

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

US Department of Environmental Protection Solid Waste Infrastructure For Recycling Grant Program

New Haven Office of Climate and Sustainability

February 4, 2023

Funding request: \$4,000,000.00 for three years

The New Haven Office of Climate and Sustainability, in partnership with counterparts in the Towns of Hamden and Branford and the City of West Haven, seeks funding from the U.S. Department of Environmental Protection to establish a regional food waste composting program.

Studies estimate that nearly one third of our solid waste stream is organic material that could be composted. Composting represents a viable alternative to the incineration of organic material, one that has the potential to improve public health, lessen environmental impact, and yield significant cost savings.

With the closure of the Hartford MIRA incinerator, the tipping fees the City pays to incinerate waste have risen over \$100. The increased fees strain the City budget and make the potential cost savings from composting substantial. As other incinerators reach the end of their useful lives, fees may increase further or the state may mandate municipalities to provide a composting program.

The program seeks to divert municipal solid waste characterized as food waste and to compost it into agricultural- and horticultural-grade soil amendment. This will reduce the municipal cost of incineration tipping fees and generate revenue by converting food waste into a useable product of commercial value.

If awarded, the participating municipalities will select an operating entity, such as a Solid Waste Authority or the South Central Regional Council of Governments, to manage the finances, procurement, and implementation of a regional curbside composting program.

The participating municipalities will procure contracting services to operate collection and composting activities from commercial and not-for-profit vendors. Each participating municipality may provide one of three collection models: voluntary subscription of food waste, mass subscription of food waste, or co-collection of food waste and refuse.

The composting will be accomplished with the aerobic method in aerated static piles, and then matured in stockpiles before being sold for agricultural and horticultural uses. Composting at municipal facilities will be implemented by a specialty contractor. Composting will occur at a site operated under a DEEP Demonstration Project permit, such as the facility permitted to operate in West Haven.

Funds will be used to:

- Acquire packaging removal and decontamination equipment to receive and process the food waste. Funds will also be used to acquire collection trucks, loaders, construct aerated static piles, mixing bins and food waste collection pails.
- Conduct public outreach and education.
- Implement the regional program, manage staff, train municipal staff, and pay vendors for drivers, route management, machine operation, and composting expertise.
- Significantly subsidize the initial 2 years of the program for an introductory rate to consumers and municipalities.