

Compost Data & Policy Research Intern



JOB DESCRIPTION

ABOUT RIFPC

The Rhode Island Food Policy Council (RIFPC) is an independent statewide network with a mission to promote a more equitable, accessible, economically vibrant, and environmentally sustainable food system. We cultivate partnerships, develop and implement high-impact projects, and advocate for good food policy. We center equity in our work, which touches all parts of the food chain – production, harvesting, processing, distribution, consumption/access, and waste management. We operate with a collaborative professional staff, over 200 engaged and diverse council members, and hundreds more stakeholders from across the Ocean State. More information about RIFPC can be found at www.rifoodcouncil.org.

The RI Food Policy Council seeks a part-time paid **Compost Data & Policy Research Intern**. The primary objective of the person in this role is to conduct and support research related to composting & statewide policy. The primary project includes designing and implementing a survey for food scrap haulers and processors to understand the total amount of food scraps that are being currently diverted from landfills in the state. Data on this topic either does not exist at the state level or is based on many different assumptions. This research will help inform and measure the progress of policy and funding interventions moving forward. Additional research projects may be assigned based on overall workload.

The ideal candidate for this position will be:

- **Interested in survey design and data gathering**, specifically how we can design a survey that balances ease of use for those who surveyed with gathering necessary data. As well as the methods for reaching out to and getting back surveys from the needed participants.
- **An accountable teammate**. Someone who manages time well, is highly organized, and can be counted on to work either independently or cooperatively. A helpful-in-nature person who enjoys “owning” projects, but understands the importance of checking in and being responsive to the team.
- **A good listener and an excellent communicator**. Someone who is comfortable reaching out via phone and email to collect data, and who can write up ideas and information in a compelling, accessible manner.

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The intern reports directly to the Program Director - Food, Climate & Environment. They will review existing survey instruments and feedback from key stakeholders to identify recommended changes. They will then solicit additional feedback, assist with finalizing the survey, and implement the survey with a goal of gathering input from 100% of food haulers and processors in the state. The intern attends weekly virtual and monthly in-person staff meetings, and communicates with interested board and Council as requested. Depending on progress, Intern may also be asked to support additional projects such as investigating the details of municipal solid waste contracts or supporting the 2026 Compost Conference to be held on March 11th at Rhode Island College, as time permits/is necessary.

This is a part-time position working 10-15 hours per week at \$17.50 per hour. Most work will be conducted remotely and some hours are flexible. There will be virtual meetings during the week, including weekly interaction with the Program Director - Food, Climate & Environment. In-person meetings and events may occur at a rate of 1-2 per month. The start and end dates are flexible, initiating in January 2026 and continuing through mid-May 2026.

RESPONSIBILITIES

- Design and gather survey data on:
 - How many pounds/tons of source separated food scraps are being collected in RI
 - Total pounds/tons of source separated food scraps collected in RI that are being processed in RI
 - What percentage of food scraps collected that are processed via different methods (Anaerobic Digestion, Compost, other)
 - Total cubic yards of compost being produced
 - Other pertinent data to be determined
- Support additional research and events

Qualifications

- Survey design and data collection experience
- Research experience, including internet searches, document analysis, and key stakeholder interviews
- Excellent active listening, verbal and written communication skills

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- Experience using Google Drive, Excel, MS Office Suite, Zoom, Basecamp, and other common professional platforms/programs
- Comfort working and communicating with a broad range of demographically, experientially, and cognitively diverse people
- Interest in sustainability and policy
- High school diploma/GED, undergraduate/graduate coursework/degree preferred
- At least 17 years of age
- A US Citizen, U.S. National, or Permanent Resident
- Willingness to undergo a National Criminal History Background Check

Please Note: We encourage applications from individuals who believe they possess the key competencies for the role and can demonstrate ability to execute the outlined responsibilities, even if they do not have every listed qualification/skill.

Applicants please send a cover letter and resume to isaac@rifoodcouncil.org with "Compost Data & Policy Research Intern" in the subject line.

We request that you do not use AI tools in preparing your application. We do not use AI or computer screening for applicants and ask that you offer us the same respect.