

City of **Gainesville**

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Zero Waste Subcommittee

**Update on Residential Food Waste Pilot Project Funded by the USDA's Community
Compost & Food Waste Reduction Grant**

August 3, 2021

Food Waste Pilot Program



General Grant Info:

- The USDA Office of Urban Agriculture and Innovative made availability of up to \$2 million for local governments to host Community Compost and Food Waste Reduction pilot projects.
- The cooperative agreements support projects that develop and test strategies for planning and implementing municipal compost plans and food waste reduction plans.
- Project to span two years from October 2020 and completion date of September 2022.
- City of Gainesville was only 1 of about 15 projects selected nationwide.

Food Waste Pilot Program

Project Goals:

- **Determine the long-term viability of residential collected food waste collection programs in this area.** *Is there a cost reduction through density of service?*
- **Measure the volume of food waste generated from residential homes.** *How much food waste are residential homes producing?*
- **Provide a quality compost product to local growers.** *What's the demand the compost product?*
- **Utilization of the over 200 community composters in the US.** *Can these smaller operations provide food waste composting services as well (or better) than traditional large waste hauling companies?*

Food Waste Pilot Program

Project Benefits:

- Enhance & expand on the existing local compost infrastructure.
- Engage community composters in the overall development of a local food waste reduction strategy.
- Encourage residents to separate their food waste from their garbage and learn the importance of food waste reduction.
- *Get the ball rolling! Have to start somewhere, somehow.*

Food Waste Pilot Program

Budget Summary:

- Residential Food Waste Pilot Project Funded by the USDA's Community Compost & Food Waste Reduction Grant
- 75/25 funding split (USDA/COG)

Cost	Federal	Match	Total
Supplies	\$ 5,260	\$ 1,720	\$ 6,980
Contractual	\$ 45,725	\$ 15,275	\$ 61,000
Total Direct Cost	\$ 50,985	\$ 16,995	\$ 67,980

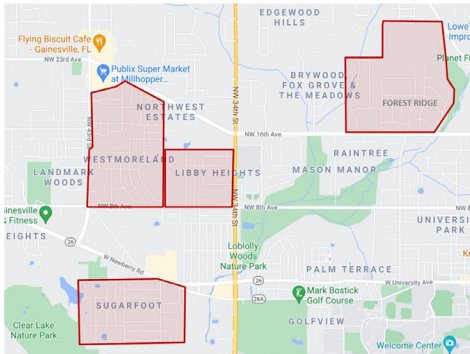
Food Waste Pilot Program



Timeline:

Approximate Dates	Program Phase/Task
October 1, 2020	Start of grant period
Oct. 2020 to Jan. 2021	Development of educational materials, ordering of program supplies, mapping of pilot zones
Nov. 2020 to Feb. 2021	Completion of contracts and agreements with program partners
Feb. 2021	Launch of program participation recruitment
March 30, 2021	Delivery of equipment and educational materials to participants
April 6, 2021	First collection day (start of 18 month service period)
Apr. 2021 to current	Weekly service, program maintenance, and field sampling
September 2022	End of grant period

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Pilot Areas/Zones:

- A total of 1,588 homes were identified within the four pilot zones selected. Expectations were signups rates around 15%.

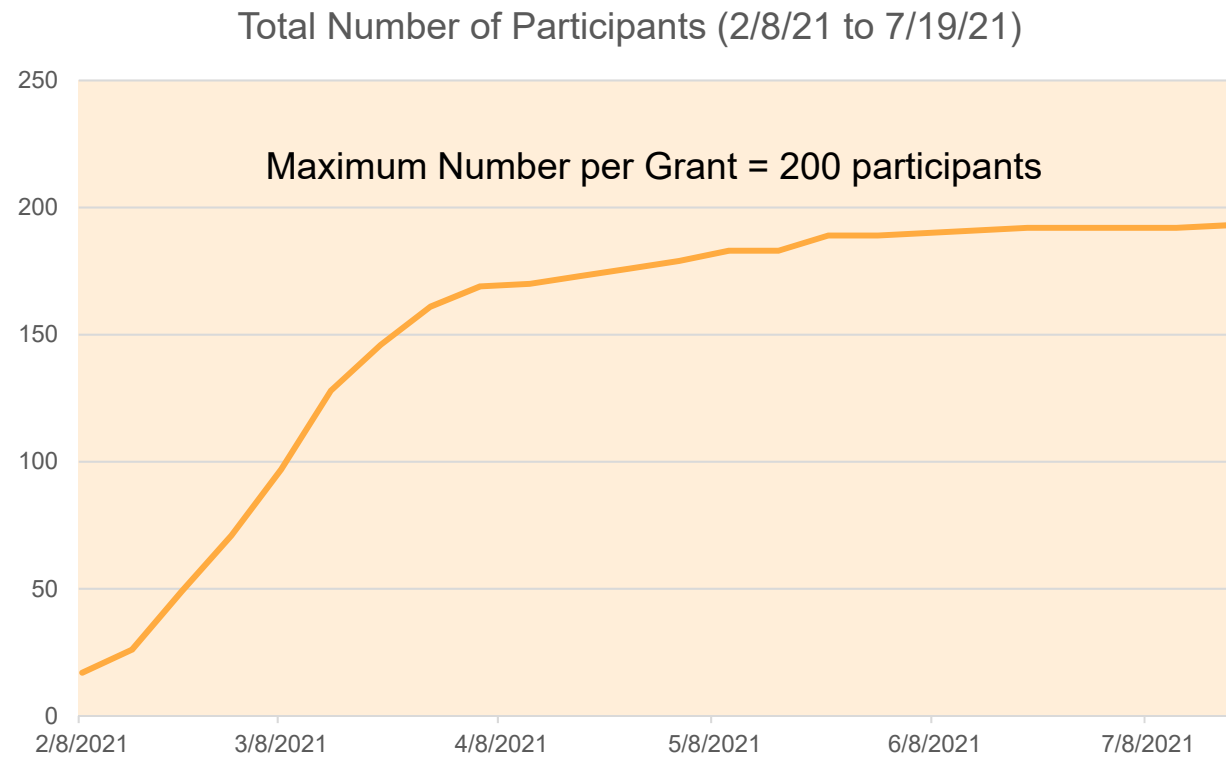
Zone	Neighborhood Name(s)	Total No. of Homes
1	Sugarfoot	353
2	Libby Heights, Skyline, Pine Glen, Crest View & Littlewood Estates	195
3	Westmoreland, Palm View, Westwood, Fernwood, Sunnybrook & Cheswood Park	604
4	Forest Ridge, Maple Ridge, Henderson Heights & Hermitage	436

- Trash service day on and off the Tuesday food waste collection day to test out differences.

Food Waste Pilot Program



Program Recruitment:



Food Waste Pilot Program



Program Launch:

- New program participants were delivered one 5-gallon food waste collection bucket, one 2-gallon kitchen compost pail, and a service guide.
- Collection is curbside once per week (every Tuesday).
- Each week the full bucket gets exchanged for an empty bucket by Beaten Path Compost crews.



Food Waste Pilot Program



Educational Materials:

- Sign up postcard
- Website (cityofgainesville.org/foodwaste)
- Email communications with participants
- Container decals
- Service guide
- Oops tags
- “Reducing Wasted Food” education piece (Aug. 2021)



Food Waste Pilot Program

Program Partners:

- **Beaten Path Compost** – Weekly collection service, compost processing and marketing of final compost product.
- **Grow Hub** - Compost operational space and equipment usage.
- **Working Food** – Assistance with developing educational materials and hands-on workshops.



Food Waste Pilot Program

Beaten Path Compost = “Community Composter”

- Compost Operations and Marketing of Product to Local Farmers



Food Waste Pilot Program



Program Data (through 7/20/2021)

- **193 homes** are participating homes within 4 pilot zones
- Average set out rate is good at **79.3%**
- Contamination an impressive **0%**
- Composted **9.68 tons** of food waste

Using calculations from the EPA Waste Reduction Model (WARM), that totals a reduction in GHG Emissions (MTCO₂E) of **5.92 MTCO₂E**, which is equivalent to:

- Conserving 665 Gallons of Gasoline; or
- Conserving 246 Cylinders of Propane Used for Home Barbeques

Food Waste Pilot Program



Program Challenges:

- **Contamination** in the food waste material collected and **the quality of the final compost product** are often the largest obstacles to overcome when residential composting projects. **To date, contamination is ZERO and the compost product is more popular than ever.**
- **Elimination of the “participation fee” from the program in order to reach participation goals.** General lack of enthusiasm from residents for contributing a partial payment for the program/service.
- During door-to-door recruitment, SWM discovered of an **usually high number of backyard composters in the Sugarfoot neighborhood.** SWD staff learned that this neighborhood was targeted a decade ago to promote backyard composting and were distributed free compost bins to residents. Fewer signups than expected for this neighborhood, but still good for the environment.

Food Waste Pilot Program

Sample Comments for Program Participants:

- *I am so happy to see our city take on this initiative!*
- *Very happy to see this pilot program!*
- *It's nice to know the city is willing to put resources behind getting this going.*
- *I just wanted to say that we are grateful for this program- many thanks to you and your team for setting it up!*
- *We are really enjoying the program so far.*
- *Hello and I wanted you to let you know we are very impressed with this program!*
- *I'm so glad I was allowed to be part of your composting buckets trial.*

THANK
YOU!

