

NYS: Wasted Food Resource for Administrators



READY TO REDUCE WASTED FOOD?

By taking steps to reduce wasted food, schools contribute to a more sustainable future. This fosters a culture of environmental stewardship among students and their school community.

Key elements to successfully reduce wasted food include:

- strategic purchasing
- right-sizing portions
- donating excess edible food
- food scrap diversion

Success depends on the cooperation between 4 key stakeholder groups:



Administrators



Compost
Champion



Custodial Staff



Dining Services
Supervisor

As an Administrator, you will:

- Support all other stakeholders
- Communicate that program is fully embraced throughout the school/school district

GET SET TO START YOUR PROGRAM

- **Get familiar with the program:**
 - Familiarize yourself with specific guidelines from your food scrap hauler/food donation organizations.
- **Adjust school policies as needed:**
 - Full program implementation may require some adjustments in contracts, job descriptions, and budgets.
 - Collecting food scraps separate from trash does not increase the total waste moved through the school.
 - Tandem carts can be used to move multiple streams in one trip
 - Locating food scrap carts near trash and recycling minimizes the time spent emptying each bin
 - Connect that removing food scraps from the trash not only reduces the weight and smell but also reduces greenhouse gas emissions.
- **Engage stakeholders** to review roles and responsibilities, as appropriate for your unique operation. Lead partnership discussions between outside organizations and haulers.
- **Designate a point person** (or small team), such as a teacher or other staff member to serve as the Compost Champion. They will:
 - Oversee wasted food management program
 - Coordinate set up/break down of sorting stations
 - Organize monitoring of sorting stations
 - Manage share/donation programs
 - Answer questions
 - Assist with classroom education materials
 - Share success stories and/or challenges with the administration

- **Consider offering a stipend or some other benefit** for leading the initiative, similar to an after-school club or class advisor.
 - Support the creation of a Green Team or Compost Club at your school. Its members can:
 - Staff the sorting stations
 - Educate their peers
 - Gain leadership experience and/or community service hours
- **Work with Custodial Staff:**
 - Provide the tools, time, and guidance to set-up, breakdown, and maintain each sorting station.
 - Facilitate the initial contract for the food scraps hauler and have a designated member of the Custodial Staff be the point of contact.
 - CET will assist schools and their haulers to right-size bins/dumpsters and optimize pick-up frequency
- **Work with Dining Services** to ensure they have access to the following information:



Source: [Recycling Guide from RecycleSmart.org](#)

- [USDA Offer vs Serve](#)

- The USDA encourages the use of [Share Tables](#). At the end of the day, items can be brought to the main office, school nurse, or in-school food pantry for redistribution. [NYS Education Department Share Table Guidance](#).
- Share table items and unserved items from food service can be donated at the end of day. See CET's [Food Donation Guidance](#) resource.
- Facilitate the partnership between the school and local food donation entity and designate someone in Dining Services to be the point of contact.
- Any food from prep or service that cannot be donated or repurposed can be diverted to a food scrap collection program.
- Interested and trained lunchroom monitors can be very useful in supervising the sorting stations. Sample job description language can be found on the [Green SWoRD of Massachusetts](#) website.

LAUNCH YOUR PROGRAM

- **Share curriculum ideas and resources** for classroom integration and reinforcement of environmental actions. Examples from [MassDEP's The Green Team](#), [Rutgers: NJ Leaves No Bite Behind](#), [Cornell University](#), [WWF Food Waste Warriors](#), [K12 Food Rescue](#), and [Central Vermont](#).
- **Celebrate success!** Communicate goals, guidelines, waste reduction metrics, and climate benefits of the program to all stakeholders.
- **Tell your story!** Include ideas/plans in morning announcements and on bulletin boards.
 - Sample Script: "Our school will set up a new sorting station in the cafeteria to separate food for donation and leftovers for composting starting the week of _____. There is a leadership opportunity for students to learn about composting specifications and help their peers sort properly. Talk with _____ to be part of the team."
- **Don't forget about recycling:** Mixed recycling includes cardboard, paper, plastic, glass, and metal containers. Resources like the [RecycleRightNY](#) website are available to clarify what materials are included in mixed recycling.

In New York State, CET works with schools to develop or expand their best practices for wasted food reduction and diversion of usable resources.



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