



# Guidance for NPS Recycling Improvement & Voluntary Food Waste Diversion Programs



How to implement successful, long-lasting, schoolwide waste diversion programs.

## Roles and Responsibilities

**School Green Team Leader:** leads program design, implementation, and program maintenance, including initial and ongoing schoolwide education for students and staff.

**Custodians:** ensure collection bins are properly paired, transport collected materials within the school and from the school to the outdoor waste collection area, keep collection bins clean, and assist with maintaining signage.

**Principal:** approves program design and supports the Green Team Leader and Custodians; is encouraged to communicate efforts to the broader school community (PTO, families, etc.) and incorporate waste diversion and waste reduction programs into school culture.

**Newton DPW:** provides program consultation and equipment, assistance with program planning, and arranges and pays for collection services as needed.

**Lunch Monitors (optional):** may play a role in assisting students with proper sorting of lunch waste materials; buy-in from Lunch Monitors will lead to a stronger program.

## Getting Started - Action Steps

1. **Decide what you want your program to focus on**
  - Option 1: improve recycling schoolwide
  - Option 2: improve recycling schoolwide and start food scraps collection (sometimes called composting) in the cafeteria
2. **Share this document with your Principal** and seek their buy-in for the desired program
3. **Have a discussion with the Head Custodian** to gain understanding whether they are open to participate with Option 1 or 2. Provide the following information:
  - The **Custodial role** and responsibilities include
    - Empty waste and recycling bins and keep materials separated, even if there is contamination.
    - Transport waste and recycling from the school to the pickup location/loading area.
    - If sorting food scraps, transfer bags from cafeteria bins to outdoor collection bins.
    - No sorting of materials. If there is contamination in recycling or food scraps bins, education will be used to address the problem and build trust in the system.
    - **Testimonial from custodians at other schools about food scraps collection**  
“With collecting food scraps separately, the trash is lighter and less messy, and that keeps my dumpster cleaner than before. It works out just fine. After lunch I tie off the

*bags of food scraps and put them in special totes. The truck comes by at least weekly to pick it up. I'm really proud of the students. We have kept over 32 tons of food out of the trash in just 5 years."*

- **Support from DPW** includes
  - Providing waste bins and signs for the school and other equipment, as needed
  - Equipment provided for recycling collection
    - Indoor bins
    - Outdoor 64-gallon rolling recycling cart(s) (optional)
  - Equipment provided for cafeteria food scraps collection
    - Indoor 23-gallon bin(s) with optional bin dolly
    - Liquids-only collection bucket and dolly (optional)
    - Outdoor 64-gallon food waste rolling cart with 2x weekly pickup (arranged and paid for by DPW)
    - Bin and cart liners

#### 4. Determine next steps

- When you have buy-in from the Principal and Custodian on the program, refer to DPW's Five-Step Implementation Guide for Recycling and Food scraps Diversion Programs. Implementation and planning require a minimum of 6 weeks.  
-OR-
- If the school is not ready for a schoolwide effort, you can lead an assessment or audit of the current program to get data that could inspire future change. Reach out to DPW to plan a program assessment or waste audit. NPS Green Team leaders at schools that have already implemented these programs are also a great general resource. For a list of Green Team leaders, contact Stephanie Gilman at [gilmans@newton.k12.ma.us](mailto:gilmans@newton.k12.ma.us).

Contact DPW for further assistance

Allison Kelley, Waste Diversion Coordinator, Newton DPW, [ALKELLEY@newtonma.gov](mailto:ALKELLEY@newtonma.gov), #617-796-1443

Reference documents and information

1. [NPS recycling policy](#) and **Newton Recycling Mandate** [Chapter 11, Section 11-5](#) of Newton Ordinances
2. **How to arrange waste bins and signs:** ["Two Steps to Make Classroom Recycling Easier"](#)
3. **How to sort trash, recycling, and food scraps:** FAQs
4. **Managing food scraps collection:** Memo to Custodians
5. **Sample school educational materials:** [Mason-Rice Elementary School recycling video](#); [Newton South High School recycling video](#)
6. [MA Green Team recycling resources for teachers and school](#)

**Thank You** for your leadership in helping our students and schools preserve natural resources, keep more waste out of the landfill, and help Massachusetts reach its climate goals.