

Ideas for Low-Waste Events at Veterans' Memorial Buildings

Thank you for choosing to host your event at an Alameda County Veterans' Memorial Building. Much of the waste generated from events can be recycled or composted—or avoided entirely. You can greatly reduce waste with actions from the list below. Our combined efforts make a difference.

Food and Drink

- Buy in bulk or only what is needed to reduce unnecessary packaging. Avoid single-serving items such as individual-serving chip bags, cookies, or condiment packets.
- If you have access to pitchers or reusable carafes, serve drinks such as water, coffee, or tea in them rather than buying bottled drinks. If using disposable cups, use sturdy plastic cups made from recycled content.
- If you expect leftover food, make a plan. If food is being catered, ask your caterer about how to donate excess food to local food recovery organizations, such as those listed on <https://resource.stopwaste.org/food-recovery-organizations>. For informal events, invite attendees to bring containers to take home leftovers.

Food Ware

- Use compostable food ware or rent reusable glasses, plates, or utensils. Avoid single-use plastic and bioplastics advertised as compostable (which are not truly compostable). Truly compostable options include uncoated paper plates, wooden or bamboo utensils, wooden toothpicks, and straws made from paper or hay.
- Purchase paper products (such as napkins) with recycled content.
- If serving a meal, consider having helpers stationed by bins to assist attendees with which bins to use at the end of the meal.

Decorations and handouts

- Choose decorations that are reusable, compostable, or can be donated. For example, cover tables with butcher paper instead of plastic, because the paper can be recycled—or composted if food is spilled on it.
- Print programs or hand-outs on recycled-content paper.

