



PE5 Action: Compost Bins for Residents

2 Points

A. Why is this action important?

Studies indicate that more than 25 percent of the typical household's waste is composed of yard trimmings and food scraps. Backyard composting provides an easy, inexpensive way for residents to reduce organic materials in the waste stream, which reduces local government solid waste costs, keeps the materials out of landfills, and has the added benefit of producing 'black gold' (aka compost) for residents to use in their gardens. Composting organic waste also produces fewer greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions than sending these materials to a landfill.

B. How to implement this action

Local governments can implement this Climate Smart Communities (CSC) action by following the guidelines below:

- Create a plan and connect providing bins to any larger goals that have been set by the local government. Such goals could be part of a climate action plan, solid waste management plan, or other plan. The local government could also set specific goals for this action by passing a resolution or establishing an executive order regarding support for backyard composting by residents.
- Conduct research to determine what type of backyard composting bins would be most useful to residents. Sometimes local governments can purchase compost bins in bulk from a qualified vendor at a reduced price.
- Determine the appropriate quantity of composting bins and how to distribute them to residents.
- Decide whether or not to charge for the bins. Local governments may elect to distribute free compost bins or provide a discount on the bins.
- Develop educational materials to be provided with the composting bins, since residents may be unfamiliar with what can be composted and the benefits of composting.
- Distribute the bins. For points under this CSC action, bins must have been distributed within five years prior to the application date. Local governments can host special events to demonstrate how to use the bins educate and spread the word in the community about the availability of the bins. Provide information about the bins on the local government's website and at any relevant public events, such as events related to gardening or solid waste management.
- Track the number of bins distributed, and if possible, the reduction in waste that could be attributed to composting.

C. Time frame, project costs, and resource needs

This initiative may take a few months to plan and implement, depending on the scale of the effort. Cost involved related to the cost of the compost bins and any staff time devoted to the initiative.

D. Which local governments implement this action? Which departments within the local government are most likely to have responsibility for this?

Any local government can implement this program. Departments of public works or sanitation are the most likely departments to implement this action, but conservation advisory councils, garden clubs or other environmental committees have also taken the lead in villages and towns.

E. How to obtain points for this action

Two points are available for implementing this action in a manner consistent with the above guidelines.

F. What to submit

Submit documentation that describes the compost bin distribution program, including the type of bin, the original cost per bin and the discounted cost, if residents were charged a fee. Provide copies of promotional and educational materials. Provide the number of bins purchased and distributed. Compost bins must have been distributed within five years prior to the application date. Any statistics about the reduction in waste because of the program are also encouraged.

All CSC action documentation is available for public viewing after an action is approved. Action submittals should not include any information or documents that are not intended to be viewed by the public.

G. Links to additional resources or best practices

- [Cornell University Composting](#)
- [DEC Guide to Composting](#)
- [New York City - Composting in New York City. A Complete Program History](#)

H. Recertification requirements

The recertification requirements are the same as the initial certification requirements.