

COMMUNITY GRANTS PROGRAM



CASE STUDY

Pratt Center Supports WHEDco Bronx CookSpace in Waste Prevention and Diversion Initiative

The Pratt Center for Community Development works for a more equitable and sustainable city for all New Yorkers, by empowering communities to plan for and realize their futures. They combine technical assistance, organizing, research and policy advocacy to advance innovative solutions to economic and environmental inequalities in partnership with community-based organizations, small businesses, and the public sector. As part of the Pratt Institute, they are the only university-based community development organization that operates at both the ground and policy levels.

The Women's Housing and Economic Development Corporation (WHEDco) is a community development organization founded on the radically simple idea that all people deserve healthy, vibrant communities. WHEDco builds award-winning, sustainable, affordable homes. WHEDco's mission is to give the South Bronx access to all the resources that create thriving neighborhoods: from high-quality early education and after-school programs, to fresh, healthy food, cultural programming, and economic opportunity.

Challenge

The insatiable New York City marketplace for high-quality food products has spurred a wave of entrepreneurs focused on meeting the demand. As the market shifts and adapts, trends within the industry have begun to reflect these changes. While manufacturing in the city has experienced an overall decline over the last decade, food and beverage manufacturing sub-sectors have seen overall positive growth in both number of firms (27%) and number of employees (6.3%). This increase can largely be attributed to growth among small food manufacturing businesses, a trend driven by retail bakeries and prepared perishable meal production. The food waste profile of the manufacturing sector reflects the industry's unique operating conditions.

Manufacturers have large volumes of food and ingredients and a relatively limited number of manufacturing locations. Higher food waste volumes per location, seen particularly when food companies cluster in facilities or zones hospitable to food production, allow for greater economies of scale when recycling food products, leading to a preference on recycling as the primary diversion procedure. On average, food manufacturers generate approximately 53 pounds of food waste per thousand dollars of company revenue. Even with recycling or donation programs in place, organic matter represents as much as 16 percent of U.S. methane emissions.

Solution

Targeting the waste streams of food manufacturing clusters presents itself as a strategy that could be powerful in reducing future environmental liabilities while helping to catalyze greater economic development by minimizing the operational costs of building managers and the small businesses they serve. The goal of Pratt Center's WHEDco - Bronx CookSpace Waste Prevention and Diversion Initiative was to develop and advance a model for sustainable industrial development in NYC by innovating a replicable waste diversion system for manufacturing clusters that generate significant amounts of organic waste. Working collaboratively with

CHALLENGE

- Growth in the food and beverage manufacturing sub-sectors has increased food waste, which has impacted the primary diversion procedure for food waste

SOLUTION

- Targeting the waste streams of food manufacturing clusters presents itself as a strategy that could be powerful in reducing future environmental liabilities while helping to catalyze greater economic development by minimizing the operational costs of building managers and the small businesses they serve
- With NYS P21's support, Pratt Center worked collaboratively with Common Ground Compost and developed a holistic approach to waste prevention and diversion at WHEDco's Bronx CookSpace

RESULTS

- Pratt Center fully evaluated the building's waste systems and identified strategic activities
- WHEDco was provided with procedures to implement an organics recovery program in its Bronx CookSpace



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TESTIMONIAL

“Food manufacturers generate the type of organic waste that can be diverted successfully from landfill or incineration. Making it easier for these businesses to do this at their place of work moves the needle forward environmentally and economically.”

– Tanu Kumar

Senior Economic Development Planner,
Pratt Center for Community Development

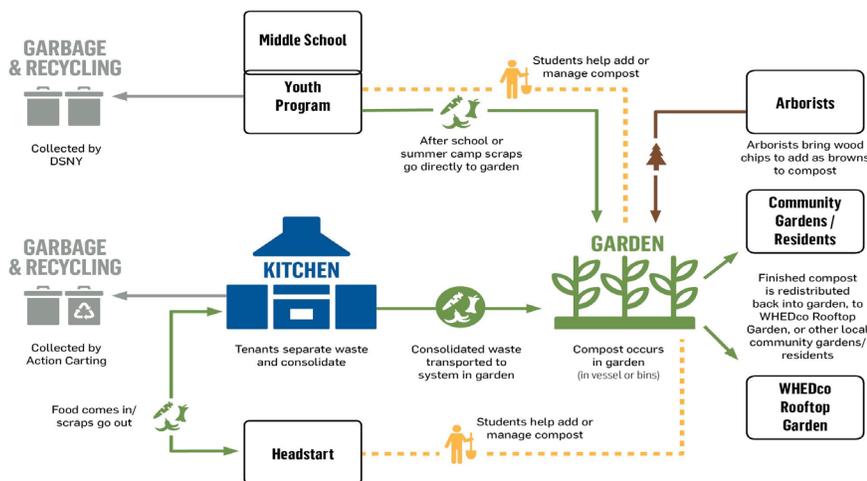
partners Common Ground Compost, Pratt Center assisted in developing and piloting a holistic approach to waste prevention and diversion at WHEDco’s Bronx CookSpace, a fully equipped commercial kitchen that provides flexible, affordable workspace and individualized technical assistance to approximately 40 small food and beverage tenants. By undertaking this project, Pratt Center sought to influence higher waste diversion rates from landfill or incineration across New York City and model an approach to secure both economic and environmental gains among NYC’s resurgent food manufacturing sector, which is overwhelmingly represented by small businesses.



Photo Credit: The Pratt Center

Results

At the Bronx CookSpace, Pratt Center fully evaluated the building’s waste systems and identified strategic activities that will help to reduce the building’s waste hauling costs, divert all possible recyclables from landfill, improve engagement with tenants around waste reduction, prevention, and management, and work to identify and implement value-added onsite solutions for organic waste recovery. WHEDco was provided with procedures to implement an organics recovery program in its Bronx CookSpace. Pratt Center hopes that this, in turn, will serve as a model for other food manufacturing hubs in the greater New York City area.



Resources:

Common Ground Compost

- <http://commongroundcompost.com/>

¹Analysis of U.S. Food Waste Among Food Manufacturers, Retailers, and Restaurants. The Food Waste Reduction Alliance publication, 2014

²Wasted: How America Is Losing Up to 40 Percent of Its Food from Farm to Fork to Landfill. Natural Resources Defense Council publication, 2012

NYSP2I PARTNERS



New York Manufacturing Extension Partnership

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