

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.

I ILLINOIS

Illinois Sustainable Technology Center
PRAIRIE RESEARCH INSTITUTE

Do a follow-up lunchroom waste characterization (post waste-free lunch day or policy implementation)

Activity Category: Zero Waste Lunchrooms

Activity: Do a follow-up lunchroom waste characterization (post waste-free lunch day or policy implementation)

Rationale: The baseline waste characterization helped you identify and quantify waste streams in your facility ([Activity: Do a baseline lunchroom waste characterization](#)). The initial waste characterization enabled you to create a tailored strategy for your facility to reduce food waste. A follow-up waste characterization provides an objective tool to measure progress as you implement your strategy.



From [A Guide to Conducting and Analyzing a Food Waste Assessment](#)

Activity Description: Conduct a waste audit of your school's lunchroom, make sure to follow the same procedures used in the baseline waste audit. (**Note: Districts participating in the Green Lunchroom Challenge may conduct an audit of one or more representative schools in your district, or schools which are being targeted for process changes to reduce waste.**) Use the US EPA's [A Guide to Conducting and Analyzing a Food Waste Assessment](#), or other documents in the Resources section below, as a guide for the process if you are using your own staff and/or students to conduct the audit. Alternatively, you may solicit the technical assistance of an external organization to perform the audit for you or alongside your staff (see the Resources section below for organizations which may provide assistance). Sort and record the weights or calculated volumes of each category of waste encountered. For food waste, you may wish to estimate, or separate and weigh, the amounts of different types of food (e.g. vegetable sides, fruit sides, entrees, beverages, beverage containers, etc.) to better guide your waste reduction strategies, but that level of analysis is not required to earn points for this activity. **You may perform an audit of pre-consumer (kitchen) waste, post-consumer (dining area) waste, or both, but please be aware of the fact that auditing both will allow you to identify the most effective strategies for reducing and preventing food waste and other forms of waste at your facility.** Note also that this activity is an excellent opportunity to involve a class or student club, providing additional hands for the waste sort and an engaging experiential learning opportunity for students. Involving students in the sorting

process can also be a great way to get their buy-in for any process changes that are later implemented based on the results of this baseline audit.

Earn Challenge Points (250 points): Submit a Word or PDF document **describing your waste characterization process** (if you follow the EPA's guide or another organization's guide, you may simply reference the guide you followed. **Include who conducted the audit (staff, students, parents, or some combination?), the date of the audit(s), a copy of your data sheets** (you can use samples provided in any of the guidance documents below or create your own) **and results summary, highlight changes from the baseline as well as continued challenges.** (For an example of how to break waste into categories and report the percentage of total represented by each category, see the "Waste Characterization" section of [Recycling and Waste Reduction Opportunity Assessment: Forest Preserve District of Cook County](#). You do not need to exactly match all the categories listed there, as not all may be appropriate for your situation. This is simply to help you understand what is meant by sorting the waste into distinct categories.) If you represent a district and conducted audits at more than one school, information from all schools assessed should be included in one document, along with the rationale for choosing those schools. **Include at least 2 photos from your sort**, depicting how you sorted waste and who was involved. **Describe 3-5 ideas for continuous improvement for food waste reduction and/or other waste categories at your facility (ies) based on your follow-up results.** Your document should be emailed to Joy Scrogum at jscrogum@illinois.edu.

Resources:

-  [A Guide to Conducting and Analyzing a Food Waste Assessment](#)
-  [Waste Assessments & Waste Audits](#)
-  [School Waste Assessment Form](#)
-  [Waste Audit Sort Sheets](#)
-  [Recycling and Waste Reduction Opportunity Assessment: Forest Preserve District of Cook County](#)
-  Organizations that may provide technical assistance:
 -  [Illinois Sustainable Technology Center](#) (contact [Shantanu Pai](#) or [Joy Scrogum](#))
 -  [Seven Generations Ahead](#)
 -  [SCARCE](#)

Follow Us  

[Green Lunchroom Challenge](#)

[About](#) | [Activities](#) | [UI Web Privacy Notice](#) 



Illinois Sustainable Technology Center

PRAIRIE RESEARCH INSTITUTE

© 2018 University of Illinois Board of Trustees