

9.4 Reduce and Compost Organic Waste

5 Points

15 Points

20 Points

30 Points

35 Points

Action Updates

This action has been revised for the **current certification cycle**. The previous version of this action is [available for comparison](#). Edits are highlighted in yellow. (Last updated 2024)

Objective

Reduce or eliminate food and organic waste and increase food scraps recovery.

Complementary Action:

- [Recycle Additional Materials](#)

What to Do

Note: Recycling of leaves is mandatory in CT, and grass clippings are banned from disposal, so programs for either of these items are not eligible for points.

1. Choose one or more target sectors and implement ongoing food waste prevention education in those sectors. Consider any measurable impacts observed as a result of the program. Examples of campaigns eligible for points under this Action are listed below. Outreach must have taken place in the last three years, though it may be part of a longer-term outreach initiative. **(5 points)**
 - Educational outreach that prevents the creation of food waste in schools. Strategies include teaching students about making responsible food selection choices and the consequences of food waste; or
 - Outreach to prevent residential food waste. Strategies include educating residents on effective menu planning and shopping and the difference between “sell-by,” “use-by,” “best-by,” and expiration dates.

Submit: A brief overview of outreach (suggested 5 sentences maximum), including target sectors; at least one example of materials disseminated in the last three years, which could include flyers, articles, letters, newsletters, presentations, or digital communications. For websites, submit both a hyperlink and a screenshot of the relevant webpage(s).

2. Implement a program to divert food waste or other non-mandated organic waste that diverts source-separated organics from disposal for composting at a municipal facility or at an off-site permitted composting or anaerobic digesting facility. Examples of programs eligible for points under this Action are listed below. **(15 points per program, up to 30 points)**
 - Implement curbside collection of food waste for residents and/or businesses.
 - Implement a food waste recovery program at one or more schools in your community.
 - Provide an opportunity for food and/or organic waste collection at your transfer station.

Submit: Evidence of current implementation of an organic waste recovery program, which could include: a municipal ordinance, contract or agreement with the composting facility, or links to town website pages that clearly describe how your constituents can participate in the program to compost organic waste.

Engaging Partners

Sustainable CT encourages regional collaboration and other forms of partnership. For every action, please complete the "Partners" box in your submission, indicating the name(s) of any municipalities and/or organizations you partnered with (if any) and a brief description of your municipality's role. If you collaborate with other municipalities, each community will receive points. For additional information, please see the "[Partners Guidance Document](#)".

Potential Municipal and Community Collaborators

The municipal recycling coordinator, public works department director, or other appropriate municipal staff involved in materials management should be involved in the implementation of this Action. Community partners include representatives from the target sectors involved.

Funding

If available, below are potential funding sources specific to this Action. For a complete listing of potential funding opportunities to assist with implementing Sustainable CT Actions, please visit the [Sustainable CT Grants Portal](#), which is searchable by Action. Please also visit the [Support for Your Town](#) page for opportunities for technical assistance and other supports.

- [Urban Act Grant Program](#)
- [Municipal Grant Program \(MGP\)](#)
- [Sustainable CT Community Match Fund](#)
- [Miniature Alcohol Bottle Fund](#)

Resources

Toolkits, Calculators, Guidance Documents

- [Legal Fact Sheet for Connecticut Food Donation: Date Labeling Laws](#)
- [Legal Fact Sheet for Connecticut Food Donation: Liability Protections](#)
- [Legal Fact Sheet for Connecticut Food Donation: Tax Incentives for Businesses](#)
- [Phood: Commercial Waste Prevention Program](#)
- Oregon's [Wasted Food Wasted Money](#)
- NRDC and Ad Council "[Save the Food](#)" campaign
- RecyclingWorks [Food Waste Estimator Tool](#)
- Center for EcoTechnology's [Wasted Food Solutions](#)
- Center for EcoTechnology's [Food Donation by Connecticut Schools](#)
- [EPA Food Scraps](#)
- [EPA Food too Good to Waste Guide](#)
- [EPA Small Business Guide on Preventing Waste](#)
- [Managing Food Waste for Sustainability: Composting versus Landfills](#)
- [USDA Food Product Dating](#)
- Institute for Local Self-Reliance "[Yes! In my Backyard: A Home Composting Guide for Local Government](#)"
- [EPA's Sustainable Management of Food](#); Excess Food Opportunities Map

Organizations and Relevant Programs

- CT DEEP, [Food Waste Reduction and Recovery](#)
- CT DEEP, [Composting and Organics Recycling](#)
- CT DEEP, [Potential Sources of Compost in Connecticut](#)
- [Center for Ecotechnology](#) offers free technical assistance.
 - Center for Ecotechnology, [Wilton, CT Case Study](#)
- US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), [Sustainable Management of Food](#)

Why This Matters

The primary component of solid waste in Connecticut is organic waste, most of which is discarded food. Through composting, food waste can become a precious agricultural resource (organic fertilizer). When food waste goes

into landfills, it does not decompose, but rather off-gases methane. Not only does the off-gassing contribute to climate change, but also that earth-friendly fertilizer resource is lost.

Benefits

When you reduce the food waste in your community, you also lower the adverse environmental impacts on your air and water supply, reduce your greenhouse gas emissions, and decrease your solid municipal waste. As a result, both the sector targeted by your campaign and your municipality will save money through less over-purchasing and reduced disposal costs. Thoughtful and strategic donations of uneaten food can also ensure that low-income residents in your community have something to eat, helping build community and promote equity.

CT Success Stories

- [Cheshire - Jun 2021 Certification](#)
- [Ridgefield - Nov 2021 Certification](#)
- [Glastonbury - Nov 2021 Certification](#)
- [Hartford - Nov 2021 Certification](#)
- [West Hartford - Nov 2021 Certification](#)
- [Westport - Nov 2021 Certification](#)
- [Southbury - May 2022 Certification](#)
- [Granby - Sep 2023 Certification](#)
- [Middletown - Sep 2023 Certification](#)