

NEW COMPOSTING SOLUTIONS FOR FOOD ESTABLISHMENTS

DEVELOPING BEST PRACTICES FOR FRONT-OF-HOUSE COLLECTION

FOOD WASTE IN THE UNITED STATES

Approximately 40% of food in the U.S. is wasted, and 95% of food waste ends up in landfills. Food now represents the single largest component of municipal solid waste reaching landfills, where it gradually converts to methane, a greenhouse gas at least 84 times more powerful in global warming as carbon dioxide. Composting is an important way to manage this waste; it reduces methane emissions, recycles nutrients, and raises consciousness about the quantities of food being wasted. In fact, expanded composting has been shown to have the greatest potential to reduce GHG emissions from food waste compared to all other food waste reduction strategies—but only 3% of food waste is composted.

ADDRESSING FOOD WASTE IN RESTAURANTS FRONT OF HOUSE

More than one-third of food waste from restaurants come from customer plates. On average, diners leave 17 percent of meals uneaten, and 55 percent of these potential leftovers are not taken home. While efforts to reduce food waste produced in the kitchen during food prep have seen success, the potential to reduce food waste generated by diners has thus far been largely untapped.

PILOT PROJECT: BEST PRACTICES FOR FRONT-OF-HOUSE COMPOSTING

Eco-Cycle will conduct needed research to quantify how much additional food can be captured from diners through front-of-house (FOH) composting and to identify the collection systems and type of packaging needed to achieve maximum diversion. We will develop and distribute nationally a set of front-of-house composting best practices so that food establishments can minimize food waste through increased rates of front of house composting.

FOOD WASTE: AN ENERGY-WATER-CLIMATE NEXUS

Reducing food waste is a critical solution to saving water, reducing fossil fuel consumption, minimizing waste and mitigating climate change.

PROJECT SUMMARY

Eco-Cycle will conduct waste audits at three food establishments for four different collection types (a total of 12 establishments) to determine how much wasted food is currently captured through front-of-house composting programs. Eco-Cycle will then systematically modify the collection system for those establishments that would like to adjust, and audit the results to establish best practices for collecting more food scraps and the types of packaging that improve front-of-house composting.



TARGET PARTICIPANTS

- Three businesses from each type of food establishment: full-service restaurants, delis, business cafeterias, and fast food/casual dining restaurants
- Establishments where sorting is conducted by staff, but focus on establishments where sorting is done directly by patrons
- Establishments with different packaging systems, including reusable, compostable or disposable packaging, or a mix of different packaging systems.

PROJECT PROCESS CONDUCT CONDUCT SECOND **SELECT FOOD** BASELINE **ESTABLISHMENT** WASTE AUDIT 7 WASTE AUDIT PARTICIPANTS **DEVELOP AND** DISTRIBUTE 6 **BEST PRACTICES** FOR FOH 2 4 COLLECT ADJUST FOH COMPOST SYSTEMS COMPOSTING BASED ON OBSERVATIONS. **BASELINE DATA** Collect data on existing collection May include changes to bin locations, signage, packaging or other methods, packaging and practices modifications.

BUDGET

TYPE/LOCATION	ESTIMATED COST
PROJECT MANAGEMENT BUSINESS LIAISON DATA COLLECTION	\$10,000 \$3,000 \$14,000 \$3,000



For more information, contact Kate Bailey, Director of Research & Policy kate@ecocycle.org 303.444.6634