

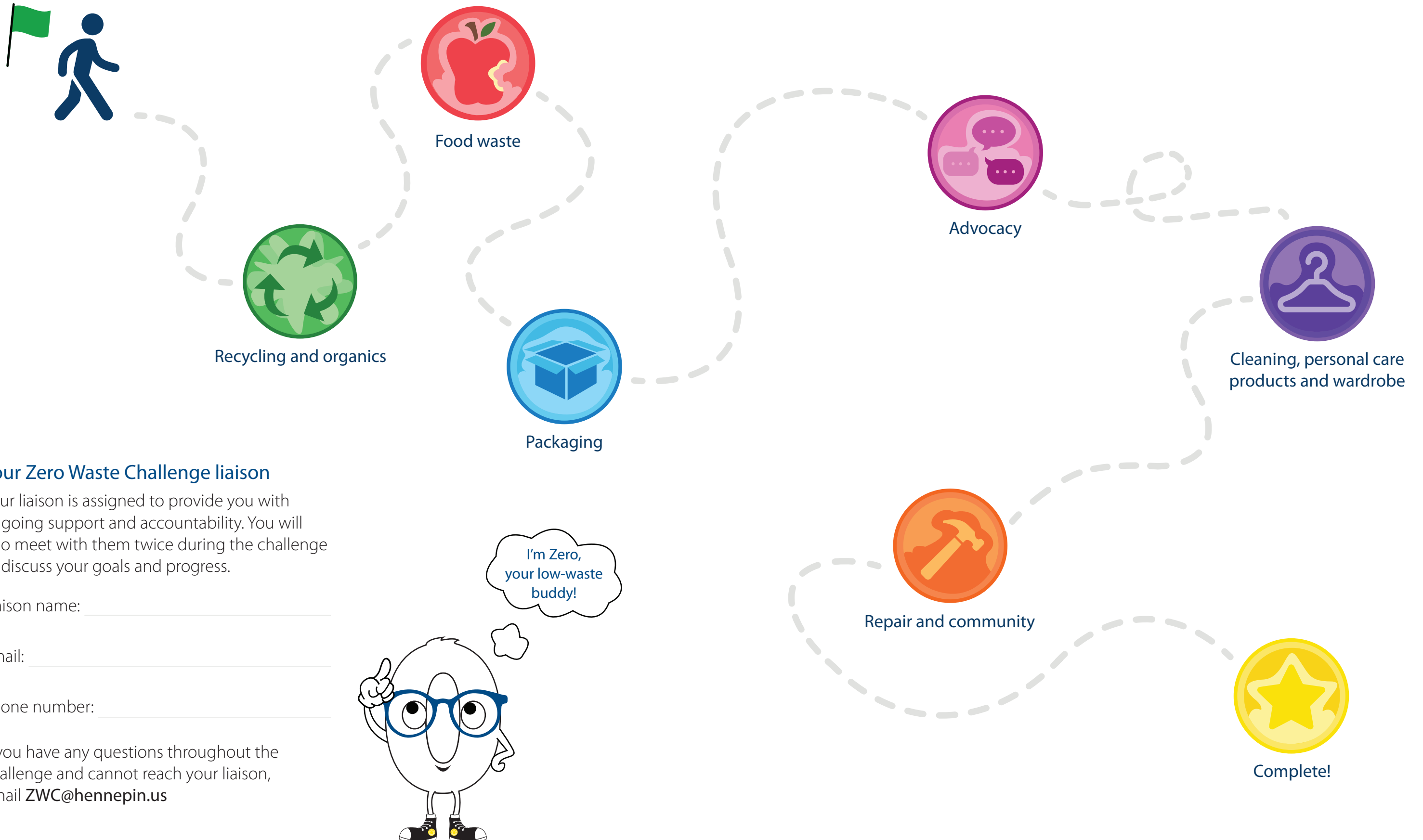
# Welcome to the Zero Waste Challenge



Use this workbook to set goals and track your progress throughout the challenge.

Your name or household name: \_\_\_\_\_

# Zero Waste Challenge roadmap



## Your Zero Waste Challenge liaison

Your liaison is assigned to provide you with ongoing support and accountability. You will also meet with them twice during the challenge to discuss your goals and progress.

Liaison name: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number: \_\_\_\_\_

If you have any questions throughout the challenge and cannot reach your liaison, email [ZWC@hennepin.us](mailto:ZWC@hennepin.us)





## Getting started

Before you attend your intro training, review this section and complete your waste tracking activities. Don't worry about changing any other behaviors yet.

To get started with the challenge, complete these items, which were emailed to you:

Watch the welcome videos

Read the waste tracking instructions on how to measure the quantity of your waste for two weeks

Read the waste audit instructions to help you notice what types of waste are in your bins

Then, get to know your waste!

Complete your waste audit

Complete your two weeks of waste tracking

Submit your waste tracking numbers online

Bring your waste tracking results and completed waste audit to your introduction training!

Introduction training date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Have more time on your hands?

Set aside examples of items or write a list of the things you don't know how to dispose of

Get messy and conduct a full waste sort

Have the kids help with waste tracking or the visual waste audit

Put important Zero Waste Challenge dates into your calendar now

**Reflect:** What was surprising to you when examining your waste? What was not surprising?

What questions do you have to ask during your intro training?

## Your Zero Waste Challenge journey

Follow along in this journey workbook to train your low-waste mindset and build momentum for a low-waste lifestyle.

Each month, you can complete mini-challenges for each topic. Check off the activities on each page, and when you complete a page, color or place a sticker on the monthly stop on your journey map to mark your progress! Each page has options to:

### Learn

Learn more through the Zero Waste Updates email, workshops, webinars, and recorded presentations.

### Act

Complete mini-challenge actions each month. Suggested actions are included for beginners, advanced zero-wasters, and kids. More ideas to engage kids are linked at the end of the workbook.

### Connect

Each month has an opportunity for you to meet up with other challengers or plug into local low-waste communities.

### Report

Once a month, you will be sent a survey question to report your progress in the challenge. Fill it in before the next Zero Waste Update.

### Reflect

Spend a moment reflecting on your progress by responding to the prompt. These are great conversation starters to share with your zero-waste liaison!

## What's required?

To complete the Zero Waste Challenge, you must:

- Attend the Zero Waste intro training
- Check in with your liaison
- Put in good effort to learn and prevent waste
- Do your waste tracking (baseline, midterm, and final)
- Fill out surveys to help us track program results

I agree

Completing all other items are optional. However, participating more strengthens your skills, gains you recognition within our group, and earns you more chances to win a raffle for low-waste items!

If you feel like you're falling behind during the challenge, don't give up! Return to your main challenge goals and give yourself grace. Everyone's journey will look a little different.



# Zero Waste Challenge 2024 – 2025 calendar

Important dates			
<b>Intro trainings</b>	Tuesday, October 1 from 6 to 8 p.m.	Saturday, October 5 from 10 a.m. to noon	Thursday, October 7 from 6 to 8 p.m.
<b>Baseline waste tracking</b>	September 15 through 28		
<b>Midterm waste tracking</b>	January 5 through 18		
<b>Final waste tracking</b>	April 6 through 19		
<b>Final celebration</b>	Saturday, April 26 from 10 to 11:30 a.m.		

SEPTEMBER 2024						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

OCTOBER 2024						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

NOVEMBER 2024						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

DECEMBER 2024						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

JANUARY 2025						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

FEBRUARY 2025						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	1

MARCH 2025						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

APRIL 2025						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

Workshops, webinars, and recordings		
<b>Backyard and worm composting webinar</b>	Tuesday, October 22 from 6 to 7 p.m.	This webinar will cover two composting methods: how to set up, maintain, and troubleshoot common issues with a backyard compost pile and worm bin.
<b>Recycling and organics webinar</b>	Tuesday, November 19 from 6 to 7 p.m.	Learn more about what you should or should not place in your recycling or organics recycling. Ask those questions that came up since your intro training!
<b>Food waste reduction webinar</b>	Thursday, December 12 from 6 to 7 p.m.	Learn more about how food is wasted and what we can do about it.
<b>Grocery shopping for less waste workshop</b>	Thursday, January 16 from 6 to 7 p.m.	Learn how to modify your shopping habits to create less waste. Join us as we help you plan and make decisions about packaging while walking through the different sections of a grocery store.
<b>Decluttering webinar</b>	Tuesday, March 11 from 6 to 7 p.m.	Learn how to declutter your home and how to prevent clutter from accumulating in the first place.
<b>Cleaning and personal care products</b>	Watch on demand recording	Learn about options for simplifying and DIY-ing your cleaning and personal care products.
<b>Low-waste parenting</b>	Watch on demand recording	Hennepin County Environment and Energy staff discuss how becoming a parent has affected their low-waste routines and share realistic tips.
<b>Low-waste holidays</b>	Watch on demand recording	Learn strategies for hosting low-waste celebrations and giving gifts with a holiday season focus.

## Setting main challenge goals

Before making any changes, reflect on what you learned about your household's waste. Use the results from your waste tracking and waste audit to define 3 to 5 goals to work on throughout the challenge. These goals will invite you to adjust your habits and will make a big impact on your waste.

Fill in the data from your waste tracking below:

	Trash	Recycling	Organics
Week 1			
Week 2			

What were the main takeaways from your waste audit?

On the next pages, write down specific goals for what you want to change during the challenge and how you'll make it happen.

Make sure your goals are "SMART!"

- S**pecific
- M**easurable
- A**chievable
- R**ealistic
- T**ime-bound

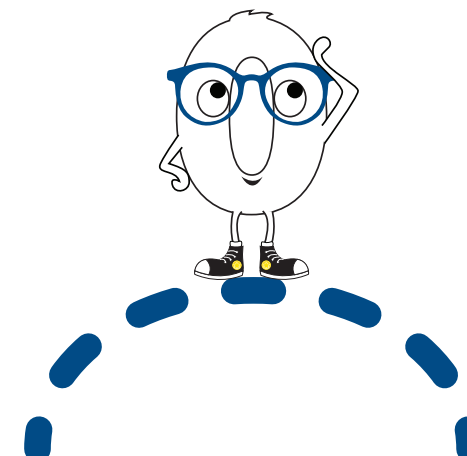
These can be simple or stretch goals – you'll have months to make them stick, so you may want to choose one or two of each! Choose goals that excite you and/or will make a noticeable impact on your waste. For each goal, think through the following:

**Action steps:** What small steps do you need to take to complete your goal?

**Potential barriers:** What might get in the way of completing your goal? Are there ways you can reduce or remove these barriers?

**Timeline:** When do you want to complete your goal? You can choose to align it with a monthly theme, work on one goal at a time, or simply have it completed by the end of the challenge. Whatever you choose, pick a date to make it happen!

**Measure your success:** How will you know if you've made progress or completed this goal?



# Main challenge goals

Complete this page during your intro training.

If you feel you're getting behind or overwhelmed during the challenge, come back to this page and refocus on these main goals!

Goal 1: \_\_\_\_\_

Action steps:

Potential barriers:

Timeline:

How to measure success:

Goal 2: \_\_\_\_\_

Action steps:

Potential barriers:

Timeline:

How to measure success:

Goal 3: \_\_\_\_\_

Action steps:

Potential barriers:

Timeline:

How to measure success:

Goal 4: \_\_\_\_\_

Action steps:

Potential barriers:

Timeline:

How to measure success:

Goal 5: \_\_\_\_\_

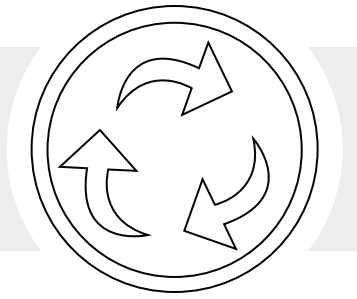
Action steps:

Potential barriers:

Timeline:

How to measure success:

# Recycling and organics



This month, you will learn what goes in recycling, organics, compost, and other special drop-offs.

## Monthly action ideas

### Beginner

- Sign up for organics recycling
- Take your organics to a drop-off
- Make sure you have recycling and/or organics bins where it makes sense in your home, and pair them with trash bins
- Set up a spot to collect specialty recycling items in your home (e.g., plastic film)

### Advanced

- If you live in a multifamily building, talk to the building owner or manager about the options for adding organics recycling
- If you live in a home with a yard, build or purchase a backyard compost bin
- Clear out old or unwanted chemicals and take them to a hazardous waste drop-off
- Teach a neighbor or friend about items they might be wishcycling

### Kids

- Make or color signs for the trash, recycling and organics bins around the house
- Learn where to put the packaging from your favorite snack (trash, recycling or organics?)



## Learn:

- Webinar: Backyard composting
- Webinar: Recycling and organics deep dive
- Read the Zero Waste Guide sections: Recycling 101, Composting and organics recycling 101

**Act:** Pick from the ideas to the left or fill in your own!

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

## Connect:

- Virtual meetup: share an item you don't know what to do with.
- Attend the monthly community builder (stay tuned for details)
- Join the ZWC Facebook group

**Report:** (find the link to report in your Zero Waste Update)

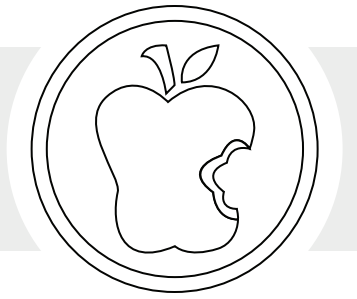
- Share your 3 to 5 main goals for the challenge.

## Reflect:

What types of items were you not recycling or "wishcycling?" How do you and your household members feel about what you've learned?



# Food waste



This month we'll focus on how to reduce the amount of food we waste. From meal planning and storing your food correctly, to building kitchen skills and becoming a creative cook, there are many ways to save food.

## Monthly action ideas

### Beginner

- Explore meal planning styles and choose one to try for your household
- Designate an "eat first" bin or area in your fridge
- Do a food waste audit – track what food goes to waste for a week

### Advanced

- Use up the 3 oldest items in your pantry or freezer
- Have a meal with a friend or neighbor where you create a dish based on items you both need to use up
- Organize and inventory your fridge, freezer, and pantry

### Kids

- Learn how to peel a new fruit or vegetable
- Help plan or prepare a meal with an adult

## Learn:

- Webinar: Food waste reduction
- Webinar: Low-waste holidays and gift-giving
- Read the Zero Waste Guide section: Food

**Act:** Pick from the ideas to the left or fill in your own!

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## Connect:

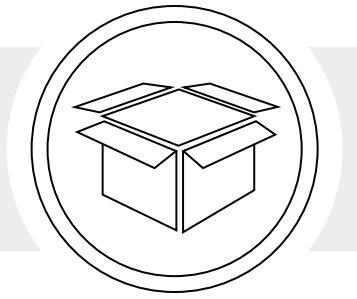
- Virtual meetup: holiday prep and idea share

**Report:** Trivia! (find the link to report in your Zero Waste Update)

## Reflect:

What habits have you changed around food to prevent waste?  
What's your favorite thing to make to use up leftovers?

# Packaging



Packaging for our food and home products is a consistent source of waste. This month we'll focus on ways to avoid and reduce it.

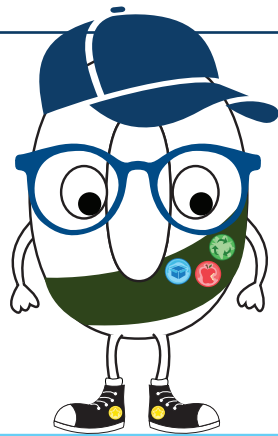
## Monthly action ideas

### Beginner

- Put together a grocery shopping kit that contains reusable shopping bags, produce bags, containers, and pen or pencil
- Buy an ingredient or food in bulk that you've never bought that way before
- Identify one single-serve item you can buy in a large container and portion out yourself

### Advanced

- Bring your own containers to a restaurant for leftovers
- Prepare a meal that uses no ingredients packaged in single-use plastic
- Learn more about zero-waste policies, such as packaging ordinances or extended producer responsibility policies



### Kids

- Try a new snack from the bulk bin
- Pack your school lunch items in reusable containers

### Learn:

- In-person workshop: Grocery shopping for less waste
- Read the Zero Waste Guide sections: Packaging, Plastics, Travel and on-the-go

### Act: Pick from the ideas to the left or fill in your own!

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

### Connect:

- Virtual meetup: Learn about policies on packaging and share your favorite low-waste items and brands

### Report:

- Submit your midterm waste tracking numbers! (find the link to report in your Zero Waste Update)

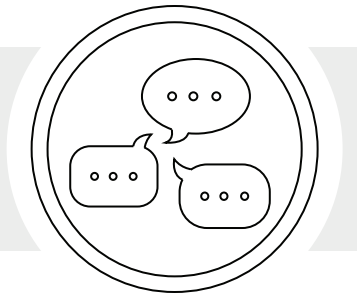
Fill them in below for your reference.

	Trash	Recycling	Organics
Week 1			
Week 2			

### Reflect:

What is one of the biggest sources of packaging in your home? List at least two ideas for how you could reduce or avoid that packaging.

# Advocacy



This month we challenge you to write, speak and act to advocate for the changes you want to see in your community.

## Monthly action ideas

### Beginner

- Write to one company that makes a favorite product to ask for or praise them for using recyclable packaging
- Post on social media about something you've worked on during this challenge
- Talk to 1 to 2 friends or neighbors about something you have learned or a habit you have changed

### Advanced

- Call or email your legislator and tell them about the changes you want to see to reduce waste
- Implement a waste prevention or recycling improvement project at your work or school or an event or gathering
- Volunteer to help with low-waste planning or waste diversion at a community event

### Kids

- Teach a friend how to recycle
- Draw a picture of the world you want to see
- Start or join a school green team
- In Scouts? Do a project or earn a badge for stewardship!

## Learn:

- Webinar: Low-waste legislation
- Watch the video: Low-waste parenting
- Read the Zero Waste Guide sections: Community and advocacy, Kids

**Act:** Pick from the ideas to the left or fill in your own!

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## Connect:

- Go to this month's Fix-It Clinic!

## Report:

- Trivia! (find the link in your Zero Waste Update)

## Reflect:

What is something you've done or could do to reduce waste at a gathering, either in your close circle of family and friends or a larger event in your community?

# Cleaning, personal care products and wardrobe



This month, take a look at the clothes you wear, the things you use to clean around the house, and the products you use on your face and body.

## Monthly action ideas

### Beginner

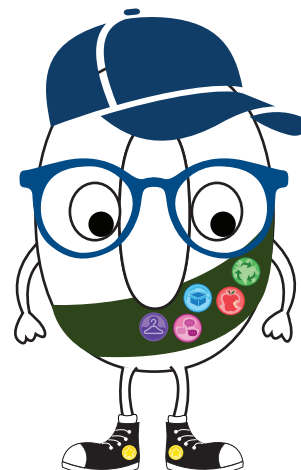
- Replace a disposable or single-use cleaning product with a durable or plastic-free version
- Read the care tags on any items of clothing you bring home this month
- Try a concentrated/solid bathroom product such as toothpaste tabs, bar soap, bar shampoo or a lotion bar

### Advanced

- Make your own cleaning or personal care product
- Host a clothing swap
- Learn or teach a mending skill
- Look up a new way to clean something without a specialty cleaner

### Kids

- Help mix up a green cleaning recipe
- Go through your toys, games or clothes and give away some you don't use anymore
- Go with an adult to drop off donations or to a Hennepin County Drop-off facility



## Learn:

- Webinar: Decluttering
- Watch the video: Cleaning and personal care products
- Read the Zero Waste Guide sections: Personal care, Cleaning, Wardrobes

**Act:** Pick from the ideas to the left or fill in your own!

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## Connect:

- Attend the monthly community builder (stay tuned for details)

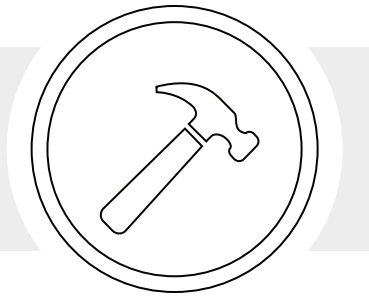
**Report:** (find the link in your Zero Waste Update)

- Trivia!

## Reflect:

What skills or actions would help you extend the life of your family's clothing?  
What gets in the way of learning or doing them?

# Community and repair



This month, focus your efforts on building community to reduce waste. Learn about local options for reuse, repair and sharing, talk about reducing waste, and practice or teach new skills.

## Monthly action ideas

### Beginner

- Give away something you no longer need on a Buy Nothing group or other community sharing page
- Identify one item you can buy used instead of new this month (and do it!)
- Find a community swap event happening near you and attend!
- Go to a Fix-It Clinic to learn how to fix a household item

### Advanced

- Repair something for yourself, a friend or family member
- Support a repair business – find something you either don't know how to fix or haven't done and hire a professional!
- Help someone else get to a Fix-It Clinic or drop-off facility

### Kids

- Put together a mending kit
- Visit a toy library
- Wash your bicycle or learn to oil the chain

## Learn:

- Read the Zero Waste Guide sections: Special events, Outdoor living and transportation

## Act: Pick from the ideas to the left or fill in your own!

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

## Connect:

- Attend the monthly community builder (stay tuned for details)
- Attend the final celebration!

## Report: (find the link to report in your Zero Waste Update)

- Submit your final waste tracking numbers!

	Trash	Recycling	Organics
Week 1			
Week 2			

## Reflect:

What items have you thrown away in the last year that you think could have been repaired instead? Is there anything you have repaired? How did it go?



## Reflection, what's next, and congratulations!

You put in the hard work, and we've reached the end of the Zero Waste Challenge! Your low-waste journey won't end here, but let's pause to celebrate your achievements.

Read through this page and complete the reflections before you attend our Zero Waste Challenge final celebration. Bring your booklet to the final celebration to receive your certificate of completion. If you cannot make it, email your liaison for other options.

Reflect on your experience below.

What was your favorite action you completed during the challenge?

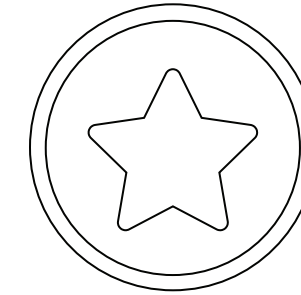
What goals did you complete?

What are you most proud of accomplishing?

How do you want to continue your low-waste journey?

- Submit one or more photos that show your waste reduction actions during this challenge!

## Certificate of completion



\_\_\_\_\_ has/have completed the  
Zero Waste Challenge on this day, \_\_\_\_\_ of 2024.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Zero Waste Challenge Coordinator

\_\_\_\_\_  
Liaison



## Additional resources



Find other resources available on the Zero Waste Challenge participant webpage: [hennepin.us/residents/recycling-hazardous-waste/zero-waste-challenge-participants](https://hennepin.us/residents/recycling-hazardous-waste/zero-waste-challenge-participants)

- Ideas to involve your kids, including links to videos, activities, and other online resources
- Waste tracking instructions and templates
- Zero Waste Guide
- Workshop dates and links
- Additional guides and planning documents
- Past editions of the Zero Waste Update newsletter

Email your liaison or [zwc@hennepin.us](mailto:zwc@hennepin.us) with any questions or for support during the challenge.