



Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection

Fact Sheet

Managing Municipal Food Waste

Food waste represents over 23 percent of all trash in Massachusetts. Approximately 46 percent of the total food waste in the State comes from homes and municipalities. The [Massachusetts Solid Waste Master Plan](#) sets a goal of diverting or reducing food waste going to landfills and incinerators by 30 percent by 2030. Municipal, residential, and small business food waste programs will be critical in meeting this goal.

Communities throughout Massachusetts are making efforts to divert organic material and food waste away from the waste stream. In doing so, less material is going to landfills, being shipped out of state, and being incinerated. Instead, the separated food waste is being composted and turned into a valuable soil amendment or going to an anaerobic digestion facility and being turned to energy.

- **109 municipalities** in Massachusetts have a residential food waste collection program. In 2025, these communities **diverted almost 24,000 tons of food scraps** from the waste stream.
- **Drop-off food waste programs** are available in **80 Massachusetts communities**. Residents can bring food waste to these collection bins weekly, or whenever they have a bag of scraps. The bins are then picked up and taken to a compost site or anaerobic digestion facility. Many of these collection bins are available to residents for free at the transfer station. Some communities make drop-off bins accessible for small or no fee in other local public spaces.
- **Curbside food waste programs are growing in Massachusetts**. At least **24 communities** have a municipally-supported curbside program, where residents put their food scraps in a separate bin to be picked up curbside along with their trash, or by a separate contracted hauler. Some municipalities support these programs by providing free curbside food waste bins or kitchen counter bins; or they may provide partial subsidies or fully fund the program.
- There are **10 communities** in Massachusetts that offer **BOTH curbside and drop-off food waste programs**.
- Backyard composting is easy and affordable for many households, and **157 municipalities sell backyard compost bins** at cost or at a discount to residents.

- [The Green Team](#), which supports school recycling and composting programs and education, has **distributed backyard compost bins to 154 schools**.
- [RecyclingWorks Massachusetts](#), a program funded by MassDEP, provides technical assistance to compost operators and assists schools and municipalities to plan and implement food waste diversion programs.
- The MassDEP Sustainable Materials Recovery Program Grants has awarded **\$900,000 in grants to municipalities** to start or expand upon curbside collection programs or residential food waste diversion programs since 2022. Municipalities can use grant funds to purchase residential curbside food waste carts, or kitchen counter food scrap bins, or help with outreach and education. Additionally, municipalities reported spending over \$300,000 in 2025 on organics diversion programs.
- The Department of Environmental Protection manages [Statewide Contract FAC113](#) for recycling containers, compost bins and rain barrels, including curbside wheeled carts for organic and food waste material, kitchen counter buckets and backyard compost systems. Municipalities can procure items directly from the contract without bidding publicly.

Waste Ban Background:

In 2014, the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection implemented a [ban on commercial food waste](#), requiring businesses and institutions generating more than one ton of food waste per week, to divert that material away from the trash. This threshold was increased in 2022 to ½ ton per week. Currently, about 4,000 businesses and institutions in Massachusetts are subject to the food waste ban. As of 2024, Massachusetts has succeeded in diverting 380,000 tons of commercial food waste from the trash annually.

Additional Online Resources:

- [MassDEP Organics Action Plan](#)
- [MassDEP Recycling & Solid Waste Data for Massachusetts Cities and Towns](#)
- [MassDEP Composting and Organics Webpage](#)
- [RecyclingWorks Massachusetts](#)
- [Sustainable Materials Recovery Program Municipal Grant](#)

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