

Important Note: This activity was developed for the original Green Lunchroom Challenge program, a voluntary pledge program for K-12 schools to improve the sustainability of their food service



operations. The project was coordinated by the [Illinois Sustainable Technology Center Technical Assistance Program](#) with funding from US EPA Region 5.

The following page(s) represent the content of this activity as it appeared on the original project web site, complete with available points and instructions for submitting documentation. **The project is no longer funded and as of June 2018 schools may no longer submit activity documentation to earn points and recognition as described.** The activity is presented for your information to guide your organization's sustainability efforts.

If your school or district implements the suggested activity and wishes to share its experiences, please email [Joy Scrogum](#). Your story may be incorporated into a blog post on this web site, the main ISTC site, or shared on social media to foster networking and inspiration among peer institutions.

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Provide training to kitchen staff on proper food trimming and other preparation methods

Activity Category: Menu Planning and Food Preparation

Activity: Provide training to kitchen staff on proper food trimming and other preparation methods

Rationale: Preparing food for a large number of students every day is a fast-paced job, where efficiency is crucial. Having set procedures for common tasks, like slicing fruits or vegetables, which all staff are trained in, not only ensures that tasks are accomplished in a timely fashion, but also provides an opportunity to highlight potential sources of waste in your back-of-house operations and guide staff in how to eliminate or avoid waste generation. For example, learning standard methods for slicing or trimming foods could minimize the amount of edible material lost due to different trimming styles, plus highlight ways in which scraps can be reused (e.g. use vegetable trimmings to make stock). Additionally, separating wastes for recycling or composting is not

something that comes naturally for everyone, so preparation training sessions provide the opportunity to show staff proper disposal procedures for various materials, including food scraps. This may help maximize the amount of materials your school can divert from the landfill. Finally, idiosyncrasies with equipment may mean adjustments to recipes are necessary at your facility - for example, experience may show that when a recipe says to preheat an oven to 350 degrees, you'll actually need to set the temperature dial at 325 for best results. Having more experienced staff members share these kinds of tips with newer staff members helps ensure that less food is lost due to burning, undercooking, etc.

Activity Description: Provide training to your food service staff on one or more aspects of food preparation, with any eye toward quality control, reducing waste, and ensuring proper management of waste streams. The form of training may include face-to-face staff session(s), required viewing of videos or completion of online guidance, outlines and tips presented in a staff handbook, newsletter, or intranet, etc.

Earn Challenge Points (100 points): Require all food service staff to complete at least one training session or module. See the resources listed below to select training appropriate for



<http://healthymeals.nal.usda.gov/hsmrs/Iowa/FFVBarGuide.pdf>

your staff and situation. Note that you will not accumulate more points for offering multiple types of training to your staff; the maximum number of points for this activity is 100. In order to earn points for this activity, write a brief description (3-5 pages, as a Word or PDF document) of the training(s), and include the number of staff that participated, any feedback received from participants, and observations on if and how training impacted efficiency and waste generation at your school. Email this document to Joy Scrogum at jscrogum@illinois.edu.

Resources:

-  [Culinary Classroom YouTube videos](#) (Several videos with different lessons available in this playlist)
-  [Institute of Child Nutrition Online Course Catalog](#) (Wide variety of courses; in particular look for the "On the Road to Professional Food Preparation" listings)
-  [Iowa Department of Education Fresh Fruit & Vegetable Bar Guide](#) (Be sure to consult the Appendix for technical assistance documents, including proper procedures for preparing various items, like the bell pepper image above, proper handling of a chef knife, etc.)
-  [Institute of Child Nutrition Culinary Techniques for Healthy School Meals: Preparing Fruits](#)
-  [Institute of Child Nutrition Culinary Techniques for Healthy School Meals: Preparing Vegetables](#)

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