

9.5 Promote Waste Reduction and Reuse

5 – 70 Points

Action Updates

This action was last updated in 2026. The previous version of this action is [available for comparison](#). Edits are highlighted in yellow.

Objective

Implement initiatives and educate community members on waste prevention, reduction, and reuse before disposal.

Complementary Action:

- [Recycle Additional Materials](#)
- [Compost Organic Waste](#)

What to Do

1. Sponsor or host outreach or a program to educate residents and/or business owners in your community about food waste prevention, waste reuse, and/or waste reduction. Examples of programs eligible for points under this Action are listed below. Outreach or programs must have taken place in the last three years, though they may be part of a longer-term initiative. **(5 points)**

- Educational materials on meal and menu planning, how to use leftovers, and other in-home food preparation practices to reduce waste;
- Educate residents on the difference between “sell-by,” “use-by,” “best-by,” and expiration dates;
- Outreach to local businesses, such as restaurants and grocery stores, on food waste prevention or waste reduction.

Note: Activities eligible for points under this sub-action include one-time events or posting of educational materials on municipal communications channels. For longer-term outreach consisting of multiple events, please see sub-action 9.5.3.

Submit: A brief overview of program (suggested 5 sentences maximum), including target audience; 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. Sponsor or host outreach or a program to educate residents and/or business owners in your community about waste contamination (i.e., placing materials that cannot be recycled in the recycling bin) and the importance of properly sorting waste and recyclables. **(5 points)**

Submit: An overview of your education program (5 sentences maximum), including target populations (if any), and at least one example of educational 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).

3. Implement a campaign to promote recycling, composting, or food waste prevention in your community. Be sure to identify a target audience (e.g., all residents, low- to moderate-income residents, local businesses,

multifamily property owners) and tailor your outreach to the audience. Your campaign must include at least 3 events (virtual or in person) that have already taken place; these 3 events must have taken place within a total span of 1 year. The full campaign must have occurred within the last 3 years to be eligible for credit. Promotion for events does not count as an event. **(10 points per campaign, 30 points maximum)**

Submit: A completed [worksheet 1](#), and at least one example of educational materials disseminated, 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).

4. Host or support initiatives in your community that promote waste prevention, waste reuse, and/or waste reduction. These programs must be long-term, available to residents, business owners, or other community members year-round, and allow for the collection and/or exchange of a broad range of items. Programs must have taken place in the last three years, though they may be part of a longer-term initiative. **(15 points per initiative or program, up to 30 points)**

Examples of initiatives eligible for this sub-action include (but are not limited to):

- Tool libraries and swap shops
- Food recovery programs
- Switching from disposable to reusable cutlery and dishware in municipal facilities, including school cafeterias

Note: One-time events related to waste prevention, waste reuse, and/or waste reduction may be submitted under sub-action 9.5.1.

Submit: A brief written description of your waste reduction or reuse initiative, including information about how your municipality hosts or supports the program; and at least one example of promotional 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). If you collaborated with a nonprofit or business to host the program, you must submit a partnership letter or equivalent documentation of the partnership.

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

Potential partners and collaborators include municipal recycling coordinators, transfer stations, public works departments, local community organizations, and local sustainability teams.

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.

Resources

Toolkits, Calculators, Guidance Documents

- Food Waste and Food Waste Prevention:
 - [Legal Fact Sheet for Connecticut Food Donation: Date Labeling Laws](#)
 - [Phood: Commercial Waste Prevention Program](#)
 - Oregon's [Wasted Food Wasted Money](#)

- NRDC and Ad Council [“Save the Food”](#) campaign
- [EPA Food too Good to Waste Guide](#)
- [EPA Small Business Guide on Preventing Waste](#)
- Center for EcoTechnology's [Wasted Food Solutions](#)
- [USDA Food Product Dating](#)
- Food Recovery and Donation:
 - [Legal Fact Sheet for Connecticut Food Donation: Liability Protections](#)
 - [Legal Fact Sheet for Connecticut Food Donation: Tax Incentives for Businesses](#)
 - Center for EcoTechnology's [Food Donation by Connecticut Schools](#)
- Waste Reduction and Reuse:
 - CT DEEP, [Tips on Waste Reduction & Reuse for Schools](#)
 - US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), [Managing and Reducing Wastes: A Guide for Commercial Buildings](#)
 - US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), [Spotlight on Waste Prevent: EPA's Program to Reduce Solid Waste at the Source](#)
 - US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), [Waste Prevention, Recycling, and Composting Options: Lessons from 30 Communities](#)
- Waste Contamination:
 - State of Washington Department of Ecology, [Washington's Contamination Reduction and Outreach Plan](#)

Organizations and Relevant Programs

- CT DEEP, [Waste Reduction](#)
- CT DEEP, [Reuse](#)
- CT DEEP, [Food Waste Reduction and Recovery](#)
- [Center for Ecotechnology](#) offers free technical assistance.
- US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), [Sustainable Management of Food](#)
- US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), [Reducing and Reusing Basics](#)

Why This Matters

Waste reduction and reuse measures help keep materials out of the waste stream. By reducing waste at the source or reusing items and extending their lifespan, communities can reduce costs and conserve resources.

Benefits

Waste reduction and reuse are critical strategies for addressing our waste management crisis. By reusing items when possible and reducing the waste generated in your communities, we can prevent the need for downstream disposal through recycling, compost, or landfill. Waste reduction and reuse initiatives can also offer opportunities for residents and businesses to save money.

CT Success Stories

- [Stamford - May 2025 Certification](#)
- [Vernon - May 2025 Certification](#)
- [Bridgeport - Oct 2025 Certification](#)
- [Darien - Oct 2025 Certification](#)
- [Guilford - Oct 2025 Certification](#)
- [Mansfield - Oct 2025 Certification](#)
- [Rocky Hill - Oct 2025 Certification](#)
- [Stamford - Oct 2025 Certification](#)
- [West Haven - Oct 2025 Certification](#)
- [Woodbridge - May 2026 Certification](#)