



**RAMSEY/WASHINGTON
RECYCLING & ENERGY**
CONNECTING VALUE TO WASTE

FACT SHEET:

Ramsey and Washington Counties Food Scraps Bag Program

Why is Ramsey/Washington Recycling & Energy (R&E) planning to collect food scraps?

Food scraps comprise about 20% of trash collected in Ramsey and Washington counties, by weight. The counties are developing a new way to recover this material so that it can be converted into soil and energy. Recovering food scraps from trash will help reach the state's recycling goals and provide health, environmental, and economic benefits to the community.

How will food scraps be collected?

Food scraps will be collected from residents using food scrap bags co-collected with trash. With this system, food scrap bags and bags of trash all go in the same trash can.



Food scrap bags are durable and compostable. They are thicker than compostable bags used at county drop-off sites, designed to withstand the journey in a garbage truck. They're also certified compostable, designed to eventually break down along with their contents.

What are the benefits?

Food scrap bags are an efficient and the most cost-effective method of collecting food scraps from residents at curbside. Benefits of this method include:

- Does not require an additional collection cart
- Does not require a separate collection day
- Does not require additional hauling trucks
- Works in communities with and without waste hauling contracts
- Has little impact on current waste hauling services
- Fewer greenhouse gas emissions

How will the bags be distributed?

R&E will provide bags and service at no cost to residents in the two counties. Bag distribution will occur through an online ordering system with call-in option available for those without internet access.

What is the timeline?

R&E is intending to launch this service in early 2023.

FAQ

How do we know that the bags will hold up between the curb and the compost facility without breaking?

Similar programs have been implemented in the region and across the country. To ensure the program here works well, R&E is collecting information from these programs, including appropriate bag strength, thickness (about three times as thick as a plastic bag from the grocery store), and compostability. Bags will be tested in actual loads of garbage before the program goes into effect.

Will this service be available in multi-unit dwellings like apartment buildings?

Yes!

Is this going to make my home smell?

Using durable compostable bags is just a different way of collecting the same material that might currently be going in your trash can.

Will the county's food scrap drop-off sites still be available?

Yes. The food scrap bag program will be one part of a larger system of recovering value from food scraps. Drop-off sites and backyard composting will remain as other components of this system.

How is this being paid for?

This program will be funded by the counties' County Environmental Charge (CEC). This is a service charge included on your waste collection bill that funds county waste programs.