

**SUSTAINABLE CU SMALL GRANT APPLICATION:**  
**“END THE DISPOSABLE MENTALITY”**

**APPLICANT**  
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***"If only 15 percent of US college students used reusable mugs instead of disposable cups every day, we would eliminate more than a billion cups a year."***  
**~ The Earth Works Group**



**COMPELLING COMMUNITY NEED**

Currently, over 10% of the items in landfills are comprised of one small item: plastic bottles. Most of the items constantly being thrown in the trash are recyclable, compostable, or reusable. On our CU campus, students are constantly living their lives with a disposable mentality. The more one pays attention, the more obvious it is that many people on campus need a reminder of what and how they can recycle, reduce, and reuse. Furthermore, the “out of sight, out of mind” concept leaves our student body unknowledgeable about their contribution to waste. Our campus may look exceptional on the surface, but if you just look inside one of those black trash bins, you are guaranteed to see recyclable and reusable items, not to mention being packed full with endless coffee cups, wasted food, and to-go containers.

## **PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

This grant will be used to run an “End the Disposable Mentality” Earth Week Giveaway, a series of events to promote reusable items and Zero Waste sustainability goals on campus. The promotion will be supplemented by reusable item giveaways such as Eco travel mugs and Chico bags, along with engaging activities such a quiz on sustainable life skills, and waste reduction pledges.

## **STUDENT INVOLVEMENT**

In the past, students have showed an interest in reusable items, especially ones that can save money at the coffee shop and grocery store. Our engagement and presence on campus will create a more informed community by messaging about the issues associated with disposable mentality issues, while providing students with information about our campus zero waste goals. Our quiz and pledges will be about sustainable living skills such as reduction and reuse, and moving toward a mentality of waste minimization.

In order to create a more sustainability at CU, our initiatives for recycling and other strong components of zero waste must be an effort to minimize waste on campus and work upstream. Empowerment can be done through education and engagement. By instilling messages in student and providing simple tools of change such as reusable mugs and bags, we will infuse students with the potential for more environmentally friendly daily behavior decisions and applications for life.

## **SCOPE OF IMPACT**

The purpose of this promotional series is to outreach to the entire student body over the course of many days. The overall goal is to raise awareness of our society’s disposable mentality in order to encourage a more waste conscious study body. By influencing a societal and cultural shift, students can save money and we can move towards a more reusable and waste minimizing community.

April brings with it Earth advocacy in many communities, especially locally on our campus and the greater Boulder area. Our “Ending the Disposable Mentality” event series will innovate our message with engaging action along other displays focused on a clean Earth. An example is the CU Recycling two-week cube and cup display, which emphasizes conscious behavior in the context of recycling, reuse, and reduction.

## **BUDGET**

<b><u>Item</u></b>	<b><u># Needed</u></b>	<b><u>Cost</u></b>
Reusable mugs	250	\$8. <sup>00</sup>
Reusable bags	125	\$4. <sup>00</sup>
	<b>Total Cost</b>	<b>\$2,500.<sup>00</sup></b>

## TIMELINE & DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITIES

<u>Dates:</u>	<u>Proposed Outreach:</u>	<u>Messages:</u>
April 23 – 28 <sup>th</sup>	<p><b>Poster board displays, activities, and interactive engagement including but not limited to:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Information about campus sustainability initiatives</li><li>- Facts about landfills such as material content and water contamination</li><li>- Disposable product waste</li><li>- Student consumption</li><li>- Least impact habits</li><li>- Reusable bag and eco-mug giveaway</li><li>- Pledges and quizzes</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Reduce Your Waste</li><li>- Recycle &amp; Reuse</li><li>- Drag Your Bag</li><li>- Lug Your Mug</li><li>- Get in the Habit</li></ul>

## SUSTAINABILITY

CU Recycling has made recycling participation easy for students. The improvements to recycling on campus have been an ongoing process since the early 1970s, representing a long history of constant evaluation and change. This evolution has fostered student initiatives, increased student awareness about recycling, and created jobs for students on campus and in the Boulder community.

The three facets of sustainability are represented within our “End the Disposable Mentality” event series. Less downstream cost provides economic benefits to students and businesses that serve them, while environmental protection is also an element of waste reduction and recycling. Finally, social equity can be expressed from less landfill waste and a larger cultural shift among our campus community. “End the Disposable Mentality” series will increase our campus sustainability by promoting lower impact habits and engaging with students about simple sustainability initiatives they can make. Outreach will be very beneficial for reducing our university impact and successful in educating our peers about the change they can make by making more conscious consumer decisions.