Almost any special event, whether a small gathering or a large festival, will produce waste. Charleston County Environmental Management (CCEM) has designed a program to effectively implement recycling at these events in order to divert waste away from the landfill.

The County will loan bins to community groups, nonprofit organizations, businesses and citizens who plan to collect recyclables and/or food waste generated at events held within Charleston County. The special event recycling program provides equipment for on-site collection of materials. In most cases, event organizers are responsible for hauling collected recyclables to a Charleston County recycling dropsite. Larger events may qualify for a collection service by Charleston County.

This guide is intended to help event organizers plan for the collection of recyclable materials. Charleston County staff is available to conduct an on-site assessment to make recommendations and assist with planning for recycling collection. Every event is different. Use these tips as an outline to begin building a successful recycling program for your event.

If food is being served at your event, consider composting in an effort to send even less material to our landfill. Check out the composting sections at the end of this guide for more details.

Beginning with pre-event planning, to day-of-event tips, and post-event evaluation, special event organizers can host an environmentally friendly and sustainable event. Use Charleston County’s Special Event Recycling Checklist to help manage the collection of waste at your event.

### Cost

There is no charge for an on-site assessment, technical support, or to use the equipment. A refundable deposit is required to ensure ClearStream® bins are returned clean, undamaged and on time.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Bins</th>
<th>Refundable Deposit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-5</td>
<td>$100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-10</td>
<td>$200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-15</td>
<td>$300</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Cash or a deposit check is due when the bins are picked up (Charleston County does not deliver the bins). Make checks payable to: Charleston County Treasurer.
- Charleston County reserves the right to keep all or a portion of the deposit if the bins are not returned to 13 Romney Street within two business days following your event.
- Charleston County reserves the right to keep all or a portion of the deposit if the bins are not returned in the same condition in which they were received.
The success of any recycling program depends heavily on convenience. To maximize participation, the process must be easy. Charleston County’s special event bins are both portable and highly visible, making them ideal for proper collection of recyclable materials. Charleston County Environmental Management recommends creating resource recovery stations located strategically throughout the event for attendees to sort and dispose of their waste. Permanent receptacles that are not part of a station need to be securely closed and labeled with a sign that indicates where the nearest waste station is located.

Charleston County ClearStream® bins have color-coded labeled tops to aid patrons in the sorting process. The stations also come with clear bags to collect recyclables and transparent green compostable bags to collect compostable materials. The transparent bags allow event attendees to visibly match their waste with the contents of each bin. The provided bags fit the ClearStream® containers and are strong enough to transport the waste from the collection stations to a storage area.

Each ClearStream® bin consists of:
• Steel folding frame and lid
• Decal on lid to identify what items can be recycled
• 1-5 clear plastic or compostable bags (as needed)

Bin lids with the following decals are available:
• Recycling
• Compostables
• Trash

The number of attendees at an event affects the amount of waste generated. This table is a helpful guide that can be used to estimate the number of waste stations you will need.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Projected Number of Attendees</th>
<th>Number of Waste Stations Needed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>200 or less</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>200 – 600</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>600 - 1,000</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1,000 +</td>
<td>Contact CCEM</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Events with more than 1,000 projected attendees may qualify for a larger collection container to be used in conjunction with the ClearStream® bins and serve as a behind-the-scenes storage area for collected recyclables. These larger collection containers are delivered and picked up by Charleston County for no charge. Not all events qualify and this equipment is limited, so please contact CCEM before including this in your recycling program plan.

TRANSPARENT BAGS AND LABELED LIDS MAKE WASTE SORTING EASY.
It is never too early to start planning your event’s recycling program. Establish goals and use Charleston County’s Special Event Recycling Checklist to develop a task list. Consider what the biggest challenges will be and, if applicable, review previous waste prevention efforts.

Having trained personnel at waste sorting stations will ensure that materials are placed in the proper receptacle. Ideally, each recycling station should be staffed during the entire event to minimize contamination and engage attendees to sort their waste properly. Utilize local environmental organizations to recruit volunteers for the waste sorting stations. If your event is several hours long, consider having multiple volunteer shifts. A well trained “clean-up crew” is also essential for a successful recycling program.

Recycling volunteers require proper training. Prior to the event kick off, it is important to gather volunteers together to explain the entire recycling operation, including: why recycling at the event is important; how to set up the equipment; how to change the bags when they are full; and what types of waste materials to expect. It is also helpful to distribute this information electronically to your volunteers before the event.

It is often a good idea to have a “recycling coordinator” at your event to help manage and train the volunteers, manage the equipment, and make sure that waste containers are being emptied into the proper receptacles. Once bins overflow, materials are more likely to be placed in the wrong receptacle.

Consult with vendors to determine which materials to expect and projected quantities for each material. This might be a good opportunity to influence the purchasing decisions of your vendors so that more materials can be diverted from the trash cans into recycling containers. For example, you could ask them to replace Styrofoam plates with compostable or recyclable serve ware. Notify vendors and caterers in advance with instructions about recycling at the event including expectations for minimizing trash. This communication should include instructions on how to sort waste at each vendor station and a list of materials that can be recycled or composted at the event.
Always pair recycling and compost containers with trash containers to minimize contamination and maximize the amount of waste diverted. Put a sorting station close to where people will be consuming food and beverages. Primary exits can be high traffic areas in need of a recycling station, especially when concerts or other forms of entertainment signal the conclusion of a day’s activities. Recycling stations must be easily accessible, should not intrude into vendor serving areas, and need to be immediately identifiable. It is also important to plan the location of recycling collection relative to the behind-the-scenes storage or pick-up area of bagged recyclables.

Place waste sorting stations in high traffic areas, such as the main exits and where food and drinks are served.

The target audience at a special event is a transient population that is present only for a matter of hours. Therefore, education must be immediately effective. Use graphics and provide bilingual information whenever possible. Place reminder signs around the event to inform patrons that recycling is offered and expected at the event. Live stage announcements or social media reminders are other ways to advertise the recycling program prior to and during the event. Use festival maps to note the location of recycling stations. Be sure to label both the recycling stations as well as the individual containers within each station.

Large, colorful signs with text and graphics effectively communicate how to properly sort waste at events.
Charleston County does not pick up recyclables collected at special events (unless your event has qualified for a larger collection container). Event staff is responsible for returning the ClearStream® bins to the Recycling Center at 13 Romney Street as well as hauling bagged recyclable materials to the recycling center or dropping off material at any Charleston County recycling dropsite location or convenience center. To determine how much recyclable material your event generated, bring your recyclables back to the Recycling Center. Staff can weigh the recyclables for you, which can help set recycling goals for your future events. If the event is reoccurring, it is a good idea to record the challenges and successes of the recycling program to make improvements at the next event.

Don’t forget to promote your green efforts. Event goers notice and appreciate recycling programs at special events. A successful recycling program is good PR!

Additonal Tips for a Green Event

- Eliminate packaging by using bulk containers for condiments instead of individually packaged servings.
- Use refillable or reusable containers like pitchers instead of canned or bottled products.
- Reuse decorations and props from year to year.
- Avoid non-recyclable containers and materials such as Styrofoam.
- Buy eco-friendly products such as those made with recycled content.
Composting

Food scraps and food soiled paper often comprise a significant portion of waste from special events. By diverting food waste from the landfill, your event can enhance its public profile, attract sponsors, inspire positive changes in attendees and vendors, support Charleston County’s 40% recycling goal, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

If you intend to collect food waste at your event, contact Charleston County’s Environmental Management Department at least two months prior to the event date to coordinate a successful plan to keep the waste out of the landfill and put to good use as compost.

Establish a food waste diversion goal and budget. Next, determine the best way for your event to divert food waste. Consider collecting unserved food and other usable items for donation to food banks or soup kitchens in addition to composting food scraps, soiled napkins, and used compostable serve ware. Work with food vendors to predetermine the types of food waste, serve ware, and packaging likely to be generated. Inform food vendors about food waste diversion expectations and encourage the use of compostable serve ware. Ask vendors to help spread the word to patrons about what materials can be composted.

Identifying Compostable Materials

**ACCEPTABLE FOOD WASTE MATERIALS**

- All fruits
- All vegetables
- Bread, dough, bakery items, pasta and grains
- Coffee grounds and tea with filters
- Dairy products (milk, cheese, yogurt)
- Processed foods (pizza, cereal, chips, crackers, cookies, cakes, cooked meat, plate scrapings)
- Eggs and egg shells
- Consumable liquids
- Cooked meats and fish, including shells and bones, wooden skewers and wooden cocktail sticks
- Food soiled paper: paper bags, paper towels, and paper napkins, and waxed cardboard boxes

**ITEMS NOT ACCEPTED**

- No raw meat products (beef, poultry, pork, seafood)
- No plastic bags, serve ware, utensils, twist ties, rubber bands
- No fats, oils, grease or non consumable liquids (vegetable oil or lard)
- No wood, metal, glass or other non food items
Transportation of Collected Compost

Transportation of the collected compostable materials to the County’s composting facility must be arranged in advance. For smaller events generating a limited amount of food waste, the County encourages self-hauling of the material from the event site to the Bees Ferry Compost Facility (1344 Bees Ferry Road, Charleston, Hours: Monday - Friday, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. and Saturday, 8 a.m. - 3 p.m.). For larger events, contact a private food waste hauler to inquire about pricing to transport your organic material. Charleston County Government does not collect or haul food waste directly, but has collection partners listed below.

Charleston County offers ClearStream® compost collection containers and compostable bags for free of charge (with a refundable deposit). Food waste haulers will charge a service fee to cover their labor costs and tipping fees at the compost processing facility. For fees and service options, contact the food waste haulers directly. Ask if the hauler will consider waiving their fees in exchange for sponsorship recognition or find a third party sponsor to help cover the costs of composting.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Food Waste Hauler</th>
<th>Contact</th>
<th>Phone Number</th>
<th>Website</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Food Waste Disposal</td>
<td>Wayne Koeckeritz</td>
<td>(843) 991-2791</td>
<td><a href="http://www.wastefwd.com">www.wastefwd.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carolina Waste Services</td>
<td>Scott Fennell</td>
<td>(843) 576–1100</td>
<td><a href="http://www.carolinawaste.com">www.carolinawaste.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smart Recycling</td>
<td>Kevin Hill</td>
<td>(843) 834-7681</td>
<td><a href="http://www.smartrecyclingsc.com">www.smartrecyclingsc.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Republic Services</td>
<td>David Mitchell</td>
<td>(843) 266-6199</td>
<td><a href="http://www.republicservices.com">www.republicservices.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fisher Recycling</td>
<td>Chris Fisher</td>
<td>(843) 554-6099</td>
<td><a href="http://www.fisherrecycling.com">www.fisherrecycling.com</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Food Donation

Food shows, banquets, and similar events often generate significant amounts of leftover, edible food and other items that can be donated. Contact food banks or similar agencies in advance of the event to find out what items are accepted and how they should be collected.