

City of San Diego Environmental Services Department Organic Waste Recycling, Food Recovery and Recycling Fellowship

Fellowship work hour availability

Fellows must be available Monday – Friday during standard work hours (approximately 8:00 am – 5:00 pm). There will also be some early morning, evening and weekend activities in lieu of normal work hours.

Program Overview

The City of San Diego (City) is the second largest city in California with 1.4 million culturally diverse residents. The City's Environmental Service Department (ESD) is implementing programs to meet California Senate Bill 1383 and the City's Zero Waste Plan that is a key strategy in the City's Climate Action Plan that includes a Climate Equity Index to identify communities of concern that have less access to information and opportunity. All CCAC Fellowship projects will be focused on addressing Climate Equity concerns.

The overall **goals** are to reduce waste and mitigate climate change by reducing short-lived climate pollutants produced when organic material is landfilled and reduce greenhouse gas emissions because items made from recycled material require less energy to produce than items made from virgin material.

This project is citywide. Fellows assigned to ESD will have the unique opportunity to implement a **paradigm-changing program** on a large-scale throughout the City, yet they will have the experience of identifying and focusing on the specific needs of diverse neighborhoods and communities within the jurisdiction. The City is implementing weekly curbside organic waste recycling including food scraps for 289,000 city-serviced residents; providing education and technical assistance to privately-serviced multifamily residents, businesses and special events; implementing commercial food recovery programs; and continuing to promote successful recycling programs.

Fellow Target Activities

Fellows will work with guidance from veteran ESD Recycling Specialist staff:

- Community Engagement will promote organic waste recycling and recycling as everyday activities that every individual can participate in to take waste reduction and climate action.
 - Education events at community centers will provide best practices for successful organic waste recycling, food scraps collection, and continued successful recycling practices.
 - “Closing the Compost Loop” events will provide finished compost to residents and tips for use of compost in gardens and for potted plants.
- Commercial Food Recovery Outreach will facilitate engagement in waste reduction, social equity, and climate action programs.
 - Survey businesses about food donation practices and obstacles to donating food.
 - Track results to identify areas of need for the business community.

- Assist Recycling Specialists to help businesses start food recovery programs.
 - Survey Food Recovery Organizations about donation programs
 - Track results to identify available capacity, services offered, and resources needed to increase food donation capacity.
 - Assist with the development of needed infrastructure to increase food recovery capacity within the City.
- Waste Characterization Tracking will collect measurable quantitative data and valuable qualitative data about material being discarded in organic waste and recycling bins.
 - Participate in “lid flip” bin inspections in neighborhoods throughout the City.
 - Participate in load inspections at the Miramar Greenery to determine contamination in organic waste material.
 - Findings will be tracked, analyzed, and measured to inform ESD on needed education and technical assistance for improved participation.

Fellow Volunteer Engagement

- Coordinate groups of student volunteers to attend special events and be positioned at trash, recycling, and organic waste recycling stations to advise event attendees on proper disposal. This project will involve coordination with local universities and community colleges and will contribute to climate action service programming.
- Act as “Recycling Ambassadors” at community clean-up events and engage with large groups of volunteers to advise them on proper sorting of collected material and the importance of recycling to save resources, reduce energy use, and mitigate climate change. Possibly invite food donation organizations to provide oranges and bananas to clean-up volunteers and have one fellow stationed at a food waste bin to promote the importance of food recovery and proper disposal of organic material.
- Fellows will assist with the recruitment and registration of volunteers for these events. This will include engagement with local universities, community colleges, community councils, and business community groups such as Business Improvement Districts.
- “Closing the Food Recovery Loop” – Coordinate with Tier One and Tier Two Generators to organize staff to participate in a “day of service” and volunteer with food donation organization such as Feeding San Diego or the San Diego Food Bank. Participation at food donation events will allow Tier One and Tier Two staff to see the results of their food recovery efforts.

Anticipated Outcomes

Upon completion of these projects, more residents, businesses and special events will be actively involved and engaged in organic waste recycling and improved recycling practices. More businesses will also be involved in food recovery programs.

- City-serviced residential organic waste recycling and recycling will be trackable by tonnage diverted, green bin set-out rates, and characterization of material.
- Privately-serviced residents, businesses, and events will be trackable by number of participants, private hauler tonnage reports, and characterization of material.
- Food recovery programs will be trackable by number of businesses involved and pounds of donated food reported by food recovery organizations.