

WHAT SCORES WELL: ZERO-WASTE EVENT GRANT

This guide explains what typically scores **lowest, medium, and highest** in the evaluation process. It is intended to help applicants understand how to design stronger, higher-impact projects.

1. BASELINE (ELIGIBLE, BUT LOWER-SCORING)

Projects at this level **meet eligibility requirements** but are unlikely to rank highly unless paired with upstream prevention measures.

These projects focus primarily on:

- Sorting waste into recycling, organics, and garbage
- Providing waste stations, signage, and volunteers
- Hiring an event waste manager to monitor bins and vendors
- Ensuring diversion compliance at the event

Why this scores lower: While proper diversion is important, it manages waste *after it is created*. These approaches are now **considered standard practice** and have limited impact on overall waste generation.

Typical impact:

- Improved diversion rates
- Limited reduction in total waste produced

2. MODERATE-SCORING PROJECTS (IMPROVED PRACTICE)

These projects go beyond basic diversion by addressing **some upstream waste prevention**.

Examples include:

- Water refill stations to reduce bottled beverages
- Vendor requirements for fiber-based or reusable service ware
- Staffed diversion stations to help attendees properly sort waste
- Clear improvements over waste practices used in previous years

Why this scores better: These projects begin to reduce waste generation and show learning from past events, but may still rely heavily on single-use items.

Typical impact:

- Partial reduction of single-use items
 - Clear operational improvements over previous events
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3. HIGH-SCORING PROJECTS (PRIORITY FOR FUNDING)

The strongest applications focus on **preventing waste before it is created**, particularly in **food and beverage service**, which is often the largest source of event waste.

High-scoring projects thoughtfully include:

- Reusable food containers, cups, and/or cutlery
- A clear system for collection, washing, storage, and redistribution
- Identified dishwashing partners or facilities
- Vendor integration (requirements, incentives, or organizer-supplied reusables)
- Estimates of single-use items avoided (units or weight)
- Plans to use reusable items across multiple events or years

Why this scores highest: Reusable systems directly reduce waste generation, align strongly with the circular economy, and provide lasting value beyond a single event.

Typical impact:

- Significant reduction in total waste generated
- Measurable avoidance of single-use items
- Infrastructure that can be reused, shared, or scaled

4. WHAT REVIEWERS LOOK FOR ACROSS ALL STRONG APPLICATIONS

Regardless of project size, high-quality applications clearly demonstrate:

- **Measurable outcomes:** Specific materials targeted and how impacts will be tracked
 - **Feasibility:** Realistic logistics, partners, and capacity to deliver
 - **Improvement:** How this project builds on or improves past practices
 - **Longevity:** Plans to sustain or expand waste reduction efforts over time
 - **Community engagement:** How attendees and vendors are supported to participate successfully
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