

# New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection

## New Jersey's Food Waste Reduction Act 50x30 Report

Evaluating Our Progress to  
Reduce Food Waste 50% by 2030

April 2026



## Introduction and Background

The Food Waste Reduction Act (N.J.S.A. 13:1E-226 et seq.) was signed into law in July 2017, establishing a goal in New Jersey to reduce its annual generation of food waste by 50 percent of 2017 levels by the year 2030, also known as the *50x30 Goal*. The Act also required the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and the New Jersey Department of Agriculture (NJDA) to develop a plan that will guide the state to achieve the reduction goal. The [Food Waste Reduction Plan](#) (Plan), which quantifies the amount of food waste generated in the state (an estimated 1.48 million tons in 2017) and establishes the 50x30 goal in accordance with the Act, was published in October 2023. In order to achieve the 50x30 goal, the state must reduce, on average, 57,079 tons of food waste generated per year to reach the eventual goal of 742,038 total tons generated in 2030. The Plan proposes short and long-term actions that the DEP intends to take to achieve this goal, including administrative and legislative recommendations to support and enhance these efforts. This progress report details the steps that the state has taken to progress towards the 50x30 Goal.

## Food Waste Reduction Progress

Food waste generation can be calculated by a combination of solid waste and recycling tonnage reports and a determination of the percentage that food waste comprises of municipal solid waste (MSW). Based on guidance from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), DEP calculates food waste generation tonnage by adding the amount of food waste disposed and recycled in a given year. However, since food waste, specifically, is not measured when disposed, a percentage of food waste comprising overall MSW must be determined and applied to the overall solid waste disposal figure.

The original food waste generation figure from 2017, as noted in the Food Waste Reduction Plan, was 1,480,000 tons. To establish the 2022 generation figure, DEP used solid waste and recycling tonnage data reported that year. To determine the overall percentage of food waste in MSW disposed, the DEP used data from the [Rutgers University's Municipal Solid Waste Characterization Study](#), funded by its Recycling Enhancement Act (REA) Higher Education Research Grant Program. By extrapolating the data measured in this study, DEP determined that the overall percentage of food waste in the MSW stream is 19%, compared to 22% in 2017. The ultimate 2022 food waste generation figure was then calculated as follows:

Total MSW Disposed (Tons)	Food Waste Disposed (19% of MSW Tons)	Food Waste Recycled (Tons)	Total Food Waste Generated (Tons)
5,920,952	1,124,981	150,381	1,275,362

When comparing the food waste generation tonnages of 1,480,000 in 2017 to 1,275,362 in 2022, an overall reduction of 14% is achieved.

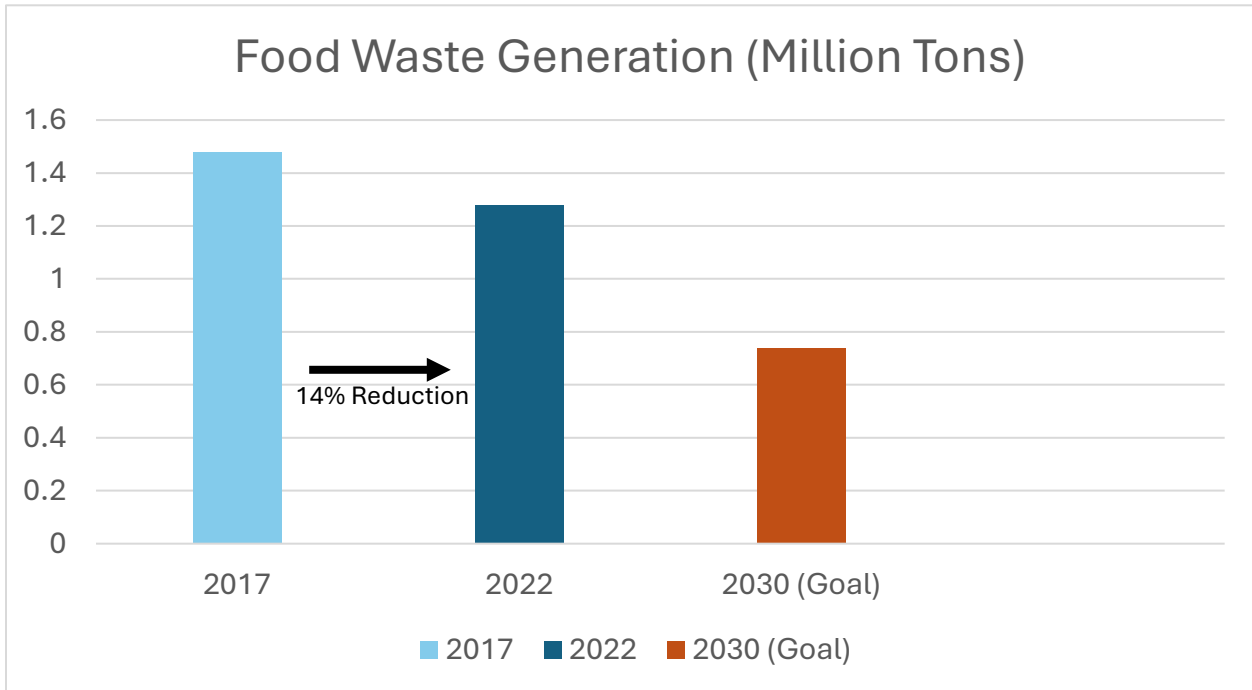


Figure 1 - Graph illustrating the food waste generation calculations for 2017, 2022 and the 50x30 Goal figure.

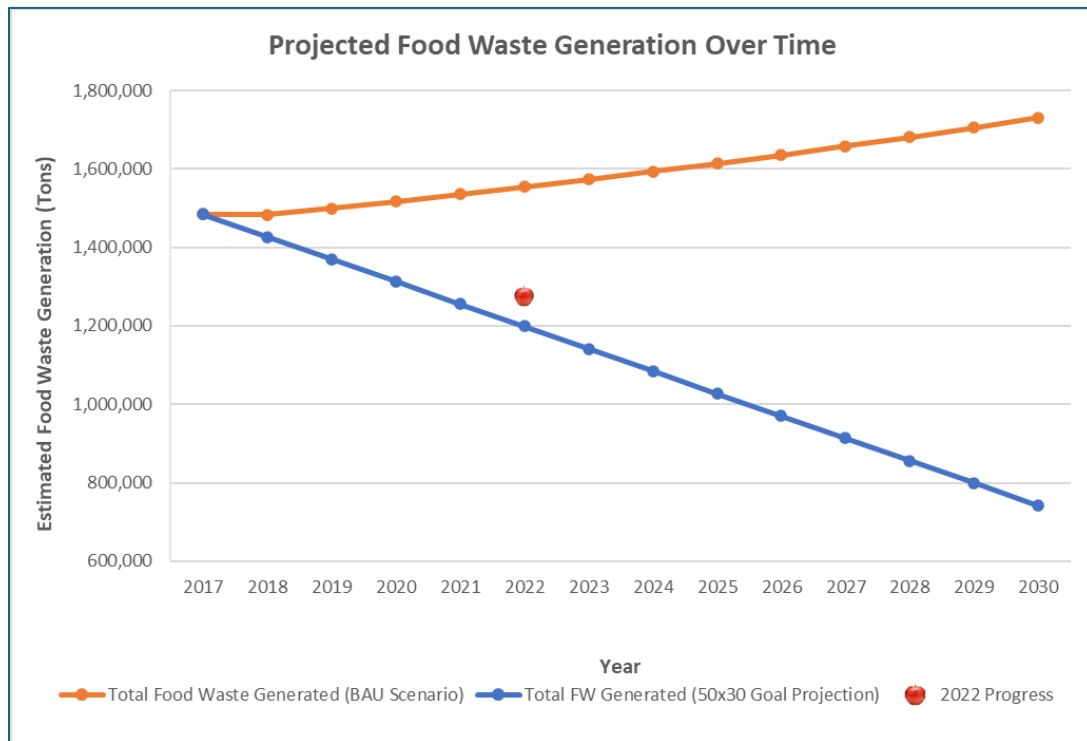


Figure 2 - Graph illustrating the state’s progress towards meeting the 50x30 Goal. This graph shows projected food waste generation over time given a business-as-usual scenario (no food waste reduction practices implemented) against an ideal food waste reduction scenario that is aligned with New Jersey’s 50x30 Goal.

The reduction in food waste generation from 2017 to 2022 is even more impressive when comparing to the difference in solid waste generation for the same time period. From 2017-2022, overall solid waste generation in New Jersey dropped from 9,615,409 tons/yr to 9,550,659 which amounts to a reduction of only 0.6%.

Pursuant to the Plan, the DEP, along with other state agencies, have undertaken the following tasks, discussed in further detail in subsequent sections below, to help achieve food waste reduction in the state:

- Creating a website and online toolkit containing information and resources about food waste reduction
- Raising awareness through an online educational campaign
- Utilizing state and federal grant funding to support food waste planning at a local level
- Applying for EPA's Climate Pollution Reduction Grant
- Drafting an Executive Order addressing food waste at state agencies
- Issuing grants to institutions of higher education
- Developing guidelines for reducing, recovering, and recycling food waste at schools
- Funding the Meal Recovery Coalition
- Supporting Sustainable Jersey food waste actions
- Collaborating with the NJ Office of Food Security Advocate

## Creation of Food Waste Website and Toolkit

In accordance with the Food Waste Reduction Plan's proposed short-term action to create a website and/or app, the DEP developed a website<sup>1</sup> in 2019 that is a one-stop clearinghouse for food waste management. It provides valuable information about the impact of food waste, explanations of food date labeling, resources and links to organizations such as the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), and the NJDA to learn more about tools that can help reduce food waste, and what can be done to mitigate the issue based on sector. This information supports the Plan's recommendation to create educational materials for reducing food waste and providing guidance for date labeling. The website will continue to be updated to reflect the progress the state makes towards the 50x30 Goal.

The DEP also developed a Food Waste Toolkit,<sup>2</sup> which provides resources to inform, authorize and fund food waste prevention and management practices at home, work, school, or in government. There are a variety of resources offered by sector and action type

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<sup>1</sup> <https://dep.nj.gov/dshw/swpl/fw/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://dep.nj.gov/sustainability/outreach-and-education/food-waste-toolkit/>

including food waste reduction, recovery, and recycling. The Toolkit contains helpful information on funding opportunities such as DEP's REA Grants for Higher Education, educational materials to reduce food waste including information on date labels and food storage, and related programs and organizations. As recommended in the Plan to develop and facilitate partnerships with organizations already active in developing food waste reduction strategies, information on established partnerships and their related programs can be found within the Toolkit, such as the NJDA's [More Meals, Less Waste](#) campaign and [Sustainable Jersey's Municipal Certification Program](#). The Toolkit also links to the DEP Food Waste Reduction website, the Plan, [New Jersey's Food Waste Recycling regulations](#) [N.J.A.C. 7:26K] and DEP's [NJ School Food Waste Guidelines](#).

## Raising Awareness

The *Erase Food Waste NJ* campaign was created by the DEP to raise awareness and educate the public about the state's food waste policy and goals while also describing how food waste contributes to global climate change. As part of this campaign, DEP has published monthly challenges that provide fun tips and tricks to address and reduce food waste generation at home. These challenges are posted on DEP's social media pages using the hashtag *#EraseFoodWasteNJ*. The goal of this campaign is to garner public interest and raise awareness while simultaneously providing educational materials to promote food waste reduction. The campaign is a prime example of the Plan's recommended action to coordinate outreach to raise awareness of the issue. DEP will continue to raise awareness through education and outreach, so stay tuned and follow our campaign!

## Pending Guidance Promoting Development of Food Waste Management Infrastructure and Programs

The DEP, in an effort to reduce food waste generation as well as divert food waste from landfills/incinerators, has been focused on utilizing available state and federal funding to develop guidance to encourage local governments and county Solid Waste Advisory Councils to develop and enhance sustainable food waste management programs and promote increased access to food waste diversion programs. Through projects funded by [EPA's Solid Waste Infrastructure for Recycling \(SWIFR\)](#) and New Jersey's REA grant programs, Solid Waste Management Districts will have access to guidance that helps them comply with the requirements of P.L. 2025, c. 228 to develop and implement food waste reduction strategies that would enable each district to reduce at least 50% of the amount of food waste generated in their district. These projects are discussed in greater detail below.

## NJDEP Solid Waste Infrastructure for Recycling Grant Project

The EPA's SWIFR Grant Program funds activities that support long-term planning and data collection needs to demonstrate progress toward the [National Recycling Goal](#) and [Food Loss and Waste Reduction Goal](#) and advance a circular economy for materials and support the state-led implementation of plans to advance post-consumer materials management. The DEP was awarded funding under this federal grant program for its project, entitled "Promoting Sustainable Food Waste Management in New Jersey," to support New Jersey's established climate action and food waste reduction and recycling policies and goals, including the *50x30 Goal*. The objective of the project is to promote food waste management solutions in New Jersey.

In accordance with the Plan, which encourages county involvement through the district solid waste management planning process, the project will develop food waste management planning guidance and a toolkit to encourage sustainable food waste management through prevention, recovery, and recycling. The guidance developed for local governments as part of the SWIFR project will support state-led implementation of plans, including the Food Waste Reduction Plan, to address food waste.

In addition to the development of guidance, the Plan also calls for encouraging the use of measuring tools to quantify food waste. As such, a New Jersey-specific estimation tool will be developed through the SWIFR project to assist generators with estimating how much pre-consumer versus post-consumer food waste they generate. This will allow businesses to determine whether they are required by the N.J.A.C. 7:26K to source separate and recycle their generated food waste. This will result in more accurate food waste tonnage reporting to the DEP and allow for more effective tracking of food waste management in the state. This project is ongoing and is anticipated to be completed by 2027.

## Rutgers University and New Jersey Composting Council Recycling Enhancement Act Grant Project

Rutgers University and the New Jersey Composting Council have partnered to complete a research project that will develop a guidance document to assist New Jersey solid waste management districts with developing efficient food waste management strategies and help districts achieve their food waste reduction targets. This project is funded by the New REA grant program referenced above. The objective of the project is for these strategies to be incorporated in existing and

future solid waste management plans by encouraging food waste management infrastructure development.

The project will assess current food waste management activities in each district by reaching out to towns that are already engaged in food waste reduction and recycling to learn the details of their plans and their current experiences. Input from stakeholders will be gathered by conducting pilot assessments of five (5) solid waste management districts that will include surveys of all stakeholders in the chosen districts as well as information exchanged at townhall meetings. This input will inform the guidance by learning from stakeholders' views on food waste reduction and reutilization. The project team will also research food waste reduction strategies implemented in other states including Massachusetts, New York, and Florida to understand if there are other lesson learned experiences. Data analysis and development of a guidance document with a set of recommendations for the solid waste management districts based on the surveys and findings from meetings will be followed by a final public meeting to share the final draft guidance with stakeholders to gauge their thoughts on the draft recommendations.

## EPA Climate Pollution Reduction Grant

EPA's Climate Pollution Reduction Grant (CPRG) program is a nationwide, two-phase EPA grant funded by the federal Inflation Reduction Act. Phase 1 provides \$250 million in noncompetitive planning grants to states and other entities to develop climate action plans for reducing greenhouse gas emissions and other harmful air pollutants. New Jersey's Priority Climate Action Plan (PCAP) identifies six focus areas, one of which is food waste. In November 2023, DEP, in collaboration with Rutgers University, hosted a stakeholder meeting to gain public input on food waste actions to prioritize. The PCAP can be found on DEP's [CPRG Program website](#) and provides more detail about stakeholder feedback and the state's priority actions, which are designed to align with the goals of the Plan. Phase 2 of EPA's CPRG program will provide \$4.6 billion in competitive grants to implement priority measures included in the PCAP. New Jersey will be eligible to receive this implementation funding.

## New Jersey Funding One Stop Shop

The DEP's Bureau of Climate Change and Clean Energy has created a clearinghouse of funding opportunities called [New Jersey Funding One Stop Shop](#). This online resource is designed to help residents, local governments, and nonprofits pursue critical green projects from homeowners from installing a heat pump to a government transitioning to an all-electric vehicle fleet. This interactive tool connects efficiency, electrification, and other

sustainability-focused projects with federal, state, and utility funding programs. Food systems/waste is also a project category. Based on answers to a few simple questions, the tool will match your project with available incentives and estimate the amount of funding for which you may qualify. The DEP will continue to compile and update information as new funding opportunities are made available in the state.

## Proposal of an Executive Order Addressing Food Waste at State Agencies

The DEP, as a short-term action proposed in the Plan, recommended the issuance of an Executive Order to support efforts to reach the state's *50x30 Goal*. The Executive Order calls for New Jersey state agencies to review their waste management practices and to begin implementing steps to achieve food waste reduction and to recycle food waste generated in state facilities. Under the Executive Order, agencies would be required to develop workplans that include strategies and recommendations to address food waste reduction in state government.

The proposed Executive Order paves the way for state agencies to lead by example by actively working towards state food waste reduction and recycling goals. The actions recommended for state agency workplans align with the recommended actions of the Food Waste Reduction Plan, including conducting a feasibility study or waste audit, providing food waste education, and developing partnerships with food donation outlets and food waste recycling facilities. To lead the state by example, DEP also prepared a plan that provides sustainable food waste management practices at its headquarters in Trenton.

## Sustainable Food Waste Management at DEP

To further support the objectives of the Executive Order, DEP's Division of Sustainable Waste Management (DSWM) prepared a plan recommending sustainable food waste management practices at DEP's main building located at 401 East State Street in Trenton. The recommended strategies for managing food waste fall under the categories of prevention, recovery or donation, and recycling. DSWM consulted the Center for EcoTechnology (CET)<sup>3</sup> to assess the amount of food waste generated within the main building's cafeteria and to determine the feasibility of recycling this food waste. Another company, SCS Engineers, was commissioned by DSWM to conduct a comprehensive waste audit of the building. Based on the data from these studies, DEP is considering options to help reduce food waste generated in-house. As part of this pilot, the DEP will also provide outreach,

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<sup>3</sup> CET is a Massachusetts-based non-profit organization focused on sustainability and assisting residents, communities, and businesses with identifying ways to reduce and effectively manage food waste.

education, and training to staff to ensure success of the program. This pilot program could lead to DEP being the first state agency to implement a formal food waste management program in New Jersey.

## Projects funded by Solid Waste Recycling Enhancement Act (REA) Grants

The REA Grant Program funds projects that support recycling demonstration, research or education including professional training. DEP has funded numerous food waste projects that provide educational materials and food waste management practices for schools, offer resources for composting, and conduct food waste audits to quantify and characterize solid waste composition in the state. Various REA projects emphasize the importance of food waste programs in schools. A critical component to achieving food waste reduction is educating students on food waste prevention, as they are more likely to take the knowledge that they gained from school and teach their families how to incorporate these practices at home as well. The following sections provide a few examples of recent projects funded under this grant program to further the state's efforts in achieving the *50x30 Goal*.

### Rutgers Municipal Solid Waste Characterization Study

As previously mentioned, one of the recycling projects funded under the REA is Rutgers University's [Municipal Solid Waste Quantification and Characterization of Burlington, Mercer, and Passaic Counties](#) - a year-long waste stream composition study that collected municipal solid waste data to determine the percentage of food waste in the MSW stream. The data collected by this study emphasizes the importance and need to research food waste among consumers, as mentioned in the Plan, to explain why food waste is being generated, and also help DEP further assess statewide food waste composition rates as referenced above.

### Sustainable Jersey Toolkit for K-12 Schools

Another project that was funded by the REA grants is the [Reduce, Recover and Recycle Food Waste – Sustainable Jersey Toolkit for K-12 Schools](#) authored by The College of New Jersey. The Sustainable Jersey Toolkit provides valuable information about best practices to reduce food waste in cafeterias, recycling and composting food waste, share tables and donations to recover food, and the importance of audits and how to implement them with student involvement. The toolkit was designed to build upon DEP's School Food Waste Guidelines, discussed in greater

detail below, and support schools in achieving Sustainable Jersey Certification Actions for Schools. In 2024, 75 submissions were received for the three new and updated food waste actions that were incorporated into the Sustainable Jersey Certification as a part of the REA project.

The Sustainable Jersey Toolkit recommends students be surveyed on the day of a food waste audit to determine why certain foods were not eaten. Understanding why the food was wasted in the first place can be used as a tool to identify opportunities for behavioral change and strategies for reduction. The Toolkit also discusses food recovery and methodologies for schools to donate excess recovered food to local non-profit organizations. This emphasizes the necessity for the Plan's long-term action endorsing food donation outlets to increase capacity by enhancing infrastructure and improving accessibility.

Three schools participated in a pilot study to test the food waste reduction practices identified in the toolkit and determine the results. After implementing the practices, the three schools noted a 45% reduction in food waste generation from the school lunch program. Based on the amount of food waste reduced and diverted in the pre-intervention versus post-intervention audits, it is estimated that in a school year, the three schools combined avoided 207,720 pounds of CO<sub>2</sub>e of greenhouse gas emissions, saved 44,400 kilowatt-hours of energy, 5,562,300 gallons of water, and \$45,193 on fruits, vegetables, and milk costs. Examples from the pilot schools were incorporated into the toolkit. <sup>4</sup>

## Rutgers New Jersey Leaves No Bite Behind

The [Rutgers New Jersey Leaves No Bite Behind](#) project, developed by the Rutgers University Cooperative Extension, provides lessons, videos, games, and resources for educators. Unlike the Sustainable Jersey Toolkit's purpose of providing the best practices for reducing, recycling, and recovering through food waste programs in schools, this project's goal was to improve the knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors of K-12 school administrations and students towards adopting food waste reduction practices. The project offers nine (9) lessons, which cover information about climate change and the greenhouse effect, the food system, environmental impacts of food waste, composting, decomposition, and how nutrients from these processes are recycled into the environment. Each lesson provides PowerPoint slides, a lesson plan, exit ticket, and a related game and/or video. Additional materials are also

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<sup>4</sup> Sustainable Jersey (The College of New Jersey) 2023. Final report for NJDEP Grant SHW20-012: Sustainable & scalable food waste solutions for schools. Submitted to the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection.

available including a student workbook, handouts, and fact sheets about composting, share tables, and tips to reduce food waste.

As recommended in the Plan to create and share educational materials, one of the goals of the New Jersey Leaves No Bite Behind project is to improve student knowledge of food waste reduction practices. It also provides specific information on food date labels. By using pre- and post-test surveys, the program was assessed by comparing two schools that taught the curriculum (the intervention group) to two schools that did not (the control group). After the study, the intervention group had scores with significantly higher averages in knowledge, behavior intentions, social norms, and perceived behavioral control compared to the control group.<sup>5</sup>

This project is a prime example of how to effectively incorporate food waste reduction education in K-12 schools. The lessons provided allow teachers to tie food waste into New Jersey's climate change education in schools. The program has been modified to include recommendations from the pilot study and is now called the [Guardians of the Food Galaxy Curriculum](#). Through an AmeriCorps grant, the outreach of the curriculum is expanding to other schools.

## Stockton University's New Jersey Food Asset Inventory and Mapping Project

Stockton University's New Jersey Food Asset Inventory and Mapping Project developed an interactive Geographic Information Systems (GIS) online mapping tool to connect excess food recipients to generators and facilitators. The project team consisted of staff from Stockton University, Rutgers University, Center for EcoTechnology, NJ Food Democracy Collaborative, and Bayshore Recycling. The objective of the project was to update and enhance EPA's Excess Food Opportunities Map to meet New Jersey's food recovery needs by developing a sector-specific food asset inventory for New Jersey and creating an interactive GIS web-mapping tool to show spatial distributions of New Jersey's excess food generation and collection infrastructure. The inventory includes various food waste generators, excess food distributors, and food waste processing facilities. The interactive GIS mapping tool improves the accuracy of metrics applied to large food waste generators and can be used to facilitate statewide food waste planning efforts and help connect excess food with those who can accept it. The interactive map is available online at: <https://dep.nj.gov/dshw/swpl/fw/>.

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<sup>5</sup> New Jersey Leaves No Bite Behind: A Climate Change and Food Waste Curriculum Intervention for Adolescents in the United States. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*. 2024; 21(4):437 <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph21040437>

## School Food Waste Guidelines

The State of New Jersey is committed to supporting New Jersey schools with effectively managing food waste. With the passage of legislation charging the DEP with developing food waste management guidance for schools [N.J.S.A. 13:1E-99.115], New Jersey's educational institutions are better equipped to reduce food waste generation and effectively manage unavoidable food waste sustainably. The following sections describe available food waste management guidance for schools that were developed by the DEP to further state food waste reduction goals.

### Guidelines for Implementing Food Waste Management Programs

The [School Food Waste Guidelines](#), developed by the DEP in 2019, are voluntary guidelines for K–12 schools and higher education institutions to reduce, recover, and recycle food waste. They were developed in consultation with the NJDA, the New Jersey Department of Education, the New Jersey Department of Health, and the New Jersey Office of the Secretary of Higher Education. Differing from the previously mentioned projects that specifically target K-12 schools, the Guidelines serve as a roadmap and advise not only K-12 schools, but also higher education institutions on how they can implement a food waste management program by providing up-to-date best management practices. The Guidelines provide information, resources, and best management practices to achieve food waste reduction, recovery, and recycling. The Guidelines also provide steps on how to implement a food waste audit and recommend that schools conduct at least one per year. Similar to the Sustainable Jersey Toolkit, the School Food Waste Guidelines also recommend donating excess food for recovery.

These guidelines were updated in 2024 to include new guidance for food waste reduction practices, such as deciphering food date labels, that connect food waste education to New Jersey's Climate Change Education Learning Standards for Schools set forth by the New Jersey Department of Education in 2020. The updated Guidelines better help schools to incorporate food waste reduction practices as part of New Jersey's climate goals.

The DEP presented the School Food Waste Guidelines at various conferences and schools. Along with an overview of the Guidelines' contents, the presentations highlighted successful implementations across New Jersey, such as one public school system implementing no/low-cost methods and reduction practices to prevent more than 90,000 pounds of food waste and an elementary school composting more than 21 gallons of cafeteria waste daily with students leading the

composting process. Based on DEP's discussions with schools, many have shown interest in integrating food waste collection programs into their cafeterias.

## In-Vessel Composting and Anaerobic Digestion Guidance

In an effort to reduce the public health and environmental impacts associated with food waste, and to encourage sustainable waste management practices, on December 21, 2023, Governor Murphy signed the [School Food Waste Recycling Law](#) [N.J.S.A. 13:1E-99.115a] into effect. The law allows schools to collect food waste for on-site recycling through in-vessel composting and anaerobic digestion systems (AD) and also allows schools without on-site in-vessel composting and AD systems to transfer collected food waste to another school equipped with such systems. As required by the law, the DEP has developed the [School Food Waste In-Vessel Composting and Anaerobic Digestion Guidance](#) for these systems with respect to addressing odor control, system selection, vessel siting, operational standards, and recordkeeping. The guidance also supports schools with compliance with the law, as certain permitting requirements for food waste management at schools have changed. With this guidance, the DEP encourages schools to create and/or implement best management practices for recycling food waste.

## New Jersey Economic Development Authority Sponsored Meal Recovery Coalition

The New Jersey Economic Development Authority (NJEDA) is a founding sponsor of the [Meal Recovery Coalition](#) (MRC), which is a new alliance that brings together New Jersey corporations, nonprofit organizations and individual volunteers, hospitals, educational institutions, and government entities to make meal recovery standard practice in New Jersey. The NJEDA awarded Share My Meals, a New Jersey-based nonprofit organization that has led the development of a technology platform that ensures safe meal recovery, a grant of \$125,000 to help expand its meal recovery efforts and establish a statewide Meal Recovery Coalition. Meal recovery is an approach to address food insecurity and food waste issues with programs that collect surplus meals from cafeterias and food service providers and deliver them to the homes of local families in need directly or through a network of community partners. It increases the amount and types of healthy food available to those who face food insecurity.

MRC is working to grow statewide meal recovery by raising awareness, fostering collaboration among private, nonprofit, and government stakeholders, and developing a sustainable and scalable model that can be replicated nationwide with a goal to recover

the estimated five million excess prepared meals that are sent to landfills each year. They are working to recover over 500,000 meals per year by 2026 to feed an estimated 6,400 people per week. As of August 31, 2024, the MRC served 168,409 meals, averted 959,753 pounds of carbon dioxide emissions, and recovered 226,026 pounds of food since its creation in December 2023.<sup>6</sup> NJDEP is a partner with the MRC and has provided support in developing the Coalition's [Food Donation Guidelines](#) in October 2025.

## Establishment of the New Jersey Office of Food Security Advocate

The Office of the Food Security Advocate was established in 2021, under N.J.S.A. 52:27J-3, and is primarily responsible for identifying areas that are underserved by current food insecurity programs, developing a strategic plan to address identified gaps in these areas, overseeing the development and implementation of public-private partnerships to address food insecurity, and bringing together stakeholders to establish a school meals strategy for the state. This is accomplished by collaborating with various stakeholders such as research organizations, universities, and state and community partners who are all focused on ensuring that the people of New Jersey have access to healthy, nutritious food. The Office has launched a number of initiatives and projects that help inform this mission. These include research to help increase SNAP participation in eligible families, collaborating with the Trenton Health Team to develop the Food Security Index map,<sup>7</sup> supporting school meals programs, and launching funding mechanisms to support food recovery organizations in the state. The DEP is committed to partnering with the Office of the Food Security Advocate by serving on its Executive Committee to assist in developing its statutorily mandated strategic plan and by supporting its many programs that align with food waste reduction.

## Sustainable Jersey Food Waste Actions

In accordance with the Plan's proposed short-term action to work with established organizations or certification programs, the DEP's Bureau of Sustainability has helped shape [Sustainable Jersey's Community Food Pantry/Bank & Soup Kitchen](#) action, which counts towards a Sustainable Jersey gold star for municipalities. The Bureau's staff reviewed submissions from municipalities that receive the 15 total available points for this action. Points are provided to municipalities that run or support a food bank or pantry and extra points are provided if they help run home and community delivery services for the food and supplies provided. There are currently 37 municipalities that are successfully

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<sup>6</sup> <https://mealrecoverycoalition.org/>

<sup>7</sup> [https://www.nj.gov/foodsecurity/food-security/resource-library/approved/nj\\_statewide\\_food\\_insecurity\\_index.shtml](https://www.nj.gov/foodsecurity/food-security/resource-library/approved/nj_statewide_food_insecurity_index.shtml)

taking this action, and the Bureau is assisting Sustainable Jersey with issuing certifications to even more eligible applicants in 2026.

## **Conclusion**

This progress report is intended to highlight some of the state's recent efforts in prioritizing food waste reduction to help mitigate the effects of climate change. Thanks to the adoption and implementation of new food waste policies in the state, an overall decrease in the percent food waste composition making up the state's municipal solid waste (MSW) stream is beginning to take effect, emphasizing the necessity to continue this momentum. The DEP will continue to prepare periodic progress updates as more information and data becomes available.