

Environmental Services Department

2025 MWMA Fall Summit:

CLOSING THE LOOP ON FOOD WASTE

ARIZONA IS A **RED** STATE



Phoenix, Tucson & Flagstaff
are **blue** cities

CLIMATE ACTION AND ADAPTATION PLAN



Climate emergency declared
by the Mayor in Sep. 2020

ZERO WASTE GOAL 2030-2050



of Tucson waste is comprised
of compostable yard
and food waste.

**NO STATEWIDE
DIVERSION MANDATES**



**WE WANTED TO
BE CAUTIOUS!**



The Bisbee ban enacted in 2014, was declared unlawful by the state Attorney General's office in 2017 because it contradicted state law.

WE WANTED TO TAKE A DIFFERENT APPROACH:

- Provide services with minimal financial impacts
- Offer services to residents interested in the program

IMPROVE UPON THE APPROACH
TAKEN WITH THE **BLUE BIN** PROGRAM!



**Let's Get
Composting**
RSVP NOW!

THE PLAN

- Analyzed current infrastructure and waste collection efforts
 - Composting operation of 8 acres at Los Reales Sustainability Campus
- Partnered with 6 of Tucson's Community Gardens to collect more brown materials



PARTNER COMMUNITY GARDEN LOCATIONS



Blue Moon Garden



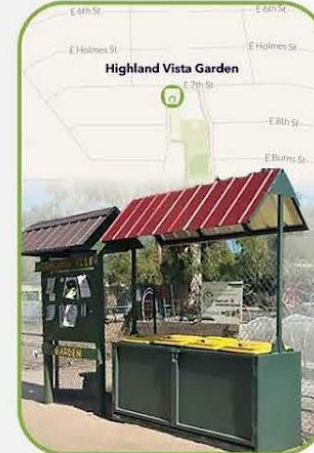
UA Community Garden



Iron Horse Garden



Pio Decimo Garden



Highland Vista Garden



New Spirit Garden

FOODCYCLE AT HOME

In January 2024 we initiated the FoodCycle at Home Pilot Program



**Partnership with
the UA Compost Cats**



**Partnership with the
Community Gardens
of Tucson**



**One 30 minute
training session**

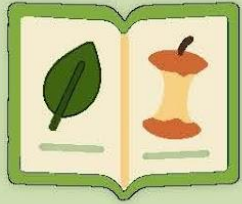


**Regular communication
and feedback from users**



Visit knowwheretothrow.com/foodcycle
for more information.

HOW DOES IT WORK?



Participants receive materials and a kitchen pail to fill with the food waste they generate.



Containers with food waste can be emptied at one of 15 locked bin drop-off locations



Food waste bins are emptied and contents taken to the Los Reales Composting Facility, mixed with green waste and turned into compost!

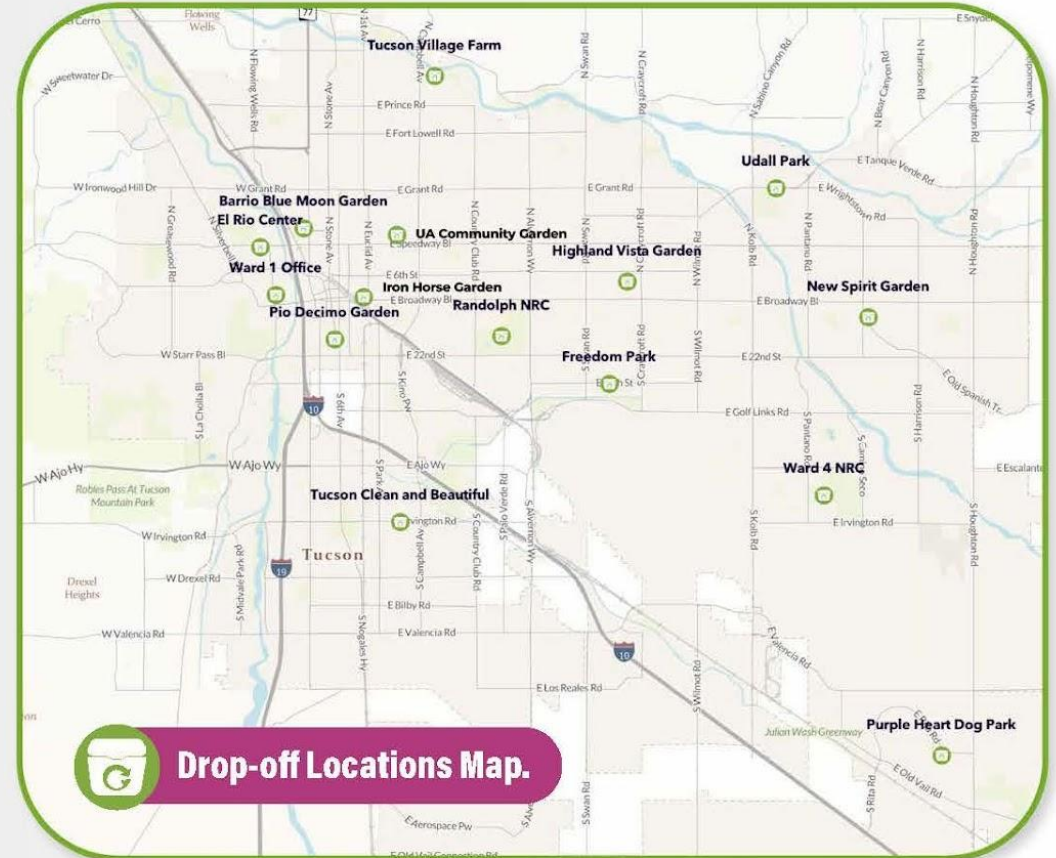


The compost is then redistributed throughout the community and for program participants to take home for free.

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS & COLLECTION SITES

3000+
Participating households,
as of August 2025.

15
Drop-off Locations
across Tucson.



PROGRAM COST AND OTHER NUMBERS



The FoodCycle program is a collaboration between the City of Tucson Environmental Services and the University of Arizona Compost Cats. The finished compost is donated to public areas throughout the community, including:

- City parks
- The University of Arizona campus
- Local farms
- Community golf courses
- TUSD school gardens
- Food waste participants
- Community gardens (including those overseen by Community Gardens of Tucson)

COMPOST VALUE

The "value"* of the compost from Tucson's FoodCycle at Home program is multi-faceted, providing ecological benefits, economic value, and social benefits by promoting a circular economy and advancing environmental justice.

ENVIRONMENTAL VALUE

- Soil Improvement
- Carbon Sequestration
- Reduced Landfill Waste

ECONOMIC VALUE

- Local Resource Creation
- Extended Landfill Life

SOCIAL AND COMMUNITY VALUE

- Environmental Justice
- Community Engagement
- Support for Local Food Systems

*The annual cost of the FoodCycle program is **\$181,000**.



EXPANDING FOODCYCLE



WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE

- CUSTOMER FEEDBACK
 - GREENWASTE COLLECTION
- CONTINUE TO ADD ADDITIONAL DROP-OFF LOCATIONS
- MORE COMMUNITY PARTNERS
 - COMMUNITY FOOD BANK OF SOUTHERN ARIZONA
 - ECONOMIC FEASIBILITY



NEXT STEPS

SECURE A GRANT FROM THE
**ARIZONA DEPARTMENT OF
ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY**
(ADEQ) TO DEPLOY A THIRD
GREEN AND YARD2EARTH BIN.



Environmental Services Department

CLOSING THE LOOP ON FOOD WASTE:

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME.