

# Reduce Your Trash: Start a School Food Scrap Recovery Program

- 1. Schedule a Planning Meeting with OCRRA**

We'll help evaluate your food scrap volumes, infrastructure and potential program costs and/or savings. We'll also provide guidance as to how to best roll out this program in your district. **Contact Theresa Evans at 453-2866 or [tevans@ocrra.org](mailto:tevans@ocrra.org).**
- 2. Contact Your Waste Hauler**

OCRRA accepts organics at less than \$0.02 per pound (less than half the cost of normal trash disposal) at our award-winning Amboy Compost Site. Ask your hauler to recommend a cost-effective organics transport solution to our site – for all those organics that will no longer require disposal as trash!
- 3. Employee and Student Training through OCRRA**

OCRRA provides on-site training at no charge. We'll meet with your staff and students to review what and how to effectively separate organics at school. We'll provide guidance, decals and signage, as well as letters home to parents.



## How to Launch the Program

- ✓ **Confirm Waste Hauler** – Find out who your current waste hauler is, whether or not food waste hauling is included in your contract, and how many times per week the food waste will be picked up. If food waste is not currently covered in your waste hauling contract, ask for it!
  
- ✓ **Educate** – Set up training sessions and meetings with the kitchen/food services staff, administrators, teachers and custodial staff to introduce the program and goals. OCRRA Recycling Specialists are ready to help through every step of this process. Provide teachers with (OCRRA-created) compost curriculum, videos, classroom activities, letters home to parents, announcements, etc.
  
- ✓ **Collection Set Up** – Plan cafeteria food waste separation logistics.
  - Get the necessary materials:
    - OCRRA-provided posters, cafeteria display boards and bin decals;
    - 5-gallon buckets or wheeled 65-gallon carts/totes;
    - Biodegradable bags to line the totes;
    - Biodegradable lunch trays and cutlery (optional).
  
  - Evaluate the best placement in the cafeteria for the food scrap bins. The food bins, recycling bins and trash bins should all be stationed together.
  
  - Evaluate the best placement outside the building for the extra food scrap totes. This should be done in coordination with your hauler.
  
- ✓ **Monitoring** – Monitor the process as it happens each day, this is critical. In the beginning, a hands-on waste separation monitor should be assigned for every lunch period. Consider enlisting student help, whether from a specific eco or compost “club” or assigning rotating classes to adopt the food scrap bins.

# Tips and Tricks

## Common Issues

1. Contamination
2. Not enough people or time to monitor the totes
3. Inadequate cooperation from custodians or kitchen staff

## Remedies

### 1. **Contamination:**

The best way to prevent this is by closely monitoring the food scrap separation in the cafeteria. Having a monitor at the food bin will prevent students and staff from absent-mindedly throwing trash in the bin.

### 2. **Monitoring:**

Make monitoring the bins fun, provide incentives. Make it a privilege to monitor the bins, something the older grades get to do. Some schools have a community service requirement and monitoring the compost bin is a great way to check off those community service hours. Additionally, the more education the student body receives about composting, the less monitoring will be necessary.

### 3. **Inadequate cooperation:**

Starting a school composting program requires support from some of the school's busiest people: the kitchen staff and the custodians. Start with just the post-consumer food prep waste, work out the kinks there, and then roll it out to the student body.

The custodians must be on board from the beginning in order for the program to be successful. It is essential to involve custodians in the planning and implementation. They know how this program will work best in their school. If they seem resistant, gain support through their supervisor or the principal.

## Additional Tips

- Start with pre-consumer or kitchen prep food scraps only.
- Next expand to post-consumer scraps with third grade students or older.
- Start with one school at a time, then slowly roll out to the rest of the district. Consider starting at the school that does most of the food prep for the district.

# Food Scraps

## What can be composted?



**Yes!**



**No.**



### Food Scraps

- Meat, Poultry, Fish, Bones, Skins
- Eggs and Dairy
- Plate Scrapings
- Fruits/Vegetables (Peels/Pits too)
- Grains (Bread, Dough, Pasta)
- Coffee Grounds, Filters and Tea Bags
- Small Volumes of Liquid (Soup)

### Paper – Food Soiled

- Paper Towels and Napkins
- Paper Cups and Plates
- Waxed Cardboard and Waxed Paper

### Plant and Wood Scraps

- Plant Cuttings, Flowers, Herbs
- Produce Crates

### Plastic

- Compostable Plastic Cups  
(BPI Certified Only)

### Plastic

- Straws
- Bags
- Cling Wrap
- Produce Baskets and Netting
- Cups, Plates and Utensils

### Miscellaneous

- Grease
- Large Volumes of Liquid
- Styrofoam
- Metal
- Gloves
- Wire
- Ice Cream Cartons
- Bathroom Tissues and Paper Towels
- Cork

### Blue Bin Recyclables

- Plastic Bottles
- Glass Bottles and Jars
- Milk and Juice Cartons
- Metal cans

