



Curbside Food Scrap and Unit-Based Pricing Co-Collection Pilot Program



What is Co-Collection?

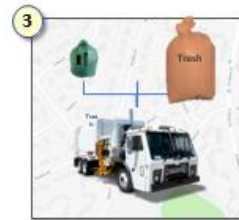
Co-Collection simply means you separate your waste into designated bags, put them in the same trash can, and put them out at the street in the same manner you always did, to be picked up by the same truck and route as normal.



1 Residents separate material types at home into color-coded bags



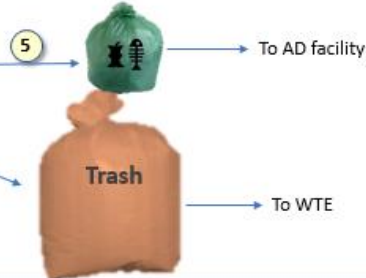
2 All bags go into the same curbside cart



3 All material goes into the same truck on the same collection route



4 Materials are unloaded and separated at the transfer station or sort facility



Is this program permanent?

No. It's a nine-month pilot program. The City committed to try it until June 30. If it is successful, the City can choose to adopt the program in the future.

Will I get fined if I don't sort my food waste?

No. You will not be fined if you don't participate in the pilot program.

Won't my food waste stink or cause problems?

You already have food waste in your house. The pilot will allow you to divert *existing* food waste from your trash. We're just asking you to put it in a different bag.

How hard will it be to do this?

It should be very easy. You generate the same trash and put it in the same trash cart on the same day of the week. You will get your bags at area stores. The only difference is that we're asking you to put food waste in a green bag so we can make green energy from it and reduce the cost of disposal the City pays from tax dollars.

**Isn't it difficult to sort my food waste?**

Not really. In fact, it's easier than recycling. If you could eat it but didn't, put it in the green bag. Otherwise, put it in the orange trash bag.

How much will this cost the City?

It won't cost anything. The City is receiving a grant of \$1.3 million that will pay for everything. The City will save money for each ton we move from trash to organics.

Where does the City get the authority to do this?

City Charter – our “Constitution” – gives the Commissioner of Public Works the authority to implement this pilot, which is being sponsored and overseen by the CT Department of Energy and Environmental Protection.

What happens if the pilot doesn't succeed?

Nothing. Food waste will still go to the trash. The pilot can only make things better by helping us make green energy with food scraps, and position us for lower disposal fees.

Why now?

There are a number of reasons we need to move now:

1. This is a one-time Grant opportunity participating with 18 other towns, and we all must go together to take advantage of State funding and coordination. This \$1.3 million grant is available now and will not be available in the future. We won this grant through a competitive process.
2. If we don't accept state aid now, we will have pay for the costs ourselves later if we choose this program in the future. It is considered highly likely the program will soon be mandated statewide.
3. There is a trash crisis in Connecticut and New England. Shipping trash to Pennsylvania – when we can turn it into green energy here is very costly and bad for the environment. Shipping trash to Pennsylvania will have an enormous impact on tax bills.
4. Nearly 40% of the State's trash disposal capacity permanently disappeared in July of 2022 when the MIRA incinerator in Hartford closed, leaving 35 towns stranded having to truck their waste to Pennsylvania.
5. The other 60% of trash is burned in old facilities, like the one West Haven uses, that could close for the same reason MIRA closed (old age) making the situation even worse.
6. Trash disposal fees are expected to grow from \$67/ton to \$120/ton now, with prices rising in the near term to upwards of \$300/ton, according to the State of Connecticut.

What if we don't make changes?

Trash is expensive and is only getting more expensive – the cost to use the Bridgeport Incinerator is going from \$67 per ton to \$120 per ton in the near term, to upwards of \$300 per ton (Per CT DEEP forecasts) soon thereafter. We don't have surplus money to pay these costs. The City will be forced to cut services that residents want in order to ship valuable food waste to Pennsylvania as trash, or raise taxes.

Will Pennsylvania accept our waste?

Perhaps, but there has been legislation introduced in Congress by Pennsylvania Senators in the past that would allow receiving states to regulate or tax out-of-state waste, putting further pressure on landfill tipping fees. Planning on trucking to PA is our worst nightmare. It adds to methane gas pollution and consumes huge amounts of diesel fuel to get it there. Our tipping fees would be impacted by diesel fuel prices, road taxes, and the problems with the trucking industry. It is the worst choice for our pocketbook and the environment. 35 other towns are stuck with this option, and we don't want to join them.

Will this cost me money?

It shouldn't. The State Grant funds an initial allotment of bags designed for the average household use. Replacement bags will be for sale at area retailers at cost, and at a price competitive to generally available commercial bags. \$1.55 for five orange bags and \$1.05 for five green bags.

Where do I get the bags?

Last fall, each Household picked up or should have received a box containing enough bags for the 9-month pilot. Residents are encouraged to be sure to recycle all they can and separate their food scraps to stay within the allotted trash bags

If you have run out of bags, you can purchase replacements at the following retailers (\$1.05 for five green food scrap bags, and \$1.55 for five orange trash bags):

Krausz's Market, 10 Jones Hill Road (Baybrook Plaza corner of Ocean Avenue)

Krausz's Market, 377 Campbell Avenue (Corner of Brown St.)

Krausz's Market, 911 Campbell Avenue (Corner of Spring St.)

Krausz's Market 191 Platt Street (near the High School entrance)

Nazar's Market, 39 Elm Street (Lorenzo's Plaza)

Greatway Food Store, 502 Saw Mill Road (across from Walmart)

Best Gas, 161 Boston Post Road (East of the Allingtown Green)

Noble Gas Station, 941 Boston Post Road (corner of Farwell Street)

West Haven is a diverse community. How are you making sure the pilot works?

The pilot was designed to address our specific needs. We will be providing outreach to help residents understand the program, in English, Spanish, Arabic, and Turkish. Food waste is easy for residents to understand – if you could eat it, put it in the green bag. The food waste will also be screened to take out any contaminants that residents throw in the green bag.

**Are we the only ones doing this?**

No. 18 other cities and towns requested grant funding and are receiving similar grants. The City of Meriden has already completed its first pilot and is planning to implement another round of pilots. The Town of Stonington adopted this successful project several years ago and has kept it. Nearly 150 Towns in Massachusetts are now in the program and have been working it successfully for many years.

Can I use a garbage disposal on my sink?

Yes, but bear in mind that sending your food waste through the co-collection process gives it a second life as fertilizer and electricity, where putting food down the drain adds to our sewer plant operating costs, which you pay for.

Why can't we compost it here?

You can. You can home compost now on your own, or the City may evaluate composting food waste here in West Haven in the future and save the trip to Southington. We have already conducted a food waste composting Pilot, and it works!

What if I have a hardship and can't participate?

The Commissioner of Public Works will make provisions for opting out of the program.

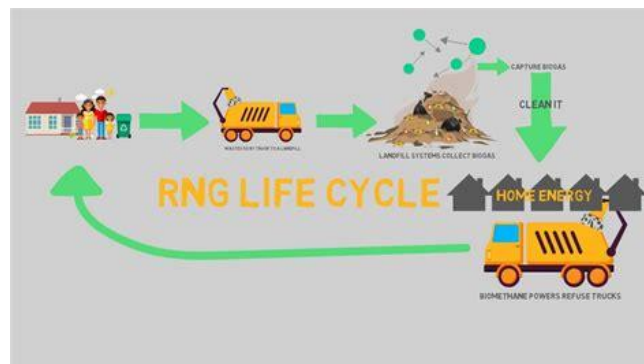
Where does the food waste go?

For this pilot program, the food waste will be shipped to Quantum Bio-Power in Southington.



Why are bio-digesters cheaper than incinerators?

The cost to tip food waste at bio-digester plants is trending down, while the cost to dispose of waste at incinerators or landfills is going rapidly up due to reduced capacity in the industry and no new plants being constructed. There is no costly ash waste residual to be sent to landfills as there are from incinerators. We expect more bio-digester waste to energy plants to be built creating a competitive environment and lowering tipping fees. Bio-digesters make money by converting food waste to renewable natural gas, selling heat or electricity, selling renewable energy tax credits, and selling fertilizer output, as well as tipping fees from users.



Will our hauler want more money?

Haulers always want more money, but this program actually cuts the hauler’s cost, as the transfer station they will be delivering to is a shorter round trip for their trucks. The routes and weight are the same. The Hauler has agreed to participate in the pilot.

Who separates the bags? A State arranged contractor, paid for with the Grant, sorts the bags and reloads them into larger trucks, making the process more efficient.



Q: Knowing that landfills are getting full, and the waste incinerators in the state are breaking down, it makes sense to me that the town's cost for waste disposal will go up, which could mean an increase in taxes. I don't want my taxes to go up, but I also don't understand how this is saving money. It's a grant program right now so that makes sense because DEEP is paying for it, but then what happens when the grant pilot period is up?

A: Trash disposal is paid for per ton, meaning you pay by how much it weighs. Food scraps are the heaviest part of the trash. Additionally, it costs let per ton to bring food scraps to the anaerobic digester that helps make the compost than it does to truck it to an out-of-state landfill. When you separate the food from the trash, you save money because it's taking the heavy stuff out of the expensive trash disposal option, and moving it to a cheaper disposal option. In the long run, the more we can as a town make less trash and get the stuff we can recycle or compost out of the trash, the more money we can save on disposal costs.

Q: I love the idea of composting and turning food scraps into something useful that can be used as fertilizer, but after having a backyard compost pile for so many years, I'm hesitant to keep my food scraps in the house, won't it smell, or attract pests?

A: The food scraps that are separated in the green bag is stuff that would've gone in your kitchen trash anyway, so it won't smell any more than it does without separation. If you don't already have pests, you won't have an issue with it now. It's the same trash, just separated into two bags.

Q: I'm all for recycling and composting, I want to do it because I care about the environment, but I read an article that said most of what I put in my recycling doesn't even get recycled. How do I know that what's supposed to happen after I separate it is really happening?

A: The reason some materials put in recycling bins ends up not getting recycled is because people are putting the wrong things in the wrong bin. If your waste gets recycled depends on people sorting it correctly. As long as you're following what the brochure you got with your bags says you can and can't put in the bin, your material will get recycled.

Q: I'm in full support of this program. I really like separating my waste and knowing that we're one of the first towns to have a program like this. I already ran out of bags though, where can I get more?

A: Krauser's located at 911 Campbell Avenue and Krausers located at 477 Campbell Avenue, Krausers located at 191 Platt Street and Nazar's Halal Meat and Market located at 39 Elm Street. Will be for sale at more retail locations soon. Same price as normal trash bags = \$1.55 for 5 orange trash bags and only \$1.05 for five green food scrap bags

Q: I love this program because composting makes sense to me. My parents and grandparents have always composted, I live in an apartment so I can't have a compost pile, but I would if I could so this way I get to compost without a yard. However, I'm struggling the bag being too big and I can't find a place for it in my house. Can I get different size bags?

A: Eventually, when the program becomes permanent, we'll have options for different bag sizes you can buy. For now, there are options to getting this system to work in your house. I've heard of people keeping a mason jar on the counter while they cook and emptying it into a bag before trash day, getting a kitty litter bucket to keep under the sink for the green bag, or you can purchase compost pails in various sizes online that would fit your kitchen and your lifestyle. New bag sizes are coming though! Make sure to keep in touch with us because eventu

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Q: I love the idea of composting and turning food scraps into something useful that can be used as fertilizer, but after having a backyard compost pile for so many years, I'm hesitant to keep my food scraps in the house, won't it smell, or attract pests?

A: The food scraps that are separated in the green bag is stuff that would've gone in your kitchen trash anyway, so it won't smell any more than it does without separation. If you don't already have pests, you won't have an issue with it now. It's the same trash, just separated into two bags. In an ideal world, all residents would compost their own. Kudos to you for doing so, and we encourage you to continue.

Q: I'm all for recycling and composting, I want to do it because I care about the environment, but I read an article that said most of what I put in my recycling doesn't even get recycled. How do I know that what's supposed to happen after I separate it is really happening?

A: It is no secret that the wholesale recycling industry is in need of a technological reboot since China stopped buying our recyclable items. The New England states are working on plans to address this problem. Separating recycled items is still the law in CT. Also, the reason some materials put in recycling bins end up not getting recycled is because people are putting the wrong things in the wrong bin. Proper sorting will solve about 50% of the problem. Visit www.reducethetrashct.org/westhaven for instructions on what to put in Blue Bins.

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that would fit your kitchen and your lifestyle. New bag sizes are coming though! Make sure to keep in touch with us because eventually, we'll be asking for public input about what kind of sizes you all want.

Q: This program is really important for reducing costs for the town and helping the environment, and I'm really proud that we're one of the first communities in Connecticut to have this sort of program. After hearing that people sorting their waste incorrectly is why some stuff doesn't get recycled, I feel bad if I'm doing it wrong. I also think I might've lost the brochure that came with my bags. How can I make sure I'm doing it right?

A: Please visit the City's Youtube channel to view our workshop on recycling.

Q: I don't want to have anything to with this and I am happy to just pay more taxes.

A: Budgets are balanced with small decisions adding up to a larger whole. The City government has an obligation to act in the best interest of all citizens, and when faced with a budget item forecasted to go way beyond normal inflationary adjustments, we must explore alternatives. We have many very worthwhile programs to fund, such as schools, roads, and public safety that would suffer if we permit this cost to impact us without taking action. Nearly half of our residents live in households considered financially distressed, and cannot afford tax increases.