

This guide provides practical steps for venues to reduce food waste at events using a natural flow (Design → Order → Prep → Serve → Eat → Debrief) that resonates with venues.

By starting with a few actions, you can steadily build a culture of food waste prevention into your events. Over time, these small but consistent steps lead to lasting impact for your clients, partners, and the planet.

Design

Catering Sales Team, Planners, Culinary, Expediting, Stewarding, Banquets

- Review upcoming food waste prevention opportunities as a team during weekly planning meetings.
- Use [Weekly Food Waste Meeting Prompts](#).

Order

Culinary, Catering Sales

- Identify donation, compost, or other diversion partners for keeping food waste out of landfill, and make planners and clients aware of these partnerships.
- Order no more than 2–5% above confirmed guest counts—track actual attendance to refine production numbers.
- Build your order and production specs with the [Food Production Range Tool](#).

Prep

Culinary, Expediting, Steward

- Review upcoming food waste prevention opportunities as a team during weekly planning meetings.
- Create and use standardized portion specifications for your top five to 10 most-ordered items.
- Use the [Creating Portion Specs to Reduce Waste Food](#) with your staff.

Serve

Culinary, Expediting, Sales, Banquet, Steward

- Right-size your serving vessels (e.g., trays, carafes, serving spoons) to match your portion specifications and maintain visual appeal through frequent, smaller refills.
- Use the [Right-Sizing Service: Vessel Selection Refill Strategy](#).

Eat

Catering Sales, Banquets, Planner, Culinary, Stewarding

- Agree upon service end times with planners in advance. In the final 15–20 minutes, reduce refill frequency and consolidate lines as guest flow decreases.
- Utilize the [Guest Experience & Surplus Management Guide](#) for staff.

Debrief

Catering Sales Team, Planners, Culinary, Expo, Stewarding, Banquets

- Send donation, compost, and food waste prevention summaries to planners after each event, highlighting outcomes and opportunities.
- Share the [Event Wrap-Up & Food Waste Summary](#) across departments and with planners.