



New Hampshire Food Waste Diversion and Sharing Initiative

Background

New Hampshire Food Waste Diversion and Sharing Initiative is a collaborative effort between individuals, schools and towns to develop best practices that reduce food waste and prevent it from going to our NH landfills. This project is being supported by grants from [WWF](#) (World Wide Nature Fund) and the [USDA](#) (CFWR) in partnership with the [Amherst Community Foundation](#).

In 2021, New Hampshire residents, schools and businesses sent about 180,500 tons of food waste to landfills, according to the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services. That is about 24 percent of the total sent to NH landfills

This is a group effort and requires adequate resources and support to establish good habits. There will be opportunities to network with your peers and fellow students pursuing this initiative.

Goal

Our goal is to provide the resources and support to enable students and teachers from K-12 in NH to divert and reduce food waste as well as share uneaten food with those in need. [Reducing Food Waste](#) is one of the top 3 climate solutions listed by Project Drawdown in reducing our carbon and methane footprint. We feel strongly that teaching students about food waste gives them the self-efficacy skills to take on climate solutions and access to climate education throughout their lives.

Food waste diversion, reduction and sharing helps students understand:

- Cycles: how food waste can be converted to compost and used in soil or converted to energy through anaerobic digestion.
- Applied STEM skills:
 - Reinforce math skills in conducting audits of what is thrown away and saved.
 - Teach and learn the biology of food breaking down and converting biodegradable waste into compost that is safe for humans, animals and plants, and that is recyclable mainly as a fertilizer or soil improver.
 - Understand the chemistry of food waste including learning about organic carbon and other elements, including nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium.
 - Learn about the physics and thermodynamics involved in converting waste to energy in an anaerobic digester.

- Civics and Community: study food distribution and understand how uneaten food can be shared with others including those that are food insecure.
- Math/Economics: Discover how food waste can be reduced by providing incentives for including local produce (see [nh farm to school](#)) or imperfect produce, or do cost-savings analysis of reusable cafeteria products like silverware and trays.

Feel free to pair your project with one of the following food waste lesson plans on Subject to Climate:

- [K-2 grade food waste lesson plans](#)
- [3 - 5 grade food waste lesson plans](#)
- [6 - 8 grade food waste lesson plans](#)
- [9 - 12 grade food waste lesson plans](#)
- [AP 12 grade food waste lesson plans](#)

With this grant, the goal is to put in place a food waste diversion, reduction and sharing practice that meets the needs of administrators, teachers and students and becomes institutionalized and a part of the school culture over time.

What the initiative entails: Up to \$2,500 per school

- Up to a \$1000 stipend for teachers that support green teams in the school that drive the food waste diversion project
- \$500 can be used to purchase [food waste collection materials](#) including bins, weight scales, mini-fridge, silverware,etc
- \$500 can be used for another School Ally: This could entail cafeteria workers, maintenance, school volunteer, administrator, etc.
- \$500 can be used by the student green team to communicate the food waste diversion program within the school
 - Work with other leadership groups to educate the whole school about food waste practices and plan waste reduction events and school activities
 - Design educational materials including posters, flyers, and school announcement scripts for each school to educate the school about fighting food waste
 - Participate in [Food Waste Prevention Week](#) (April 1- 7) and share your story about how their school/organization is reducing school food waste

There is some flexibility on the funding in terms of how it can be spent. For example, at the elementary level, emphasis may be placed on more project based, hands-on learning whereas upper grades (7 -12) may want to focus on creating materials that educate their fellow classmates about fighting food waste. This is a rolling program that will go through June 1st of 2025 as there may also be some additional funding coming this summer.

Interested? Next Steps

[Apply here](#). The 1st application deadline to apply is **February 15th** to try this out in the Spring of 2023. If you have any questions, feel free to email Paul Karpawich at pkarp7691@gmail.com