



2026-2027 MONROE COUNTY SCHOOL FOOD WASTE DIVERSION PILOT PROGRAM

Background: Initiatives such as the New York State Food Donation and Food Scraps Recycling Law and State Solid Waste Management Plan, the Monroe County Climate Action Plans, and the upcoming Monroe County Organics Management Plan all emphasize the need for effective organic waste management programs at the local level. At the federal level, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) recognizes that K-12 schools have a remarkable opportunity to reduce, recover, and recycle food waste on their campuses, while advocating for nurturing the next generation's understanding of the importance of food conservation.

Monroe County is proposing a second round of the Monroe County School Food Waste Diversion Pilot Program to inspire students, teachers, and staff at public primary and secondary schools to take an active role in reducing food waste locally. Upon Legislature approval, this pilot program would provide funding via grants to assist public school districts with facilities within Monroe County in starting or expanding food waste diversion programs in 2026-2027 academic year.

Eligibility and Funding: These grants are only available to public school districts that are actively participating in a mixed recycling program, as mandated in the Monroe County Solid Waste Reuse and Recycling Regulations. A school district, defined under this grant program, includes any of the 18 public school districts primarily within the Monroe County, as well as BOCES Monroe 1 and 2. School Districts that were awarded a grant in 2025 may apply again.

Fifty thousand dollars is included in the 2026 County budget for these grants. Applicants may only submit one (1) application per school district. Grant funds are available for up to 50% of the eligible project cost and the maximum grant amount for each project is \$5,000. Applicants must provide the remaining 50% or more in match funds.

Eligible Project Types – The following projects are eligible for this grant opportunity:

- Hauling services for source separated food scraps to a New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC)-authorized organics recycling facility;
- Developing or expanding on-site composting operations;
- Combination of the above project types.

Eligible Items and Materials –The following items and materials are eligible for this grant opportunity:

- Equipment (and supplies) for existing or new food waste diversion programs;
- Expansion of yard composting facilities to accept food scraps;
- Equipment and construction costs for new food scraps recycling facilities;
- Hauling contracts up to one (1) year in duration; and
- Developing education and outreach materials in support of food waste diversion projects.

Applications: Applications will only be available through the [program website](#). It is anticipated that applications will be available on the [program website](#) in March 2026 and grant announcements will be made in the second quarter of 2026. Following the award announcements, successful school districts will need to enter into an Intermunicipal Agreement (IMA) with Monroe County.

More Information: This factsheet provides an overview of the grants for 2026. Visit the [program website](#) for the latest updates and details.

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