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.

Implement a waste prevention and tracking system for food service operations

Activity Category: Zero Waste Lunchrooms

Activity: Implement a waste prevention and tracking system for food service operations

Rationale: Measuring and tracking the amounts, types of, reasons for - food being discarded is an effective way to reduce waste from being generated over time. The continuous and diligent tracking of waste serves as a foundation for reduction efforts. It is important to know more than just the overall quantity of waste generated. For an effective and meaningful tracking system that can make suggested improvements to your operations, waste type (for example, onions or bacon) and reason(s) for loss (for example, improper cooking or overproduction) need to be recorded.

Food waste monitoring engages your team and enables them to be part of the food waste reduction solution. It feels better to feed people rather than the landfill! By helping to identify and address the root causes of food waste, and seeing the resulting reduction in waste volume over time, your staff will feel an increased sense of pride in their work and their organization.

Activity Description: Using the guides in the resources section below, start tracking the waste. Make sure the tracking sheet has at least these fields and record the following:

- **Date and tme of record:** The date and time the product was discarded (either to landfill or to compost; you're interested in the loss of product as a source of food)

- **Item/description of item:** a description of the item discarded

- **Amt. /Qty. /Wt.:** the amount, quantity or weight of what was discarded, including the unit of measure

- **Reason for wastage:** the detailed reason for the material loss/disposal, such as "over

cooked," "spoiled," "trimmings from food preparation," etc.

Place form in a space accessible to the food service staff as well as safe from being exposed to the food.

To gain the best results from this activity, implement a policy that the kitchen manager reviews the waste sheets periodically to make changes in purchasing and production.

Earn Challenge Points (250 points): Submit a completed waste log using a template below or your own system, including the policy to review waste sheets. Your document should be in Word or PDF format and be emailed to Joy Scrogum at jscrogum@illinois.edu.

Resources:

EPA Food waste log template

Tracking and recording food waste Aramark

LeanPath waste log template

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