

FIVE STEP GUIDE TO COMMUNITY COMPOSTING



change **X**

WELCOME

“Welcome to the ChangeX Community Composting guide! We’re thrilled you’re thinking about starting a composting project in your community, as it reduces the amount of methane-producing organic waste ending up in landfill, instead creating compost that can result in higher yielding crops.

Here you’ll find all the information, practical tips, and resources you need. There is someone to help you at each stage of the journey so don’t be afraid to get in touch!”

**Catherine Duffy
Community Composting**



Introduction to the Idea

What is Community Composting?

Community Composting is all about bringing people in your community together, to divert their food waste, yard trimmings, and other organic matter from landfill, and compost them instead. Community members can compost at home and use the compost in their own gardens. However, at-home composting doesn’t generate enough heat to break down animal products (like meat, cheese, or bones) or biodegradable packaging. So the benefit of coming together as a community is that together you will have enough food waste to employ a local composting company to come and pick up your food waste from a centralized location, and these companies have the equipment to break down all food waste and compostable materials into useable compost! If your group is affiliated to a community garden the finished compost can even be used to fertilize your soil. Many municipal composting programs return composted food waste back to local farmers, creating higher-yield crops and reducing the need for chemical fertilizers.

Why is it important?

The single largest input into U.S. landfills is food waste, yard trimmings, and other organic matter. Sending organic matter

to composting facilities rather than landfills dramatically lowers emissions — in fact, expanding composting globally would avoid or capture the equivalent of around 3 billion tons of carbon dioxide by 2050.

Composting is central to a zero-waste routine. Instead of throwing food scraps into the trash, letting them decompose naturally into rich soil keeps landfills smaller, greenhouse gas emissions lower, and gardens and farms healthier - it’s just a really efficient system. Unfortunately, only 4 percent of U.S. households are served by a municipal composting service. Community Composting helps community members to come together to work with a local composting company, contributing to local climate and environmental action.

Background

The inspiration for his idea came from The Creation Care team who set up a composting project at the All Saints Episcopal Church, New Albany, Ohio and won in the “Community Inspiration” category in the Cool Congregations Challenge. They contracted with a local composting company to pick up compost consisting of food scraps and compostable disposables from the church and invited church members to bring their compostables to the church for pick up.

STARTING COMMUNITY COMPOSTING

EVERYTHING YOU NEED

TIME



As the organizer you'll need approximately 3-4 hours a week to get the project up and running, and from then on just an hour a week to maintain it.

PEOPLE



You'll need a team of approx. 5 people to help you start Community Composting

FUNDING



Funding is helpful for paying the contracted composting company, as well as for starter kits (bins and bags) for community members.

Who typically starts a Community Composting?

Someone who:

- is part of a community group or is well connected in the community
- is passionate about reducing waste going to landfill
- enjoys bringing people in the community together

5 Step Summary

- 1 Complete the 30 Day Challenge
- 2 Find a local composting company
- 3 Set up the local composting station
- 4 Organize and distribute starter kits
- 5 Communicate your progress

Support and Additional Resources

Support from ChangeX: Call us at 507-301-6614. Email: hello@changex.org

Support from The Creation Care Team: Email: catherineteresaduffy@gmail.com

STEP 1: COMPLETE YOUR 30 DAY CHALLENGE



The 30 Day Jumpstart Challenge has been designed to get your project off to the strongest possible start by building momentum in the first month. Once you have completed your challenge your first funding payment will be unlocked.

- Learn more about the idea you're starting**

This '5 Step Guide' includes all you need to know about the specifics of starting your project.

- Schedule a Call**

Pick a time that works for you to talk to a ChangeX team member about what's involved in your chosen project as well as to ensure that you understand the Guidelines & rules associated with the Challenge.

- Find 5 interested people**

You already have your own project page on changex.org. Use the site to share the project with others and recruit neighbors, friends, or other folks with an interest to be your first supporters.

- Set up a safe kick-off meeting**

Host a virtual (eg via Zoom, Hangout or Microsoft Teams) or physically distant meeting (ideally outside) and come up with an action plan for your project, including a COVID-19 safety plan.

- Share a team photo and your plan of action**

Upload a team photo taken at your first meeting (a screenshot from a virtual meeting is perfect!) to changex.org and share your plan for getting your project started. This should include how you'll spend the seed funding, a COVID-19 safety plan and how you hope the project will ultimately benefit your community.

STEP 2: FIND A LOCAL COMPOSTING COMPANY

Once you have built your team and got your community excited about this project, it's time to do some research into what composting companies are in operation in your locality.

Community members can of course compost at home and use the compost in their own gardens, and this can be a good starting point for your project. However, at-home composting doesn't generate enough heat to break down animal products (like meat, cheese, or bones) or biodegradable packaging. When you come together as a community to compost, you will have enough food waste together to employ a local composting company to come and pick up your food waste from a centralized location, and these companies have the equipment to break down all food waste and compostable materials into useable compost!

The composting company will provide the composting bins, and they should clean them each time they carry out a collection. Work out with them how many bins you want to start with and how often you think lifts will need to be done (depending on how many people are interested in taking part). This can be adjusted as you go.

TIPS TO FIND A COMPANY

Contact your county or town government waste management divisions to find out if they recommend any companies.

In addition, these websites are handy resources to identify local composting companies across the US:

- www.litterless.com/wheretocompost
- www.findacomposter.com/

The Creation Care team who set up the Community Composting project in New Albany, Ohio used a company called Go Zero which takes their food waste to a new composting facility at the London Correctional Facility where prisoners learn about composting while working there, resulting in social as well as environmental benefits.

STEP 3: SET UP THE LOCAL COMPOSTING STATION

Work out where to keep the composting bins in the community - somewhere accessible to everyone who will be using them, including the composting company. A good location might be outside your community center or church, or in one of your team members' front yards, if they are happy with that. Bins should be secured from animals. A gate, a simple latch, or even a brick on top should do the trick.



Support

Support from ChangeX: Call us at 612-232-6626. Email: hello@changex.org

STEP 4: ORGANIZE AND DISTRIBUTE STARTER KITS

To help your community get off to a good start, it's a nice idea to provide starter kits to everyone who wants to start composting. Included in the starter kits should be a food waste bucket and lid, as well as a box of liners. Be sure to consult with your composting company about what they can compost, as different companies have different capabilities, and then crucially, communicate this clearly to your community. It would be a good plan to include a list of what is compostable by the chosen compost company with the starter kit.

Talk to the composting company about sourcing the buckets, lids and liners for your community. At the All Saints Episcopal Church, New Albany, community members paid \$20 for a starter kit plus the first 3 months of composting, but if you secure funding for this project you can cover the starter kits and composting company costs!



STEP 5: COMMUNICATE YOUR PROGRESS

The best way to keep your community motivated is to let them know the impact they are having as they go. The composting company you use should be able to let you know the weight of food waste they collect each week/month. You can then use an online calculator like this one: <https://naturbag.com/foodscrapcalculator/> to calculate carbon equivalencies based on your diversion efforts, for example, cars driven, or energy consumed in homes, to help everyone visualise the impact!

Equivalent to greenhouse gas emissions from:



4.16 average American cars driven
for one year



1.52 tons of waste recycled instead
of landfilled for one year



11,440 miles driven by an average
passenger vehicle

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