

2026 SUSTAINABILITY TOOLKIT



America's Semiquincentennial & The Bay Responsible Initiative

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BAY RESPONSIBLE & MD TWO FIFTY

**THE OLD LINE STATE HAS A NEW LINE: BAY RESPONSIBLE!
OUR REVOLUTION TO COMBAT WASTE AT COMMEMORATIONS
AND 250-RELATED EVENTS**

TAKING THE INITIATIVE ON SUSTAINABILITY

Planning is underway for a full year of commemorations and Maryland is taking the lead to make these events sustainable.

With a knowledgeable team in place, the Bay Responsible initiative offers guidance, resources, and assistance to help event planners, venue staff, and vendors make it happen!

THIS TOOLKIT OFFERS GUIDANCE ON



Compost and waste diversion



Eliminating plastic bottles & deploying water refill stations



Using recycled products



Encouraging guests to go car-free or use public transportation

MAKE OUR FOUNDING FATHERS PROUD!

Participating commemorations can display the Bay Responsible seal on promotional materials



A Note from the Bay Responsible Team

Bay Responsible is a consortium of individuals and business owners who see this year and those that follow as important opportunities to make a real difference. It's a movement that everyone hosting an event or commemoration can join.

The objective is simple: reduce waste and pollution at as many gatherings as possible. Together, we achieve that through composting and recycling, access to water refill stations that replace plastic bottles, and locally-sourced Bay-friendly food, drink, supplies, and more.

Maryland's 250th anniversary is not just a milestone of history—it's a promise to protect our shared future. By joining the Bay Responsible movement, every Maryland 250 event becomes a model of sustainability, honoring our Chesapeake Bay and the communities that depend on it.

We hope that through this toolkit, developed in cooperation with the founding members of Annapolis Green, Refill Goodness, and Naptown Taps, we will inspire even more people and businesses to join us in ensuring the Chesapeake Bay is well looked after this year and for the next 250. Whether at a party, on the water, or in our backyards, it's the right thing to do!



Meredith Glacken



Lynne Forsman



Jenny Vedrani



The Bay Responsible Mission

THE BAY RESPONSIBLE INITIATIVE AIMS TO EMPOWER COMMUNITIES

Let's celebrate Maryland's history while protecting its future. Being Bay Responsible means recognizing that how we gather, celebrate, and commemorate matters to the health of the Chesapeake Bay and all of us who depend on it. It means planning events with intention, reducing waste, refilling instead of tossing, composting and recycling what we use, and choosing local, Bay-friendly food and materials whenever possible.

Events that meet Bay Responsible guidelines are recognized for their commitment to stewardship, demonstrating that celebrating Maryland's history and culture can—and should—leave a positive environmental legacy.

ABOUT THIS TOOLKIT

The Bay Responsible Toolkit is designed to make sustainability the standard across all Maryland events in 2026, especially those that commemorate our nation's Semiquincentennial. Here you'll find practical guidance, strategies, and tools to help reduce waste and protect the Chesapeake Bay at celebrations that reflect Maryland's shared responsibility to the environment.

Whether planning a meeting of ten or a festival of thousands, this toolkit offers a flexible framework that supports progress at any scale.

Bay Responsible is not an all-or-nothing program. It meets organizers where they are and encourages meaningful action—trying one idea, adopting several practices, or working toward a fully zero-waste event.

Assembled by the founders of Annapolis Green, Refill Goodness, and Naptown Taps, the Bay Responsible Toolkit brings together proven approaches across decades of experience under a shared banner—equipping communities in Maryland to honor our state and nation's history while protecting the Bay for the next 250 years.

Sustainability Checklist

Whether it's a small meeting of 10 or event of several thousand, here are the steps you can take to make your events and commemorations

Bay Responsible:

Refill, Don't Toss

Install water refill stations and encourage attendees to bring reusable bottles and cups.

Compost

Replace plastic with compostable cups, plates, and utensils, and partner with local composting services to keep methane-producing waste out of landfills.

Recycle - Do It Right

Provide clearly labeled recycling bins, focus on truly recyclable materials like aluminum, paper, and cardboard, and engage volunteers to guide guests in proper sorting.

Celebrate MD's Local Food Heritage

Showcase locally sourced food and drink and support local farmers, watermen, and food producers who steward our land and waters. Each local bite sustains Maryland's communities and reduces transportation emissions.

Design Events for Zero Waste

Plan from the beginning with waste reduction in mind. Eliminate single-use plastics, styrofoam, and balloons; use durable, reusable, or compostable alternatives. Make your gathering accessible via public transportation and publicize ride share options.

Engage & Educate

Create interactive Bay Responsible stations where guests can pledge to protect the Bay, learn about oysters, or take home sustainable tips. Train volunteers as sustainability ambassadors, visible in Green Team shirts, ready to guide guests. Use signage and live impact boards to show real-time results.

Celebrate History & Protect the Future

Frame Bay Responsible as part of Maryland's legacy: just as we celebrate 250 years of resilience and growth, we commit to a sustainable future for the next 250. Every sponsor, vendor, volunteer, and guest plays a role in writing this new chapter of responsibility.

THE OUTCOME:

A statewide showcase of sustainable celebration—where every refill, every composted plate, and local bite contributes to the health of the Chesapeake Bay.



Best Practices

REAL-WORLD STRATEGIES FOR PLANNING AND PRODUCING SUSTAINABLE EVENTS



Successful sustainable events start with a shared vision: **diverting as much waste as possible from the landfill is achievable** with planning, coordination, and clear communication. Begin early by engaging vendors, caterers, and suppliers before anything arrives on site. Review all materials in advance and require that single-use food and beverage items be compostable, recyclable, or reusable. Early alignment prevents last-minute waste problems and sets everyone up for success.

Engage community stakeholders—sponsors, local organizations, volunteers, and municipal partners—so sustainability is embedded across the event. Establish a clear **Sustainable Procurement Policy** and communicate expectations consistently. Let everyone involved know why these choices matter and how their participation contributes to a Bay Responsible event.

Make waste sorting easy and intuitive for guests. Use **clear, consistent signage** at every waste station showing exactly what goes where, and place compost, recycling, and landfill bins together to reduce confusion. Monitor stations throughout the event to ensure materials are ending up in the correct containers and are transferred properly to designated dumpsters or roll-offs for recycling and composting.

Prevent contamination by managing liquids effectively. Place liquid collection containers or troughs at bars, food areas, and exits so cups can be emptied before disposal. This simple step dramatically improves recycling and compost quality. After the event, sort compostables and recover recyclables that may have entered the organic stream to maximize diversion.

Best Practices (continued)

Look for creative, engaging ways to reinforce the zero-waste message. Invest in **durable, reusable materials** that can be used year after year. Engage youth through school-based poster or graphic design contests with a “Party Responsibly” theme, and display their work at the event. Turn sustainability into a point of pride and participation.

Extend the impact beyond waste. Sell co-branded reusable water bottles as a fundraiser for a local watershed organization. Donate unused food to food banks or shelters. Consider calculating the event’s carbon footprint and sharing the results to encourage continuous improvement.

Finally, support the effort with people power. Create a visible **Green Team** of trained volunteers who guide guests, answer questions, and reinforce Bay Responsible practices. Promote the long-term goal of diverting 100% of event waste from the landfill and commit to learning from each event to do even better next time.



Examples of Prohibited Items at Bay Responsible Events



TO REDUCE CONTAMINATION AND MAXIMIZE WASTE DIVERSION, THE FOLLOWING ITEMS SHOULD NOT BE BROUGHT ON SITE OR USED AT BAY RESPONSIBLE EVENTS:

- Single-use plastic water bottles
- Styrofoam (polystyrene) cups, plates, containers, or packaging
- Non-compostable plastic cups, plates, utensils, or food containers
- Plastic film, including shrink wrap, bubble wrap, and plastic packaging
- Balloons and balloon releases
- Individually wrapped giveaways or promotional items that cannot be reused or recycled
- Mixed-material items that cannot be easily recycled or composted
- Plastic straws and stirrers

Event organizers should communicate these restrictions clearly to vendors, caterers, sponsors, and partners in advance to avoid last-minute waste challenges and ensure a successful Bay Responsible event.



10,291 kW-hrs of electricity

Enough to power 1 home for a full year



254 gallons of oil

Enough energy to heat and cool 1 home for a full year



60 gallons of gasoline

Enough gasoline to drive 1,687 miles



60 mature trees

Enough to produce 746,374 sheets of newspaper



17,570 gallons of water

Enough to meet the fresh water needs of 937 people for a year



9 cubic yards of landfill airspace

Enough airspace to meet the disposal needs of a community of 135 people

Tracking & Measuring Success

Tracking and measuring success is an essential part of hosting a Bay Responsible event and helps turn good intentions into lasting impact. Event organizers are encouraged to establish a baseline early and then measure what matters most—such as pounds of material composted and recycled, waste diverted from the landfill, number of refill station uses, and single-use bottles avoided.

Sharing results through announcements, signage, social media, and post-event reports not only celebrates success but also educates attendees and builds momentum for future events, reinforcing that every responsible choice makes a measurable difference.

Messaging & Promotion

Promote sustainability early through event communications. Remind attendees to bring reusable water bottles, carpool, etc. Celebrate post-event success by sharing results, photos, and impact metrics on your website, social media, and in press releases to inspire attendees, partners, and future Bay Responsible participating events and organizers.



Final Thoughts & Next Steps

OUR IMPACT TOGETHER

Bay Responsible reflects a statewide commitment to celebrating Maryland's history in a way that protects its future. By embedding sustainability into Maryland 250 events and beyond, we help reduce our environmental impact on the Chesapeake Bay while setting a visible, replicable standard for how communities gather.

These efforts demonstrate that responsible choices can be integrated seamlessly into celebrations of any size, creating lasting cultural change and reinforcing Maryland's role as a leader in stewardship—during the 250th commemoration and well beyond.

READY TO MAKE YOUR EVENT BAY RESPONSIBLE?

-  Select your goals from the Sustainability Checklist.
-  Email your event name and checklist to **impact@mdbayresponsible.com** and schedule a time to review your list and plan with our team.
-  Once approved, proudly display the Bay Responsible badge on your marketing materials.

For further discussions and inquiries, please contact:

 impact@mdbayresponsible.com

Resources

YOU ARE READY TO GET TO WORK!

And it's easy with the right tools and people power! Once you've identified the sustainability priorities for your event from the checklist, connect with trusted local partners who can help you implement them. Here are just a few who have experience supporting area sustainable events and can help you plan, execute, and measure your impact with confidence.

Green Event Consulting

Lynne Forsman
Fairwinds@comcast.net

Low and No-Waste Products & Sustainability Planning

Refill Goodness
Jenny@refillgoodness.com

Water Refill Stations

Naptown Taps
Team@naptowntaps.com

Composting Services

Veteran Compost
Info@veterancompost.com

Shore Soils

Info@shoresoils.com

Compostable Event Supplies

Leonard Paper
Sales@leonardpaper.com

Grants & Support

Chesapeake Bay Trust
Events@cbtrust.org

Volunteers & Institutional Support

Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay
Contact@allianceforthebay.org

Economic Development Grants

Chesapeake Crossroads
Heritage_area@aacounty.org

Recycling & Waste Management

Republic Services
Bcallaghan@republicservices.com

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**BY PROTECTING OUR RESOURCES WE ARE
ALSO PROTECTING OUR HIGH QUALITY OF
LIFE... IF EVERYONE MAKES AN EFFORT...
IT CAN HAVE A SIGNIFICANT IMPACT
AND ENSURE OUR STATE'S FUTURE.**

**- PARRIS GLENDENING -
MD250 CHAIR**

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