

## DESCRIPTION

Use this checklist to share your food waste prevention expectations with venues. It helps planners and venues align early and reduce food waste at every stage of event planning and execution.

## HOW TO USE

Customize this checklist to fit your organization's needs or use it as is. Share it as early as possible—ideally in the RFP phase but if not, review this during the kickoff call with the venues, so your expectations are clear and you ensure an event with minimal food waste. It's recommended you reiterate and revisit these goals throughout the planning process.

## GENERAL EXPECTATIONS

The planner and venue will work collaboratively to reduce food waste throughout the lifecycle of the event. Below are the minimum expectations. Any issues or deviations from these expectations should be communicated between parties immediately.

## Pre-Event

- Include this checklist with BEOs so all team members involved in the event (culinary, banquets, conferences services, sales, etc.) know what's expected.
- Complete the Essential Food Waste Reduction Questions for Venues on food donation, composting, and food waste tracking capabilities.
- Design menus with the catering and culinary team that prevent waste using strategies like: fewer options, shared ingredients, and smaller portions.
- Order food based on confirmed guest counts, expected attrition, attendee demographics, and historical event data.
- Agree with the planner on an overage limit of no more than 5%.
- Serve proteins in portions no larger than 4 oz.
- Use smaller or zero-waste vessels for condiments, sauces, and toppings.
- Match special meal production (e.g., vegan, vegetarian, gluten-free, kosher, halal, etc.) to confirmed guest count.

## During Event

- Confirm that compost, animal feed donation, and landfill bins are clearly labeled and utilized during food preparation in back-of-house areas.
- Set up buffets and stations to support portion control (e.g., zero-waste vessels, smaller vessels that meet production quantities, smaller plates, right-sized utensils).

- Label menu items clearly with ingredients, being sure to pay close attention to allergen information so guests can make informed decisions about their food selections.
- Follow the agreed-upon replenishment plan: refill when dishes reach about 30%, and stop refilling 15–30 minutes before meal service ends.
- Consolidate food displays and buffets near the end of the meal time to reduce uneaten trays of food so they can be donated. Remember, trays of food that have been placed on a buffet can no longer be donated even if they were untouched.

## Post-Event

- Take before-and-after photos of surplus and waste areas; note which items have been eaten the most and which have been eaten the least. Share with the planner and venue teams to provide insights that will help prevent waste at future events.
- Repurpose surplus food for staff meals or donate to a food rescue organization.
- Compost all food scraps and approved fiber-based materials, from front and back of house.
- Share completed post-event food waste recap to the planner (use template or agreed format).