



NEWS FROM THE OFFICE OF
ADAM J. BELLO
MONROE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

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COUNTY EXECUTIVE ADAM BELLO ANNOUNCES NEW FOOD WASTE DIVERSION PILOT PROGRAM FOR SCHOOLS

Grant funding available to Monroe County School Districts to start or expand food waste diversion programs

ROCHESTER, NY — Monroe County Executive Adam Bello announced today a new program to encourage the diversion of food waste in schools. The program will provide grant funding to school districts located within Monroe County looking to start or expand food waste diversion programs in their buildings to nurture the next generation's understanding of food conservation and inspire students to take an active role in reducing food waste. The pilot program will provide matching funds up to \$5,000 for any of the 18 local school districts, including BOCES 1 & 2, to implement new or expanded initiatives.

"The Monroe County School Food Waste Diversion Pilot Program will not only help to educate students on environmental stewardship, but will also act as another pillar of our Climate Action Plan Phase II," **said County Executive Bello**. "I thank our Department of Environmental Services for their continued innovation in developing programs that will reduce waste in landfills, cut down on costs, and protect our environment."

The second phase of Monroe County's Climate Action Plan (CAP) seeks to address greenhouse gas emissions from Monroe County residents, businesses and organizations, complementing Phase I of the CAP, which focused on emissions from County-owned sites, facilities, and operations.

"What better way to sponsor change than to collaborate with our schools and student leaders who are teaching us a new way to think about the waste stream and the importance of removing organics from landfills," **added Legislator John Baynes**.

"In nature there is no waste. By composting organics, we can reduce the amount of trash heading to landfills, and the greenhouse gases being produced. Instead, composting will create a nutrient rich material that can be added to soil. By partnering with our schools, we can take a step towards protecting the environment while inspiring another generation to care for it," **said Legislator Sue Hughes-Smith**.

"The Food Waste Diversion Pilot Program is an exciting opportunity for Monroe County public schools and BOCES to enhance their existing recycling efforts by reducing, recovering and recycling food waste – estimated to be one of the largest waste streams

found in educational institutions,” said **Mike Garland, Director of Monroe County’s Department of Environmental Services**. “Not only will this program assist in diverting organic waste from landfills and sewers, it will educate the next generation on environmental conservation, allow for the donation of excess food to those in need, and assist in expanding the circular economy by supporting local businesses.”

The Food Waste Diversion Pilot Program for schools was voted on and approved by the County Legislature at their meeting last night, March 11, 2025. To learn more about this program and apply when applications open, please visit: <https://www.monroecounty.gov/des-school-food-waste>.

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