

Special events



A lot of waste can be created at celebrations and gatherings. For example, household waste increases by 25 percent during the holiday season. Nationally, an additional one million tons of waste per week is generated during the holidays. But, it is possible to have special events such as holidays, birthdays, graduation parties, retirement parties and weddings and still avoid creating waste.

Planning tips

High-waste	Low-waste
Sending paper invites.	→ Invite people via email or phone.
Cooking massive amounts of food.	→ Plan carefully and only cook enough food for the people coming.
Throwing out leftovers.	→ Send leftovers home with guests, save for later in the refrigerator, or compost.
Using disposable plates, cups, bowls and utensils.	→ Use reusable dishware and utensils.
Buying new games for attendees to play.	→ Rent inflatable or large carnival-type games for kids. Ask attendees to bring their own games to share.
Having trash cans scattered around the event space.	→ Clearly mark all trash and recycling containers, and always keep them next to each other.
Using single-use, disposable decorations like balloons and banners	→ Decorate with items that can be reused, recycled or composted, are made from used or recycled materials, or given to guests to take home.

Find more tips for planning green events in the green party planning checklist at hennepin.us/-/media/hennepinus/business/work-with-hennepin-county/environmental-education-activities/reducing-waste-appendix-green-party-checklist.pdf

If you are holding a larger gathering or event, get tips for reducing waste and recycling at hennepin.us/eventrecycling.

“For National Night Out, my block started providing recycling and organics bins. But after seeing all the paper plates and plastic cups that were used, I encouraged my neighbors to bring their own reusable dishes and cups to the event to reduce the waste we generated.”

– Homeowner in south Minneapolis