



# ReThink Disposable

STOP WASTE BEFORE IT STARTS  
[www.rethinkdisposable.org](http://www.rethinkdisposable.org)

**ReThink Disposable, a program of Clean Water Action  
and Clean Water Fund, aims to stop trash before it starts.**

# Food Packaging Litter and our Oceans



- The packaging industry is the largest and growing consumer of synthetic plastics derived from fossil fuels.
- Food packaging accounts for 50% of the plastics derived from fossil fuels
- Single-use bags, plastic bottles, food containers and food wrappers are the four most widespread items polluting the seas, making up almost half of the human-made waste

# Recyclable and Compostable Materials



**9%**

Only 8.7% of all plastic that's ever been produced has been recycled



**1%**

BioCycle found that only 49 out of 4,700 composters nationwide accepted compostable plastic products.

- Many recycled items become contaminated in a single-stream system and do not end up being recycled
- Because U.S. recycling was dependent on China for so many years, we never developed the correct infrastructure
- Compostable materials can also contain toxic PFAS "forever" chemicals
- Compostable still reinforces the single-use disposable mindset

# Why Reusables



## 1. Litter Reduction

Fast food and take-away packaging accounts for up to 88% of the world's coastline litter

Every minute of every day, the equivalent of one truckload of plastic enters our waterways

# Why Reusables



## 2. People and Planet forward

85% more climate friendly than single-use disposables, less toxic additives, LCA (life cycle assessment) uses less resources including water, reduced burden on fence-line communities

Fenceline communities lose 10-20 years of life on average from air and water quality issues due to oil and plastic production

# Why Reusables



**Before**



**After**

## 3. Cost Savings

Businesses save between \$3,000-\$22,000 and reduce 110,000 pieces of disposable items weighing 1,300 lbs, every year

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## Overview

Free and collaborative technical assistance removes barriers to change

We handle product research, procurement, delivery, set-up, and storytelling

ReThink Disposable provides funding to allow businesses and institutions to purchase reusable supplies; this funding is doubled for women, BIPOC, & LGBTQ+ business owners.

567 businesses signed up

40 institutions signed up

28 million single-use disposable items eliminated each year

# Our Process



1. In-person outreach to restaurants



# Our Process

ITEM CODE	MFG CODE	ORDERED	SHIPPED	SELL PRICE	ITEM TOTAL
LGC12/20 Clear X-Slot Lid 1000/case Fits GC90F	9509111 / LGC12	1.0 CS	1.0 CS	97.37/CS	97.37
P550N 5.5oz Portion Container PS 2500/c	P550N	2.0 CS	2.0 CS	74.28/CS	148.56
PL4N Clear Portion Container Lid PET 2500/c	PL4N	2.0 CS	2.0 CS	33.69/CS	67.38
PL2N Clear Portion Container Lid PET 2500/c	PL2N/PL200N	1.0 CS	1.0 CS	25.63/CS	25.63
B353 #300 Food Tray Red Plaid 2/250/case	B703	2.0 CS	2.0 CS	35.28/CS	70.56
B352 #200 Food Tray Red Plaid 4/250/case	B702	2.0 CS	2.0 CS	46.94/CS	93.88
SSK21P Smart Stock Medium Weight PP Knife Refill White 960/case	SSK21P	1.0 CS	1.0 CS	50.30/CS	50.30
SSF21P Smart Stock Medium Weight PP Fork Refill White 960/case	SSF21P	2.0 CS	2.0 CS	31.92/CS	63.84
SSS21P Smart Stock Medium Weight PP Teaspoon Refill White 960/ca	SSS21P	2.0 CS	2.0 CS	50.30/CS	100.60
V4221 Vinyl Powder Free Glove Large 1m/case	GVP9-L-1 GPX346100	1.0 CS	1.0 CS	21.99/CS	21.98
242M 24x2000' PVC Film Roll	30550000/142	1.0 RL	1.0 RL	23.64/RL	23.64
241 24x1000' Standard Foil Roll	241	1.0 RL	1.0 RL	135.62/RL	135.62

2. Conduct single-use disposable audit


# Our Process

## Reusable Foodware

Shop for examples of earth-friendly and money-saving reusable foodware here. Studies have shown that replacing disposable with reusable foodware can dramatically reduce your operational cost.

The County of San Mateo's Foodware Aware Team offers **free technical assistance** to help you make the switch and **financial assistance** to offset the cost of purchasing reusables or infrastructure (i.e., shelves). So if you're interested in switching to reusables, like the ones listed below, please contact us! **Email:** [foodware@smcgov.org](mailto:foodware@smcgov.org) / **Hotline:** 888-442-2666

The information provided in this Purchasing Guide is meant to serve as a resource to help food facilities explore options to comply with/go beyond the County's Foodware Ordinance.

Size	Material	Photo	Available Colors	Estimated Price
<b>Plates</b>				
10.5" Round Note: 2 case minimum purchase	Porcelain		White	\$4.25 ea

3. Research and find reusable replacements (conduct testing if purchasing stainless-steel items for schools)
4. Purchase reusables using subsidies from our NOAA grant and partnership with Plastic Free Restaurants

# Our Process



5. Deliver to the location

6. Educate staff on ReThink Disposable practices to be implemented



# Our Process

## CASE STUDY: House of Dim Sum



### THE BOTTOM LINE

- \$429 upfront investment in reusable foodware
- \$33,561 in total annual net cost savings
- 2.2 million disposable items reduced per year
- 7.2 tons of annual waste reduction (equivalent to the weight of a San Francisco cable car)

"I encourage other businesses to work with ReThink Disposable and the City for the cost savings and to eliminate disposable items."

— Ying Huang, Owner



Eliminated  
**7 tons** of  
take-out wares.

That's the  
weight of a  
San  
Francisco  
cable car.



7. Follow-up after a few weeks

8. Determine if we want to create a case study

# The Results

Restaurants find that reusables...

- Save \$3,000-\$22,000 in annual net cost savings
- Eliminate 110,000 disposable packaging items
- Prevent 1,300 pounds of waste
- See an overall 60% reduction of targeted packaging items
- Average 4-month payback period



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