

## Food Scraps Pickup Program Update – April/May 2022

### Why collect food scraps?

Food scraps make up about 20% of trash collected in Ramsey and Washington counties by weight. By separating this material, residents can help turn it back into soil instead of becoming trash. This helps reach state recycling goals and provides environmental, economic and health benefits to the community.

### Program Name

Food scraps pickup program.

### Process

Food scraps will be collected from residents using specially designed compostable bags, called *food scrap bags*, that will be co-collected with trash.

Initially, food scraps will be sent to commercial compost facilities. In the future, they may also go to anaerobic digestion facilities.

### Getting Started

Residents will go online or call to order their free bags. The website and phone support systems are in development. Residents will not need to contact their hauler to get started.

### Cost

The food scraps pickup program will be free to residents who want to participate.

### Eligibility

This program will be available to all residents of both counties, whether they live in an apartment, townhome, or single-family home. The service will not initially be available to small businesses but may be available to them for a fee in the future.

### Food Scrap Bags

To participate in the food scraps pickup program, residents will need to use the food scrap bags

1



Collect your food scraps in the bags.

2



Once a week or when the bag is full, tie a single knot at the top to close the bag.

3



Place the bag inside your trash cart or dumpster for collection.  
Do NOT place on top of your trash cart or dumpster and do NOT place in your recycling.

4



Done!  
Your trash cart is collected as usual. After collection, these bags are sorted from the trash and composted.

provided by the counties, which are specifically designed for this program.

Food scrap bags are certified compostable, designed to eventually break down with their contents. Food scrap bags are thicker than compostable bags used at county drop-off sites or sold in retail stores and are designed to withstand the journey in a garbage truck. Food scrap bags are also designed to be identified by robotic sorting equipment after collection.

Food scrap bags will be light green and will come in 6- and 13-gallon sizes. Residents will be able to order a yearly supply of 60 free bags in either size. Residents will be able to purchase additional bags for a fee if they require more than 60 bags per year. Note that food scrap bags will not be sold in stores or from online sellers, only through the food scraps pickup program.

### Accepted Items

Accepted items include:

- Fruits & vegetables, including skins, peels & cuttings
- Meat, seafood & bones
- Coffee grounds & filters
- Nuts & shells
- Dairy products
- Eggs & eggshells
- Rice, bread, pasta & beans
- Moldy or rotten food
- Grease (room temperature, not hot)
- Non-recyclable paper (paper towels, tissues, napkins, food-stained paper bags & paper egg cartons)

The counties are assessing material management options for compostable products (cups, plates, utensils, etc.) for the food scraps pickup program, and this will determine whether these materials will be accepted as part of the program.

### Drop-off Sites

County food scraps drop-off sites will remain in operation. The food scraps pickup program is one part of a larger system for managing food scraps. Residents may prefer the food scraps pickup program, drop-off sites and/or backyard composting. The food scraps pickup program is about expanding choice for residents.

### Timeline

- Pilot – Limited test in late 2022
- Phase I launch – Roll out to select number of cities initially starting in 2023
- Phase II launch – Additional phases will be launched, rolling out over several months to become available to all residents in both counties by end of 2023

R&E and the counties will share information on which communities will be involved in the pilot and initial launch phase as soon as this is determined.

### More Information

Full FAQ list is available on the Ramsey/Washington Recycling & Energy website:

[recyclingandenergy.org/food-scraps-pickup](https://recyclingandenergy.org/food-scraps-pickup)