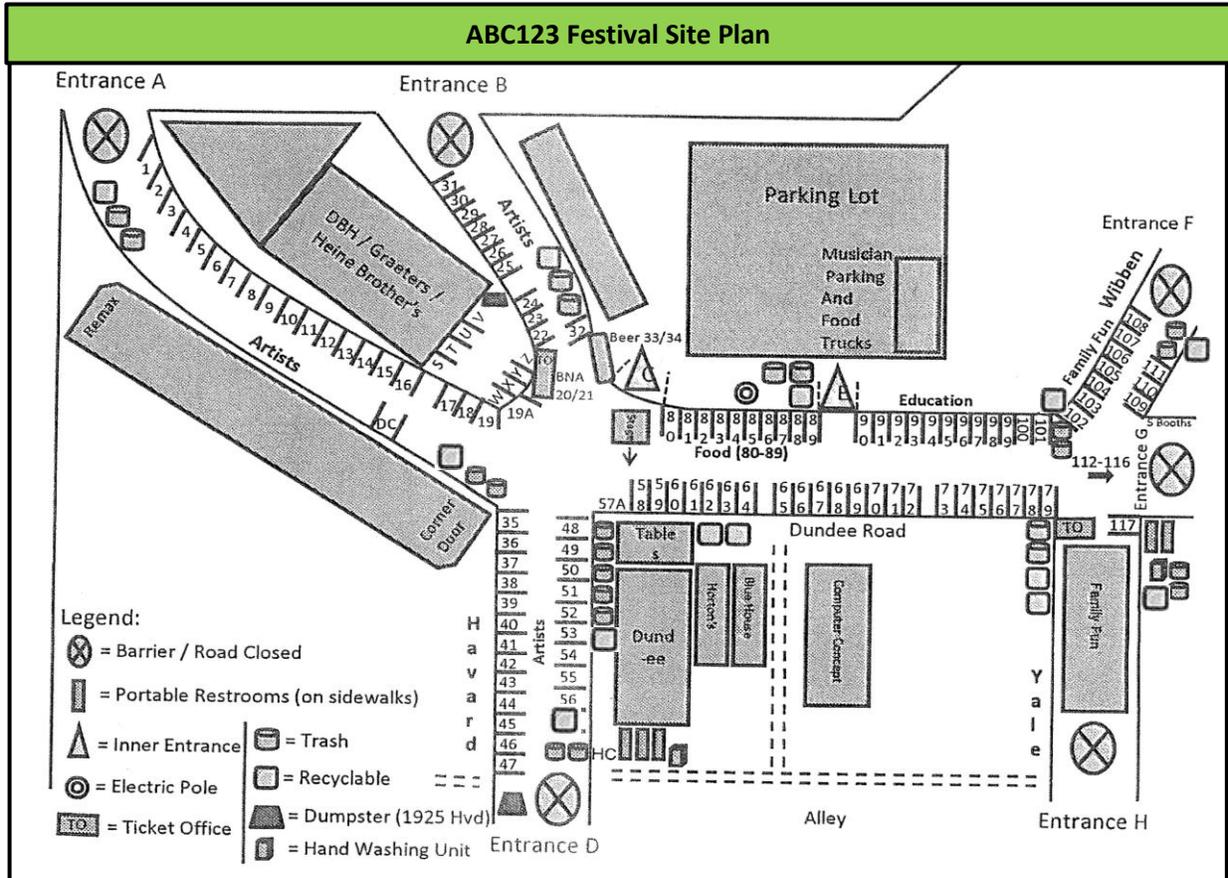
Where do I Start?

1. **Designate a recycling /waste program coordinator.** Pick someone who is environmentally-minded and has a personal interest in recycling and waste reduction. This person can assist you in selecting the best recycling option for your event and manage relations with recycling and garbage vendors and/or volunteer groups.
2. **Decide who will manage collection, transport, and disposal of your recycling and garbage.** To properly manage the implementation of your recycling and waste reduction plan, the following options are available to you:
 - a. **Louisville Metro's Solid Waste Management and Services (SWMS):** Contact SWMS at 502-574-3571 to determine logistics for the City to manage collection, transport, and disposal of garbage and recycled materials.
 - b. **Private vendor:** You may choose to hire a private vendor to manage collection, transport, and disposal of the event's garbage and recyclable materials. Visit the SWMS website or call 502-574-3571 for a list of licensed recycling and garbage hauling vendors.
 - c. **Self-manage:** You may also choose to self-manage the collection, transport, and disposal of garbage and recyclable materials to the appropriate facilities.
3. **Decide the right recycling program for your event.** Contact SWMS at 502-574-3571 to discuss what option may be best for your event.
 - **Single Stream** - The most common approach is providing "single stream" recycling containers next to garbage containers. Single stream means all recyclables go into one container and all garbage goes in another. This is the most common approach at special events.
 - **Source Separation** - A "source separation" method provides separate containers for each type of recyclable material such as aluminum cans, cardboard, paper, plastics, and food. This method requires more bins, but you may be able to negotiate lower rates with your vendor since less processing will be required at the recycling facility.
 - **All-in-One Recycling Only** - Depending on the type of your event, you may consider an "all-in-one" collection system. This method is an option for events with very little food waste and where most of the waste generated is recyclable.
 - **Food Waste Recycling and Wet/Dry** - This option can complement and enhance a single stream or source separation program. **Food waste recycling** may also be a component of a "wet/dry" sorting system, meaning that all food waste (the wets) goes in one container, typically labeled "**Compostables**", and all other materials (recyclables and dry garbage) go into the other. The food waste is taken to a composting facility while the recyclables are sorted out from the dry garbage at the recycling processing facility.

What Does a Recycling and Waste Reduction Plan Look Like?

Your recycling and waste reduction plan does not need to be fancy. Check out the *example* below:

Site Plan: (Example)



Disposal Location Information: (Example only, not actual companies)

Recycling Disposal

Ready2Recycle, Inc.
123 Earth Friendly Blvd
Louisville, KY 40000
(502) 555-1283

Garbage Disposal

Landfill Bound, Inc.
456 Landfill Lane
Louisville, KY 40000
(502) 555-9999

Recycling and Garbage Service Provider: (Example only, not actual people or companies)

Name: Rhonda Recycler and Willy Wastenot
Organization/Company: Protect the Planet Recycling and Waste Reduction Services, LLC
Phone: (502) 555-1234

What Can I Recycle?

Depending on your event, you may find that the majority of the waste produced is actually recyclable! The full list of recyclable material collected may be dependent on your recycling vendor, but at a minimum, recycling should include cardboard, mixed paper, plastic bottles and cups, aluminum cans, and glass bottles. Refer to the chart below to see a list of common recyclables and landfill-bound garbage at special events.

RECYCLABLES	LANDFILL
 <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Aluminum cans, trays, and foil (free of food)• Glass bottles and jars• Tin cans• Plastic bottles, cups, and containers• Mixed paper and paper bags• Newspapers and brochures• Cardboard	 <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Plastic cutlery (knives, forks, spoons)• Wrappers from candy, chips, condiment packets (consider bulk packaging to reduce waste)• Polystyrene/Styrofoam plates, bowls, cups, and containers• Paper coffee cups (plastic lids and cardboard jackets are recyclable)• Food soiled paper and cardboard• Plastic bags

What Containers Should I Use?

There are many types of containers that can be used for recycling and garbage. Choose wisely – the size and shape of containers can have a significant impact on the amount of recyclables collected. The following techniques will assist in increasing the quantity of recyclables collected and significantly reduce the time and effort needed to remove unwanted garbage from recycling bins.

1. **Use recycling bins that are clearly marked and easily distinguished from garbage bins.** Whether separating different types of recyclables or simply separating garbage from recyclables, containers should be clearly marked and preferably different colors. Restricted openings and pictures of recyclable materials also help differentiate recycling containers. Your recycling bins should be consistent in visual appearance throughout the event space to help make them easily identifiable.



2. **Mark garbage containers as “Landfill Bound” or “Landfill Only”.** Language can draw strong connotations that can impact decision making. By using this language, you will encourage more people to recycle by reminding the public that garbage does not just disappear.



3. **Use transparent plastic bags as liners for recycling bins and black bags for garbage.** Transparent bags make it easier to identify and remove garbage that ends up in the recycling bins. This color coordination also assists janitorial crews in keeping recyclables and garbage separated once the bags are removed from their respective containers.



4. **Avoid lids that must be opened to deposit waste.** Containers with lids require people to touch the container and may discourage some people from properly sorting recyclables. For your recycling bins, consider container tops with restricted openings that accommodate bottles and cans, but reject larger items like food-soiled plates.

Where Should I Put Containers?

Most people will recycle if it's convenient to do so! When you are mapping out the location of vendors, stages, and entry/exit points, consider the locations of recycling and garbage containers. The following steps will help you maximize recyclables collected when you are deciding where to put your containers:

1. **Recycling stations should be in highly visible and convenient locations:**

- Place more stations in areas where high volumes of waste will be generated. Locate recycling stations near food and drink concession areas, picnic areas, restrooms, entrances, and exits.
- If you restrict people from bringing beverage containers into your gates, have recycling bins available just outside the entry gate. If you do not allow any containers to leave your facility, have bins available just inside the exit gate for disposal.



Place recycling and garbage containers in pairs so that there is always an option to recycle. To ensure the containers are easily identifiable, it also helps to make the bins different colors!

2. **Always place recycling bins next to a trash container.** Use the “buddy” system! When people go to throw something away, they should always have an option to recycle! This 1:1 ratio will limit the amount garbage in the recycling containers and the amount of recyclables in the garbage bins.
3. **Work with your hauler to determine where pre-positioned dumpsters can be located.** The location(s) should be accessible to both your staff to drop-off materials collected and to the hauler if emptying the containers will be required during the event. Depending on the size of your event, you may need to establish more than one location.

What Can I Do During the Event?

If you have the capacity, staff and/or a volunteer “Green Team” can be extremely helpful in monitoring recycling and garbage containers. A Green Team can remind event-goers to recycle and minimize “overflow” emergencies by emptying containers when the bins are nearing capacity. Consider enlisting local groups or clubs to help promote and manage the recycling stations.

Keep these points in mind:

1. Ensure that your event staff or volunteers are aware of the recycling and waste reduction plan and are comfortable with checking and emptying containers.
2. If possible, staff all recycling stations to help attendees choose the right container. If this is not possible, assign a staff or volunteer member to check each area periodically.
3. Have extra clear and black plastic bags available when bins need to be emptied.

Do I Need To Do Anything After The Event?

Congratulations on planning a great event! You will most likely be exhausted at this point so all the planning ahead of time will pay off big time! Remember, as the event coordinator, you are responsible for ensuring the venue is clean and ready for others to use. Ensure that any additional litter that didn't make it into a container is cleaned up and that your recycling and garbage haulers have emptied or removed the dumpsters.

Track your results and promote your success! If possible, measure the amount of recyclables and garbage collected and determine how much material you kept out of the landfill. Your hauler may be able to assist in gathering this data. Promote your success in press releases and at your next event!

Thank you for doing your part to make Louisville “cleaner and greener”! Please contact the Division of Solid Waste Management Services with any questions.

Division of Solid Waste Management Services

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