



PE5 Action: Residential Organic Waste Program

2 – 22 Points

A. Why is this action important?

According to the US EPA report, *Characterization of Municipal Solid Waste in the United States: 2009 Update*, yard waste makes up 13.7 percent of the solid waste generated nationwide. Studies indicate that more than 25 percent of the typical household's waste is composed of yard trimmings and food scraps. Organics made up nearly 24 percent of local government solid waste in New York State in 2008, according to DEC. When these organics end up in landfills, they produce methane. Methane is a short-lived but powerful greenhouse gas, so when it is important to either compost organic waste or send it to an anaerobic digester. Diverting this portion of the waste stream cuts back on tipping fees for local governments and reduces the greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions generated from solid waste.

B. How to implement this action

When planning for this action, keep in mind the [DEC Solid Waste program](#) regulates facilities involved with the land application, composting and other recycling methods of certain types of organic waste materials under Title 6 of the Official Compilation of Codes, Rules, and Regulations (6 NYCRR) Part 360 Solid Waste Management Facilities. If needed, contact them at swpermit@dec.ny.gov with questions.

The first step in implementing this action is to gather information about local goals and the characteristics of the community's existing waste stream, especially what portions are composed of organic materials. Using this information, create a plan and connect the organics program 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 diverting organics from landfills. The Climate Smart Communities (CSC) program recommends getting public input when determining the goals, scope, and design of the program.

Next steps include determining the types of organic materials to be gathered through the program, such as grass clippings, leaves, and food scraps. Determine the approach for collecting the materials, i.e., at a drop-off facility or through curbside collection, and whether yard waste, food waste, or both will be collected. Depending on the region, contractors may be available to collect and process organic waste through composting or bringing the materials to an anaerobic digester. Research the opportunities to collaborate with neighboring municipalities to achieve economies of scale.

For points under this Climate Smart Communities (CSC) action, curbside pick-up of yard waste must occur at least two times a year but more often is better. For food waste, local governments are eligible for points if they implement a curbside pick-up program throughout the entire jurisdiction, or if they first test their food waste collection model in a pilot area.

The CSC program recommends that local governments include educational materials in their organics programs, so that people understand the benefits of organics collection and how it works. In addition, to measure the impact of over time, local governments should consider setting up systems to track the quantity of organic waste collected and calculate the GHG emissions avoided.

C. Time frame, project costs, and resource needs

The time frame and resources associated with establishing a residential composting program will depend on the scope of the program. Establishing drop-off facilities will generally require less time and fewer resources than curbside collection.

Food waste programs are often more resource intensive than food waste programs. Both programs will involve public input and education, as well as staff training.

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

Any local government that manages solid waste collection can implement this program. Departments of public works or sanitation are the most likely departments to implement this action.

E. How to obtain points for this action

Points for this action are tiered based on the scope and type of the organics processing program. (None of these tiers are mutually exclusive so the maximum points possible is 22.)

	POSSIBLE POINTS
Establish a drop-off yard waste program	2
Establish a drop-off food waste program	4
Establish a community-wide curbside pick-up yard waste program (with pick-up at least two times a year)	4
Establish a pilot curbside pick-up food waste collection program (within last 10 years)	4
Establish a community-wide curbside pick-up food waste collection program	8

F. What to submit

Submit documentation that describes the scope of the organics program including types of materials collected, when and how it is collected, where it goes, and any other requirements for residents related to this program. The documentation should confirm that the programs are currently active, other than the pilot curbside pick-up food waste collection program, which must have been active within the last 10 years, from the date of application.

Links to websites with this information are acceptable. Information on the quantities collected and estimates of GHG reductions are 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

- [Village of Tarrytown, NY, Yard Waste Collection Program](#)
- [City of Albany, NY, Yard Waste Collection](#)
- [Watervliet, NY, Organic Waste Recycling](#)
- [DEC Organic Recycling Facilities and Regulations](#)
- [DEC Composting and Organic Materials Management](#)
- [DEC Recycling and Composting](#)

H. Recertification requirements

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