



Request for Proposals

The Rhode Island Food Policy Council seeks a contractor to support outreach to Rhode Island municipalities to assess their interest in initiating/expanding food waste composting.

Background

The central landfill in Johnston, Rhode Island is projected to reach full capacity in 10-15 years. The quasi-public entity that operates it, Rhode Island Resource Recovery Corporation, told planners in 2018 to start looking for trash disposal alternatives by 2022. The trash being dumped into the landfill includes about 100,000 tons of food waste per year, making food waste one of the top materials being deposited in Rhode Island's waste stream.

Unfortunately, when organic waste like food waste is deposited in a landfill and starts decomposing, it releases methane – a greenhouse gas which is much more dangerous than carbon dioxide for the climate, because it is much more efficient than carbon dioxide at trapping heat in the Earth's atmosphere.

Concurrently, there is a strong and growing need for high quality compost that can improve soil fertility among RI's farmers, gardeners, home builders, and state infrastructure agencies. This small state boasts 57,000 acres of farmland and over 1,000 farms, which were estimated by the University of Rhode Island to result in \$297 million in agricultural sales (2012 estimate adjusted for inflation to 2020 dollars). We also have scores of community gardens, many in historically underserved communities, and tens of thousands of home gardens. Many of these home and business owners prefer to use compost because it is a natural, nutrient-rich soil amendment that enriches their plants.

Objective

To grow municipal food waste composting volumes by supporting RI municipalities in learning about and implementing food waste diversion strategies including municipal composting programs. Working to support the Program Director - Food, Climate and Environment establish relationships with potential municipal partners.

Activities/Outputs

A spreadsheet including but not limited to the following data for each RI city/town:

- Planning department contact information
- DPW contact information
- Sustainability committee contact information
- Population (total)
- Population density



- Average household income level
- Existing solid waste and compost infrastructure
- Municipal ordinances regarding composting
- Potential municipal composting site availability
- Existing interest in composting
- Summary comments

In-person meetings with a minimum of 12 municipalities focused on informing them about strategies for reducing tipping fees and climate footprint by increasing food waste composting. Follow-up may include connecting municipalities with potential compost collection and/or processing entities. Meetings should include tours of existing municipal waste facilities. Detailed meeting notes expected.

A brief report summarizing the goals, objectives, questions, needs, and challenges of the 6-8 municipalities most interested in increasing municipal food scrap composting in the next 3-5 years. This report should also identify key takeaways, key questions, funding needs (e.g., those needed to support robust and equitable municipal composting program start-up in those locations) and high-level recommendations for review by RIFPC. The report should identify 2-3 municipalities for prioritization based on potential site availability, financial impacts, and municipal leadership interest/alignment.

Timeframe

May - September 2024 (5 months)

Budget

\$20,000

To Apply

Please submit your application to isaac@rifoodcouncil.org by April 26, 2024.