

# Green Event Seal Certification Guide

UC MERCED- Zero Waste by 2020

## What is a Green Event Seal?

This certification is awarded for an event which is **zero waste**. This means that at least 95% of waste generated is either composted or recycled. Different levels of certifications depends on the waste diversion (percentage of waste that is not composted or recycled).

Here at UC Merced, we want to make a positive change by developing a culture of life-long commitment to sustainability. UC Merced has a **Triple Zero Commitment**, which is our sustainable pledge to consume zero net energy, produce zero net greenhouse gas emissions, and produce zero landfill waste by the year 2020.

## Steps to Certify your Event

1. Read the Green Event guide below
2. Identify and implement strategies to make your event zero waste
3. [Apply](#) for the UC Merced Green Event Seal (Must sign in to CatLife).

## Before the Event

- Group Planning Meetings:
  - Send electronic handouts to the meeting attendees
- Communicating with Guests:
  - Use electronic communication (i.e. Email, Facebook)
  - Encourage guests to make sustainable choices for the event (i.e bring a reusable mug/bottle, take green transportation to the event)
- Communicating with Caterers:
  - Note: Make use of campus catering and other on-campus resources to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions on delivery.
  - Inform caterers in advance that you will be hosting a zero-waste event. Ask if they can provide acceptable serving materials:
  - **Reusable** (This is the best and most sustainable option)
    - i.e. Reusable plates, bowls, cups, utensils, napkins, drink ware
  - **Compostable**
    - i.e. Paper plates, bowls, cups, utensils, napkins, lunchboxes
  - **Recyclable**
    - i.e. Aluminum serving trays, bulk condiment serving containers
  - The following is **NOT** acceptable:
    - **Styrofoam materials**
    - **Plastic Utensils**
    - **Individual condiment packets**
  - Ordering Food

- Ask your caterer to provide food in bulk to avoid individually packaged foods such as chips and cookies.
    - Serve food on reusable platters
    - Consider serving vegetarian or vegan meals. (Meat production produces a large amount of GHG emissions and uses a lot of water)
    - Have a precise number of attendees to avoid wasting excess food
  - Ordering Beverages
    - Have beverages served in bulk
    - Avoid using stir-sticks for coffee and tea
      - Alternative option: reusable spoons
      - Note: If stir-sticks *must* be present, use compostable ones
- Planning Event Décor and Materials
  - Use materials that can be reused for future events (i.e. table linens, signage, name tags)
  - If giveaways are necessary, make sure they can be recycled or reused
  - Prepare reusable name tags
  - If multiple electronic equipment will be used, a power strip can be used to turn the power on and off when not in use
- Waste Management
  - **Plan your event as a zero waste event!**
  - If your event will generate more waste than can be contained in the available waste bins, contact *UC Merced Recycles* or *Facilities Management* for details on how to place a work order. Make sure to contact them at least a week in advance!
  - Make sure there will be waste stations available
    - Each waste station should have 3 options: Recycle, Compost, and Landfill
  - Recruit volunteers that will help guests sort their trash during the event
  - For more information on what belongs in each bin, [click here](#) to visit the **UC Merced Recycle website**.

## During the Event

- Request vendors to turn off their vehicles when not in use (i.e during loading/unloading)
- Provide reusable name tags for guests (if necessary)
- Turn off electronic equipment during breaks
- Only distribute paper materials upon request
- Instruct guests to use the waste stations to dispose of their trash
  - Have volunteers stand around waste stations and assist guests in sorting their waste properly so that little to no waste ends up in the landfill bins.
- Thank for guests for the considerations they've taken to make your event a green event
- Ask guests to return the reusable name tags for future use
- Have signage that reminds guests that they are attending a green event

## After the Event

- Ask vendors if excess materials can be recycled after the event
- Arrange to donate leftover materials and centerpieces after the event to places like the Goodwill.
- Try to have excess food taken home by guests, or donated. Note: Be sure to check if there are any policies for donating leftover food
- Share your success story with UC Merced Recycles! Your green event can be featured on the recycling website as well as on their Facebook page.

Once you've successfully completed the application, you will be awarded the Green Event Certification Seal that you can proudly display on all promotional items for your event.