



sanitation

Jessica S. Tisch Commissioner

Mandatory Curbside Composting Implementation Plan, required pursuant to Local Law 85 of 2023

On June 8, 2023, the New York City Council passed Local Law 85, which requires the Department of Sanitation (DSNY) to create a mandatory curbside composting program for all residential properties by October 7, 2024. The law directly mirrors an approach to voluntary universal organics service already put forward by DSNY and announced by Mayor Adams in February of this year; the Council codified the Adams Administration's existing strategy and phased rollout timeline with the added dimension of mandatory separation. The Council's law also follows DSNY's final rule published in May 2023 requiring residents to separate yard waste from refuse. The leaf-and-yard-waste-first approach was designed based on an analysis of successful programs in other cities, including Portland, San Francisco, Seattle, and Toronto.

This implementation plan is based on the successful strategy deployed in DSNY's Fall 2023 curbside organics pilot in Queens. The strategy – designed to remove barriers to access for residents and increase operational efficiency – exceeded expectations in Queens as it diverted three times the material at less than a third the cost on average per district compared to old programs.

Unlike past organics programs, there is no sign-up required for this new program. Residents simply set out anything from their kitchen or their garden in a separate bin on their recycling day, and DSNY collects it and turns it into usable compost or clean, renewable energy. While DSNY will make its own Brown Bins available to residents as the program expands, this program also includes the flexibility for New Yorkers to use any bin of 55 gallons or less with a secure lid.

Curbside composting is the collection service for leaf and yard waste, food scraps, and food-soiled paper. Just like traditional recycling of paper, cardboard, metal, glass, plastic and beverage cartons, residents separate these items to be collected at the curb. These materials are collected every week and turned into nutrient-rich compost or renewable energy.

This document highlights key elements of the plan for how to achieve operational rollout of curbside organics collection in the timeframe established in the Administration's February announcement, in addition to the residential outreach, education, and bin distribution to maximize program participation.

Operations and Timelines

Curbside organics collection is currently underway in Queens. Collection began on October 3, 2022, paused on December 24, 2022, and resumed on March 27, 2023.

Curbside organics collection will expand to all New York City residents on a rolling basis. All boroughs will receive service by October 2024. The schedule for collection expansion is as follows:

- Brooklyn on October 2, 2023
- Bronx and Staten Island on March 25, 2024
- Manhattan on October 7, 2024

This phased implementation will provide the Department with sufficient time to establish the foundations for a successful program, including the development and staffing of new weekly collection routes, outreach and education for each new service area, and the distribution of NYC Compost Bins to residents. Critically, the addition of a new weekly collection service to existing operations for over 3 million residential properties requires additional collection trucks and sanitation workers.

The Department is currently developing a Request for Proposal to expand the available processing capacity for organic material to accommodate the expected substantial increases in organic material as services roll out to each borough.

As Manhattan will receive curbside service last, the borough received an additional 150 Smart Composting Bins in June 2023 to provide an easy-to-use option for residents to separate their compostable material, bringing the total number of Manhattan bins to 200. An additional 200 Smart Composting Bins are located throughout the other four boroughs and cover several traditionally underserved communities, including Bushwick, Bed-Stuy, Castle Hill, Parkchester, Highbridge, and the North Shore of Staten Island. All Smart Composting Bins are accessible 24 hours per day via an app for [iOS](#) and [Android](#) named “NYC Compost.”

Bin Distribution

Any resident or property owner who wants a rodent-proof organics collection bin will be able to order one at no cost from DSNY online or by calling 311. All NYC Compost Bins are wheeled and have a rodent-proof latching lid. Single family residents will receive a 13-gallon bin, and all residences of 2 or more units will receive a 21-gallon bin. There is a maximum of 1 bin per address.

Department-issued compost bins are not required; residents can also use their own bins for organic set out. All bins used for organics setout must be made of rigid plastic bin, have a tight-fitting lid, and be labeled with a DSNY composting decal. Bins cannot exceed 55 gallons.

Brooklyn

All Brooklyn residents can order their NYC Compost Bin starting August 1, 2023. To receive a bin by the start of curbside organics service on October 2, residents must submit their bin order no later than September 1. Bins will be delivered on a rolling basis within 21 days of the point of order. Requests for bins will be open until October 15. After that period, residents in Brooklyn will be responsible for purchasing their own bins.

Remaining Boroughs

The schedule and communication for bin distribution in the remaining boroughs will follow a similar timeline as Brooklyn based on each borough's go-live date.

Outreach and Education Program

DSNY will conduct outreach and education for each borough receiving curbside organics service prior to the start of service. The outline below highlights key Department activities to ensure every resident across the City is aware of the new service and is empowered to participate.

Outreach

The Department will be conducting door-to-door canvassing of all residential properties with 9 or fewer units during the roll-out phase for each borough. All canvassers are trained to educate residents on the new service, timelines, bin ordering, and how to participate. Communications will be available in 14 languages spoken throughout New York City, including Spanish, Guyanese, Mandarin, Yiddish, and Russian. Residents in buildings with ten or more units will receive outreach from other methods including mailers, distribution events, and information sessions in each community board.

Door-to-door canvassing will begin in Brooklyn on August 1 and will continue through early October. The timeline for canvassing in the remaining boroughs will follow a similar timeline.

Information Sessions

The Department will conduct virtual and in-person culturally-competent educational sessions open to all residents in every community board prior to the start of service in each borough. Additionally, there will be targeted presentations with community partners including civic associations, tenants' associations, trade associations, and more.

In medium and large multi-unit buildings, The Department will conduct site visits and trainings for building management upon request. Virtual sessions targeted towards building owners and building staff will also be offered and advertised through the appropriate channels.

Distribution Events

DSNY will be conducting compost givebacks in all community boards throughout the City. Returning the end-product of organic material diversion provides residents with a tangible benefit to their efforts. DSNY will also be hosting distribution events for kitchen countertop containers in all districts.

Paid Communication

Like all previous rollouts, The Department will provide a comprehensive educational mailer to all residents receiving the new organics collection service. The mailer will include the service start date, basic information on how to participate, clear visuals, the link to order a DSNY Compost Bin, and instructions on how to access more information.