

US EPA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT



OnCampus ecoAmbassadors are college students who implement projects from EPA's partnership programs to help carry out the Agency's mission to protect human health and the environment. The program is open to ANY college student, regardless of program, age, or background. All interested students are encouraged to participate.

Did You Know?

- Food waste is the second largest waste stream in the United States after paper and paperboard waste.
- When excess food, leftovers, and scraps are disposed of in a landfill, they decompose and become a significant source of methane, a potent greenhouse gas.
- The United States generates more than 34 million tons of food waste each year, and less than 3% is recovered and recycled.

Learn More

WasteWise helps organizations save money, improve efficiency, and reduce their climate footprint through waste reduction. Any organization, including large and small businesses, colleges and universities, nonprofit organizations, and federal, state, local, and tribal governments, can become a WasteWise partner.

For more information, please visit:
www.epa.gov/wastewise



Food Recovery No Tray Day Event

Cafeteria trays enable students to carry multiple plates and glasses at once. Although convenient, the use of cafeteria trays encourages students to take as much food as they can carry while touring the buffet lines. This leads to excess food that usually gets thrown out when students can't finish their meals.

Colleges across the country are adopting the tray-less culture in their dining halls in an effort to reduce food waste. Participants in the Food Recovery No Tray Day Event will eliminate the use of cafeteria trays for one day to reduce food waste on their campuses.

Goals of the Food Recovery No Tray Day Event

- Reduce food waste by eliminating the use of cafeteria trays for one day
- Promote a tray-less culture to reduce food waste in the future
- Increase awareness about the consequences of improper disposal of food waste
- Empower students to be environmental leaders on campus
- Educate and encourage others to reduce food waste

If You're Interested In:

- Learning how to conduct a food waste assessment
- Initiating an environmental project on your campus
- Working with your campus' dining services and facilities staff to improve waste management
- Gaining valuable project management and event planning skills

... then the Food Recovery No Tray Day Event is for you!

See page 2 for a step-by-step checklist for
 the Food Recovery No Tray Day Event.



Students Taking Action

Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT) stopped using trays in their campus dining halls in 2008. Since then, dining services estimates that food waste has dropped 30%. Because students waste less food, the college is saving money by reducing food purchasing by 10%. Less water is used and wasted because the trays do not have to be cleaned by dining staff. Overall, their tray-less initiative has reduced food waste, saved money, and conserved water!

The Food Recovery No Tray Day Event is ideal for students pursuing degrees in communications, education, engineering, environmental economics and policy, environmental science, environmental studies.

Checklist for the Food Recovery No Tray Day Event

Follow the steps below to conduct a Food Recovery No Tray Day Event on your campus.

☐ 1. Find out what's being done on your campus.

Meet with campus administrators, facilities staff, sustainability directors, dining staff, and environmental clubs on campus to learn more about your campus' current waste management practices and what is being done to educate students and faculty about food waste disposal.

☐ 2. Form a team.

Gather support for your efforts by developing relationships with facilities staff, dining services, and environmental clubs. Facilities staff and dining services can lend administrative support, and peers in environmental clubs can help you when conducting assessments and publicizing your efforts.

☐ 3. Organize your No Tray Day Event.

Choose an appropriate day and location for your event. If there are multiple dining halls on your campus, consider starting small by initiating a No Tray Day Event at only one of them. If your event is successful, expand to other dining halls and areas that sell food. Work with dining services staff to ensure that no trays are available for use during your event. Gather materials and create eye-catching signage for an informational booth in the dining commons during your event.

☐ 4. Publicize your event.

Utilize multiple media outlets to get the word out about your event. Create a Facebook event and invite your friends. Promote your efforts in your school newspaper and make class announcements, if approved by professors. If possible, have your projects and events sponsored by relevant student organizations and campus officials to reach a larger audience.

☐ 5. Document your success.

Take photos during your event to post to the OnCampus Facebook page and keep track of your results. Celebrate your success and record lessons learned so you can make your next No Tray Day Event even better.

☐ 6. Continue your efforts beyond the event.

Remember that food waste is being created every day and we don't always need an event to promote waste reduction! Continue to organize more No Tray Day Events in dining halls on your campus. With persistence, your dining areas could become tray-less!

☐ 7. Fill out your completion form.

Record the information that you are required to report to EPA on the event completion form, including your name, date of the event, name of your college, a description of the event or events, the number of interactions (include any interesting comments), and additional comments.

Resources

Ideas to Promote No Tray Day

1. Host an informational booth inside the dining hall before and during the event
2. Post promotional posters inside the dining hall and nearby dormitories
3. Create a marketing campaign to discourage the use of trays in the dining hall

Food Waste Website

For more information on economically, socially, and environmentally beneficial food waste management, visit:
www.epa.gov/foodrecovery

Tips for Successful Events

1. Find a suitable space.
2. Put up posters to advertise the event.
3. Create a Facebook event.
4. Ask friends to spread the word.
5. Plan to have snacks available – find out if you can get donations.
6. Arrange for music at the event.
7. Arrive early to set up the space, including snacks and music.
8. Use sign-up sheets to record attendance.
9. Create a written summary of the event.

EPA Contact Info

WasteWise

(800) EPA-WISE

oswwastewise@epa.gov

Allow a few days for a return call or contact the OnCampus team.

EPA OnCampus Team

EPAOnCampus@epa.gov

EPA OnCampus Websites

Visit the EPA website at

www.epa.gov/ecoambassadors/oncampus



Join the conversation at

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