

Food Scraps Drop-off

Frequently Asked Questions

Who can participate in this program?

The food scraps drop-off program is for residents who are recycling food scraps at home. The program is open to residents of Washington and Ramsey counties.

Do you accept food scraps from businesses?

No, food scraps are not accepted from businesses. Visit BizRecycling.com for details on business recycling.

How do I get started?

Sign up here to receive occasional email updates about the food scraps drop-off program.

- 1 Find a container to collect food scraps.** Pick up free compostable bags at a Washington County food scraps drop-off site. If using a bag not provided by the county, check that it has the “compostable” logo from the Biodegradable Products Institute (BPI) on the bag or the box.
- 2 Start collecting food scraps at home.** Line your container with a compostable bag and fill it with food scraps and other accepted items. See yes/no list on page 2.
- 3 Bring bagged food scraps to a drop-off site.** Bring your filled compostable bag to a free drop-off site. Pick up another free bag while you are there. To ensure there are enough bags for everyone, please only take the number of bags you drop off.

How often can I drop off food scraps?

You can drop off food scraps as often as you like during operating hours.

Do I need to use a compostable bag?

A compostable bag (either BPI certified compostable or paper bag) is required if bagging your food scraps. Plastic bags are not compostable and are considered a contaminant at the commercial composting facilities that process the food scraps.

Will this smell and attract pests?

Odors will be similar to regular trash and will not attract pests if managed properly. Dropping off your food scraps on a weekly basis will help minimize odor and pests.

Can I put yard waste in with my food scraps?

No. Please keep food scraps separate from yard waste. Search WashCoRecycles.com/Disposal to find a list of yard waste drop-off locations.

How are food scraps recycled?

The food scraps collected are recycled at a local facility and turned into compost.

Food Scraps Drop-off Frequently Asked Questions

What materials are accepted?

Food

- Fruit and vegetables
- Meat, fish, and bones
- Dairy products
- Eggs and egg shells
- Bread, pasta, beans, and rice
- Nuts and shells
- Coffee grounds, filters, and tea bags
- Animal and pet food

Non-recyclable paper

- Paper towels, napkins, and tissues
- Pizza delivery boxes
- Dirty paper bags

Certified compostable products

- BPI certified compostable paper and plastic cups, plates, bowls, utensils, and containers
- Look for the BPI logo to ensure it is compostable



Other residential compostable items

- Hair, fur, and nail clippings
- Cotton balls and swabs with paper stems (must not have been used with chemicals)
- Houseplants and flowers

What materials are **NOT** accepted?

- Yard waste
- Animal and pet waste, litter, or bedding
- Dead animals
- Diapers
- Cleaning or baby wipes
- Dryer lint and dryer sheets
- Items that can be recycled (cartons, glass, metal, paper, plastic)
- Frozen food boxes
- Styrofoam™
- Rubber
- Wood

Quick Tips for Storage and Transport

Use a rigid tote or pail to transport bags

Compostable bags start to break down sooner than you think. Using a rigid container that can be emptied and returned helps avoid spills and leaks in your vehicle.

Avoid plastic bags

Plastic bags are not accepted. They are very difficult to empty and frequently too dirty to recycle. If you don't have a tote, try using a paper grocery bag instead. They should hold up for the trip and are compostable.

Freeze it

If you're concerned about odors during transport, you can always freeze your bags.

Seal it

If you're worried about pests, use a 5-gallon pail with a tight seal or a galvanized steel can with locking lid. Always keep it stored in a cool dry place.

