



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

**Ramsey/Washington Recycling & Energy Board (R&E Board) Workshop:  
Food Scraps Pickup Program**

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6/23/2022



# R&E Board Workshop Agenda

**Date:** Thursday, June 23, 2022

**Time:** 11:00 am – 12:00 pm

**Commissioners, Key staff, Presenters:**

Ramsey County Environmental Health | 2785 White Bear Ave N. | 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Conf. Room  
Maplewood, MN | 55109 | [Map](#)

**Public:** [Microsoft TEAMS](#)

Call In (audio only): 1-323-792-6297 | Phone Conference ID: 881 995 846#

The Recycling & Energy Board Chair approved, starting with the March 24, 2022 R&E Board meeting, hosting with commissioner members all in person at Ramsey County Environmental Health Offices in Maplewood, along with key staff and presenters. Members of the public are encouraged to participate remotely or may attend at the Maplewood address.

## Workshop Purpose

- Provide a brief overview of R&E's comprehensive approach to addressing food waste
- Provide a staff report and updates on the upcoming food scraps pickup program, being implemented collaboratively by Ramsey County, Washington County and Ramsey/Washington R&E. Updates will include program development, plans and timelines.
- Provide opportunity for board members to ask questions.

## Workshop Outline

- I. Overview of R&E/counties' food scrap recycling programs
  - a. Food waste prevention
  - b. Food recovery
  - c. Food waste recycling
- II. Food scraps pickup program pilot, phased launch and timeline plans
  - a. Criteria for pilot and roll-out
  - b. Pilot test area
  - c. Phased launch roll-out
  - d. Tentative timeline for pilot & roll-out
  - e. County food scrap drop-off sites & food scrap bags
  - f. Communications timeline



- III.** Review of food scraps pickup program communication plan and strategy
  - a. Engagement & outreach and communication strategy
  - b. Plan for updates and “tool kit”
  
- IV.** Food scraps pickup program development updates
  - a. Online bag ordering website
  - b. Customer service
  - c. Food scrap bag design
  
- V.** Board member questions and discussion



June 16, 2022

**To:** Ramsey/Washington Recycling & Energy Board (R&E Board)

**From:** Joint Leadership Team (JLT)

**Re:** R&E Board Workshop: Food Scraps Pickup Program

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The R&E Board meeting on June 23, 2022, will include a one-hour workshop following the board's business meeting. The purpose of the workshop is to provide in-depth information on Ramsey and Washington counties' upcoming **food scraps pickup program**, a new program to collect and recycle residential food scraps using special compostable bags called **food scrap bags**.

At this workshop, board members will receive information and updates on program development efforts, including the tentative timeline for a pilot test and the phased roll-out to Ramsey and Washington county communities. The workshop will also provide time for R&E board members to ask questions.

After the workshop, in early July, board members will receive a link to an online folder of digital communication tools related to the program, including social media/newsletter content about program phasing and a PowerPoint presentation to use in sharing about the program. Communication tools will continue to be added to this folder as the program is rolled out.

#### **Program Background**

Food scraps make up about 20% of trash collected in Ramsey and Washington counties by weight. The food scraps pickup program is a strategy to recover and recycle food scraps that offers environmental, economic and health benefits.

This system will use special compostable bags called food scrap bags. Residents who want to participate will sign up through a custom-designed website (to be located at FoodScrapsPickup.com) or a customer service line to receive an annual supply of bags at no cost and will use the bags to collect their food scraps. Residents will then put the bags in their trash carts or dumpsters along with their trash, which will be collected as usual. After collection, the bags will be mechanically separated from the trash. Separated bags of food scraps would go to composting facilities (and potentially anaerobic digestion facilities in the future).

This method of food scraps collection was chosen by the R&E Board because it provides an efficient and cost-effective way to collect food scraps across the two counties. 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
- Has little impact on current waste hauling services



- Results in fewer greenhouse gas emissions
- Is an equitable and accessible way to offer food scraps collection, since anyone with garbage service and regardless of homeownership status will have access to this program at no additional cost.

Food scrap bags are thicker than compostable bags currently used at county drop-off sites or that might be purchased in a store or online. They are designed to hold up on the trip in a garbage truck. They are also designed to break down along with the food scraps they contain. There will be no charge to residents for bags or program participation.

While the resident experience will be easy, simple and convenient, there are multiple components of this system's design to be implemented by R&E and the counties prior to the program launch. The system components consist of:

- R&E Center facility construction and equipment installation for food scrap bag separation
- Manufacture of custom food scrap bags for the program
- A website for residents to learn about the program and order bags
- Customer support services for residents with questions or who need assistance
- Warehouse and fulfillment center to distribute the food scrap bags to residents
- Development of communication and educational materials

Initially, a pilot will be conducted, anticipated for later this year. The pilot phase will be a simplified 'test' of the program, prior to launch, of a small number of participating households in specified geographic areas. After the pilot is completed, ensuring that all components and operations are ready for launch, the program will roll out in phases to residents of Ramsey and Washington counties in 2023. The counties' goal is 40% participation, or about 127,000 households, at program maturity (estimated about five years after launch).