

CCSMM Recommendations

PR

Pamela Roach

Thu 10/15/2020 09:02

To: DEEP RecyclingProgram

Cc: Carl Amento <camento@scrcog.org> Daria Larson <dlarson@scrcog.org>

Response to CCSMM - Recommendations.pdf

138 KB

Good morning,

We are pleased to submit the attached recommendations for CCSMM's Organic's Focus Area. We look forward to implementing programs that will reduce trash by diverting food scraps through prevention, donation, compost and anaerobic digestion. We appreciate this opportunity to submit our recommendations for consideration.

Thank you.

South Central Regional Council of Governments (SCRCOG)

Pamela Ricci Roach, Solid Waste & Recycling Consultant pdricciroach@gmail.com

Carl Amento, Executive Director CAmento@SCRCOG.org

Daria Larson, Graduate Student Professional Intern DLarson@SCRCOG.org

CCSMM Public Engagement Questions Request for Comments and Solutions

Submission by:

South Central Regional Council of Governments (SCRCOG)

Pamela Ricci Roach, Solid Waste & Recycling Consultant pdricciroach@gmail.com

Carl Amento, Executive Director CAmento@SCRCOG.org

Daria Larson, Graduate Student Professional Intern DLarson@SCRCOG.org

EDUCATION

It is important that education be the first and most important step with CCSMM programs that are implemented, i.e. addressing and preventing contamination, recycling right, diverting food waste, clear signage (written and pictures), clear instructions, bi-lingual, radio ads, more. It would be beneficial to partner with organizations, schools, churches, and businesses to provide materials to participants as well as to host events where citizens can learn about the programs and provide feedback. Additionally, it would be helpful to give incentives and subsidies whenever and wherever possible to aid in the successful launch of programs/projects.

Recommend: Bring to Connecticut the Center for Eco-Technology's (CET) Recycling Works program

RecyclingWorks in Massachusetts is a recycling assistance program funded by the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection and delivered under contract by the Center for EcoTechnology. The goals of this program are to help businesses and institutions reduce waste and maximize recycling, reuse, and food recovery opportunities. RecyclingWorks experts are available for assistance through a wide range of services, including on-site and virtual technical assistance, simple cost-benefit analyses, provision of signage templates, and staff **South Central**

Regional Council of Governments (SCRCOG)

Pamela Ricci Roach, Solid Waste & Recycling Consultant pdricciroach@gmail.com

Carl Amento, Executive Director CAmento@SCRCOG.org

Daria Larson, Graduate Student Professional Intern DLarson@SCRCOG.org

. Since its inception in 2013, RecyclingWorks has diverted over 185,000 tons of waste from disposal and has helped thousands of businesses and institutions across the state. recyclingworksma.com

Recommend: Bring to Connecticut Massachusetts's "The Green Team" food waste diversion program for schools

The Green Team is an interactive educational program that empowers students and teachers to help the environment through waste reduction, recycling, composting, energy conservation and pollution prevention. Participating classes receive certificates of recognition and are eligible to win awards. thegreenteam.org

Recommend: School Food Waste Diversion Programs with support from the Center for EcoTechnology

At the first CCSMM Organics working group meeting, Ashley Muspratt from the Center for Eco-Technology mentioned in her presentation their food waste diversion work and its success within schools in the SCRCOG region. For the past year, SCRCOG has been working with the CET to implement food waste diversion projects in public schools in the

SCRCOG's region. Food Waste Diversion guides were developed and given to each school after meeting with stakeholders and conducting site visits. Many of the schools have plans to compost on-site, as managing food scraps locally is a proven, viable way to reduce waste thereby saving on disposal costs, reducing transportation emissions and increasing compost for urban agriculture and community gardening.

There was extraordinary support from every SCRCOG municipality to conduct a pilot program for implementing this food waste diversion program for 20 schools in the SCRCOG region over a two-year grant period from approximately 7/1/20 to 6/30/22, with the goal of the pilot program being instituted in at least one school in each of the fifteen (15) SCRCOG municipalities. The pilot program was to serve as a "proof of concept", demonstrating waste disposal savings for municipalities and schools, and savings for schools with regard to upfront costs of buying and providing food for schoolchildren. The cost savings demonstrated by the pilot program would incentivize the pilot schools to continue their food waste diversion efforts after completion of the grant period. It would also provide a template for each of the municipalities/school districts to emulate the pilot schools and expand the program to other, and potentially all, schools in each SCRCOG town.

Food Waste Diversion Programs are developed to tailor to each school's individual needs, with the goal of reducing, recovering, and recycling the foods that goes uneaten by students. School staff can choose to create a program which builds upon current local efforts and includes any of the following components: 1) Reduction – find ways to improve on current methods of ordering, prepping, and storage techniques in cafeterias kitchens; 2) Recovery – donate uneaten food to other students or people in need; 3) Diversion – recycle discarded food for other uses including animal feed, compost and energy generation.

Support for this program was evident through extraordinary engagement from the SCRCOG's Chief Elected Officials, school principals, administration, teachers, kitchen staff, custodians, parents, students, environmental clubs, Town Sustainable Committees, and more - most site visits were followed by a meeting of 10-20 of the above-mentioned people excited about this project.

Important: Children's lifelong food habits are informed by their school experiences, and school meal programs can be a key avenue for education on source separation of trash, recycling and food scraps. Changing practices in schools has the potential to change food waste habits in the home, as children will start the conversation with their parents about the concepts they have learned in their school cafeteria. Teaching about the donation of surplus food to local food banks and families in need connects students directly with the realities of hunger and food justice issues on a local level.

As the momentum for this pilot was propelling forward, COVID hit. Unfortunately, RPIP grant funding from OPM for this pilot was not awarded due to a shortfall of funds (due to COVID) in the Regional Performance Incentive Account which is funded in portion by hotel and car rental taxes.

As we soon move beyond COVID, and cafeterias resume operation we will again seek support for SCRCOG's regional school food waste diversion pilot program. In the meantime, with support, CET can provide training/support for food waste diversion in school kitchens, donation guidance and food scrap diversion in classrooms.

Recommend: Add Food Scraps to existing Composting Operations at Transfer Stations – Need CT DEEP Permit

For example, the City of West Haven submitted a grant proposal to USDA to demonstrate how municipalities can add food waste to existing yard waste compost operations without significant investments in equipment, technology and expertise, and save significant funds in tipping fees. The project seeks to answer questions about residual chemical contamination, seed contamination and nutrient value of the end product that is of concern to farmers and gardeners and improve the overall ecology of the community. West Haven did not receive USDA funding; however, they are

currently planning to move forward with this demonstration pilot while seeking funding to begin operations on a slighter scale.

West Haven anticipates that this operation will demonstrate to municipalities statewide that the City saves at least \$94/ton for every ton composted, while avoiding transportation costs and reducing emissions. West Haven would plan to continue the operation and proceed with plans for household collection city-wide. Additionally, West Haven has a large food distributor who will be compelled by State Law to recycle food waste once West Haven's composting facility is locally established. The City may charge such operations a tipping fee to help offset compost operation expenses. They anticipate ecological benefits from replacing public field fertilizer operations with compost by reducing chemical run-off to the sound, improving soil quality and ability to absorb water. They anticipate positive outcomes for urban farmers and gardeners with a high nutrient value quality compost, and its contribution to quality local food production.

Recommend: Community Composting Collaboratives

For example, New Haven received a grant from USDA Grant to conduct a Community Compost and Food Waste Reduction Project. New Haven's effort, along with its partners, will pilot new approaches to food waste processing and compost production and engage collaborating partners in a well-facilitated process to work toward building and integrated, multi-tiered community food waste handling and composting systems. The plan includes coordinated development of three mid-scale composting facilities in the City, the promotion of community gardens and home-based composting, and the production of 700 cubic yards of high-quality compost to use across urban agriculture projects and community gardens. The project will result in cost savings from removing waste from the municipal waste stream and will provide high quality compost for urban agriculture and community gardening.

Recommend: Curbside Organics Program

As we increase food scrap collection efforts from businesses and institutions facilitated through the RecyclingWorks program recommended above, food scrap diversion would ideally reach a scale large enough at which the savings from route efficiency may lower costs for businesses, institutions, schools and residents. Currently, residents who want their food scraps diverted curbside must pay a food scrap hauler for pickup. See below Co-Collection method for residents which allows them to separate their food scraps into a separate bag and put it out with their trash at no additional cost.

Recommend: Co-Collection Method

The Co-Collection method presented at CCSMM's first organics working group meeting, by Debra Darby, Tetra-Tech – a method whereby organics are collected in the same truck as solid waste. Residents put their food scraps into a compostable bag in their trash container along with their regular trash bags. Bags are durable enough to withstand the compression of the truck, tears and is puncture resistant. This method would require the compostable foods scraps bags to be separated at the trash facility or transfer station where the trash transported to. This method would be the ultimate convenience for residents, would reduce trash tonnage, avoid additional emissions and will not require residents to pay for food scrap pickup at the curb. WasteZero also promotes this method as part of their OneRoute Co-Collection program, whereby residents also put recyclable materials into color coded bags – for example can separate glass into separate bags as well. WasteZero.com