

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Recycling
2. U.S. EPA Food Waste Reduction
3. USDA Programs
4. School Recycling and Composting Programs Leading the Way
5. States Programs
6. Examples of Classroom Resources
7. Equipment Sources for Sorting Stations
8. Ideas for Reduce & Reuse
9. Zero Waste Challenge – The Chewonki Foundation

RESOURCE DIRECTORY

School Cafeteria

Recycling & Composting Training Workshop

This Directory provides links to sites with background information for recycling, planning, launching and operating cafeteria recycling and composting programs. **Click on the titles** to connect to the websites for more information.

1. RECYCLING:

[Maine Department of Environmental Protection: Sustainability/Maine Recycles:](#) This website provides information of what can be recycled in

Maine, and where facilities are for recycling specific items such as electronics, hazardous waste, batteries, etc. Also has a Q&A section, and links to other recycling information sites.

[ecomaine's Single Sort Guide:](#) This website is ecomaine's Single Sort Guide, and provides a link to recycling do's and don'ts, including videos and a list of frequently asked questions.

[ecomaine Recycling Grants Information:](#) this website describes available grants and links to past recipients.

Each year, ecomaine awards up to \$20,000 in grant funding to area schools to start a sustainability program or grow an existing one.

The 2014 Education Grants have been awarded. We will begin accepting applications for the 2015 program in the Spring



[NorthEast Recycling Council \(NERC\)](#) This website provides information the latest news in recycling, state by state resource lists, Current Source Reduction, Reuse, Recycling Projects, and conferences and workshops going on in New England. NERC is a non-profit organization that conducts research, hands-on projects, training, and outreach on issues associated with source reduction, recycling, composting, environmentally preferable purchasing, and decreasing the toxicity of the solid waste stream. NEC serves 10 states in the northeast, including the New England states, New York, Pennsylvania, New Jersey and Delaware.

2. U.S. EPA Food Waste Reduction

[EPA Food: Too-Good-To-Waste](#) - An innovative community food waste prevention tool that was designed by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) with input from the [West Coast Climate & Materials Management Forum](#). The toolkit, which has been linked to a 25% reduction in household wasted food, is made up of simple strategies and tips to help individuals and families prevent wasted food at home.

[EPA Food Recovery Hierarchy](#) - The Food Recovery Hierarchy prioritizes actions organizations can take to prevent and divert wasted food

EPA [The Food Recovery Challenge](#) (FRC) is part of EPA's Sustainable Materials Management Program. The program seeks to reduce the environmental impact of materials through their entire life cycle, including how they are extracted, manufactured, distributed, used, reused, recycled, and disposed. Through the FRC, the EPA is partnering with organizations and businesses to prevent and reduce wasted food. Challenge participants save money, help communities, and protect the environment by purchasing less, donating extra food, and composting.

EPA [Food Waste Reduction and Prevention](#) Food waste source reduction or prevention is the strategy of preventing food waste before it is created. An example of food waste prevention for a buffet is tracking which dishes generally have more leftovers, and either make less of the dish or substitute it with a more popular dish, rather than continuing to throw the leftovers away.

EPA [Composting for Facilities](#) This page provides composting and compost application information for compost facilities, businesses, industry, and local governments

3. USDA Programs

[USDA K – 12 Schools Resources](#) - K-12 schools have a special role in not only reducing, recovering, and recycling food waste on their premises, but also in educating the next generation about recovering wholesome excess food for donation and about reducing food waste to conserve natural resources.

4. School Recycling and Composting Programs Leading the Way - stories

[New York City organics Collection](#) – article in Biocycle: Two-year pilot program to collect residential and school source separated organics is into its second year. This update reviews progress, challenges and next steps.

[State of California – Recycle and Cut Waste Schools:](#)

Schools implementing waste reduction and recycling programs can save money, conserve natural resources, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Recycling and waste account for the seventh largest source (1% of total) greenhouse gas emissions in California. By expanding programs that meet the three R's – Reduce, Reuse, Recycle – schools will be on the way towards achieving our statewide goal of zero waste and a low carbon future

[State Of Composting In The U.S.](#) – article in Biocycle: New report reviews composting basics, provides national and state-by-state statistics and job generation data, summarizes model programs, technologies and systems, and concludes with recommendations on how to grow composting in the U.S.

[New York City Public Schools Best Practices](#) - This video shows the best practices in NYC public schools! This video was shown in a webinar "Reducing Waste in Schools: Cafeteria Waste Stations," hosted by EPA Region 2 on May 10th, 2012.

[NPR Food Scraps to Energy](#) - Every year, Americans send millions of tons of food to the landfill. What if you could use all of those pizza crusts and rotten vegetables to heat your home? That's already happening in one unlikely laboratory: the [Newtown Creek](#) Wastewater Treatment Plant in Brooklyn.

[Cleveland Indians turn leftover hot dogs, uneaten pizza into energy, New York Times reports](#) - Progressive Field, home of the Cleveland Indians, is among the latest to adopt a disposal system that converts food waste -- from melon rinds to chicken bones and uneaten pizza -- into energy.

[UVM Helps Colchester Students Compost at Lunch](#) - Once ACT 148 goes into full affect in a few years, Vermonters will be mandated to recycle and compost. Through a grant from the Agency of Natural Resources, three schools in Colchester and two elementary schools in Rutland City are getting a head start.

5. State Programs:

[California School Waste Reduction](#) - Whether you are a school district administrator concerned about increases in solid waste disposal costs, a recycling-conscious teacher or student, or a city/county recycling coordinator working with your local school district, setting up or improving an existing school waste reduction program can benefit everyone involved. Furthermore, in many cases, school recycling is now a state requirement

[New York State Recycling and Composting](#) - At home, work and school, New Yorkers generate a lot of trash - and it's a mixed bag. We are making too much trash - over 4.5 pounds per person per day in NYS! We need to get out of the habit of throwing trash into one receptacle with cans, bottles, paper, garbage, banana peels, etc., all mixed together. Many of the items we are throwing things away can be reused, recycled or composted, such as paper, glass, aluminum, metals as well as potato and carrot peels.

[Vermont's New Composting Law](#) - Vermont's new solid waste law, [Universal Recycling](#) (Act 148), calls for the diversion of all food scraps, leaf and yard debris, and clean wood debris from the landfill and instead towards sustainable management strategies, notably composting. These materials must be diverted on a graduated time line based on quantity produced and type of material; these details and more are available on the [Universal Recycling web page](#).

ADD: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OBIGL4iqvPY> – how to compost video – grammar school

[More on VT's state composting law:](#) In 2012, the Vermont Legislature unanimously passed [Act 148](#), a universal recycling and composting law that offers Vermonters a new set of systems and tools for keeping as much as possible out of the landfill. The first thing the Legislature did was jettison the concept of waste itself.

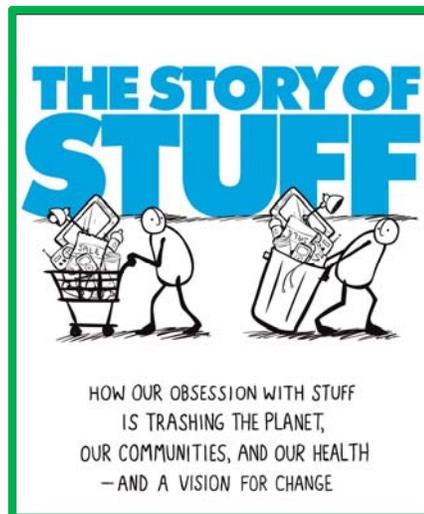
[School Composting in CT - School Composting Manual](#) Connecticut DEEP funded the production of this manual to provide a model for Connecticut schools to help them reduce their waste stream, increase recycling and to teach students about responsible waste management and the environmental advantages of composting. In the manual, you will find strategies for initiating a compost plan, bin design, routine steps of the composting operation, promotional activities, as well as an exhaustive section on lessons and resources. Although written specifically with K-12 schools in mind, the manual could be applicable to other small-scale institutional settings. [K-12 Composting Resources](#), [College & University Composting Programs](#)

6. Examples of Classroom Resources

[Oregon Green Schools Resources](#) - Oregon Green Schools has several helpful tools that you can use to evaluate your school's environmental performance, educate staff and students about your program, lesson plans and more! Use the following tools and links to help you start or improve your Green Schools program and find resources for teaching about resource conservation in the classroom.

[Teaching Materials from U.S. EPA on Reduce, Reuse, Recycle](#) - These resources can help you teach your students to reduce, reuse, and recycle the waste we generate in our schools, homes, and communities. From basic classroom activities to starting a school electronics recycling program, these materials will help you and your students learn what we can do to reduce and better manage waste. Many resources are provided in both English and Spanish.

[The Story of Stuff \(movie\):](#)



7. Equipment Sources for Sorting Stations



[Recycle Away](#) – Offers a selection of indoor recycling solutions

[ClearStream Recycling, Inc.](#) – offers easy to use bins

[Staples sorting signs](#) - Consider using free-standing sign holder to display sorting signs. See example at Staples (online) website or build your own version

8. Ideas for Reduce and Reuse in the Cafeteria (Adapted from [North East Recycling Council](#))

This section includes Q & A with Walter Beesley, Director of Maine Child Nutrition, State of Maine Department of Education, walter.beesley@maine.gov.



a. Reduce and reuse single-use cafeteria items

- Eliminate Styrofoam products, including trays, bowls, and plates. Replace with reusable or recyclable/compostable trays. Consider eliminating food trays, especially for older students to reduce costs of purchasing, handling trays and food waste as students take only what they will eat.
- Replace condiment packets with health department-approved, refillable dispensers.

- Eliminate plastic service ware packets (containing service ware, straw, and napkin, wrapped in plastic). Instead of self-serve, have staff distribute disposable items like napkins and plastic forks or use napkin dispensers that dispense one napkin at a time.



- Serve beverages from beverage gun or dispenser, buy juice/soda mixes in concentrate form, and buy milk in 5-gallon dispenser boxes.
- Have staff bring reusable mugs for their drinks. Or offer a mug with your school logo.
- Conduct a cost-benefit analysis comparing reusable items, compostable items (if composting), and disposable items. Be

sure to include purchase costs, disposal costs, water and sewage fees, custodial labor, etc.

Q: Has the Maine DOE issued any information to schools about ways to reduce their waste in cafeterias, for example, by 1) using re-usable silverware and trays, 2) eliminating Styrofoam items, and/or 3) using large pump containers to dispense mustard, ketchup, and dressings rather than the small foil packets.

A: 1) Re-usable tableware is always a question if it saves or is it a cost because of silverware going in the trash. There is plastic tableware that can be washed a few times.

2) Polystyrene (Styrofoam) is not an acceptable method normally. Child Nutrition does not suggest or encourage the use of polystyrene. There actually is a Maine law against it but not enforced. It would cover all the containers and tableware.

3) We have not addressed large pumps and PC unless we are called in for a financial technical assistance.

b. Reduce Cafeteria Food Waste



- Offer Versus Serve - This program allows students to decline items they do not want. Offer Versus Serve is an acceptable option under the national school lunch and breakfast programs administered by the United States Department of Agriculture. It allows students to decline up to two of five required items offered in the reimbursable lunch, and one of the four required food items offered in the reimbursable breakfast. High schools are required by the Department of Agriculture to provide the Offer Versus Serve program.

Q: The North East Recycling Council (NERC) web site mentioned an option for Maine K-12 students who take hot lunch called "Offer Versus Serve." Would you confirm if this is an option that Maine K-12 schools can participate in?

A: This information is somewhat correct. Offer vs Serve is available to Maine schools and most schools do utilize this option to control waste and costs. It is also true it must be offered to grades 9-12. While it is true students can decline lunch components and breakfast items, all school breakfasts and lunches must contain fruit or vegetable [so those items cannot be declined].

- **Maine DOE Policy on Cafeteria Share Tables**

Q: To address food waste, what is the official Maine DOE policy for re-use regarding fruit, milk and/or OJ, crackers (wrapped), bagels (wrapped), anything in a container (such as cream cheese), etc. in a school cafeteria that have been handled but not opened or eaten. We know that many schools have a sharing table where these types of items are set out for kids to take, but these same schools have told us they also worry they are breaking some code by doing that. And many schools won't follow this practice at all because of the worry of being on the wrong side of the code. If this practice was adopted by schools, this definitely would create an opportunity to cut down on food waste.



A: A product that is sealed, milk, fruits once served to a student are the student's property. They cannot be returned to the kitchen per Maine Food Code. Many school utilize a sharing table that is not managed by Food Service. Products that are sealed can be offered to other students at no cost. Open items must be discarded. Oranges and bananas are example of acceptable fruit. Apples and pears are examples of questionable fruit because the student eats the peelings.

- Give leftover food that is not suitable for human consumption to local farmers for animal feed, humane societies or pet owners with small animals (such as chickens).

Q: What is State policy on whether Maine public schools can bring leftover milk and/or food to farms/pig farmers for disposal (or have these vendors collect items from school)?

A: Districts can allow leftover products for farms. Districts doing this must follow the Maine Food Code and have farmers pick up the leftovers.



c. Purchasing Considerations

Significant waste reduction and cost savings can result from considering waste reduction as part of the procurement practices.

- Can reusable items be used instead of disposable ones?
- Is there a bulk purchasing option or other option with less packaging?
- Will some of this product spoil before it is all used?
- Is there a less-perishable product available in bulk?
- Are there recycled or other environmentally preferable products available?
- Is the product packaging recyclable or compostable?
- Consider durability as a cost criterion when buying equipment and janitorial supplies.
- Check Craig's List or local ReStore location or similar businesses for the items you need.
- Reuse egg cartons, milk cartons and jugs, steel cans, and cardboard boxes for student art and science projects.



9. Zero Waste

[Zero Waste Alliance](#) - The Zero Waste Alliance (ZWA) has a clear and simple vision: a prosperous and inclusive future without waste. A future without waste and toxics is not just a dream; it's a



necessity. Waste reduces the effectiveness of our businesses, increases pressures on the natural environment and harms the vitality of our communities. It does not have to be this way; waste is the result of a broken process. Fortunately, this is a process that can be fixed.

[“Nudging Recycling from Less Waste to None”](#) a New York Times article about the concept and practice of zero waste in the US. October 19, 2009

[‘Nil to Landfill’ Is Now a Practical Goal”](#) – Wharton, University of Pennsylvania, March 6, 2014

10. Zero Waste Challenge

[The Chewonki Foundation, Wiscasset, ME](#)

The Zero Waste Challenge is a service learning challenge project to help encourage the reduction of waste in schools across Maine. Middle school classrooms (grades 6,7,8) are invited and encouraged to take the challenge to help their schools save money and resources by evaluating their waste stream and creating a plan to reduce waste. Winning schools receive a cash prize that can be used to implement a Zero Waste plan at their school or fund an environmental education experience with Chewonki staff.

Funding for School Cafeteria Recycling & Composting

Training Workshop

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