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. With NYSP2I’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

TANU KUMAR
Senior Economic Development Planner
718-637-8654
718-636-3709
tkumar@prattcenter.net
Pratt Center for Community Development
200 Willoughby Avenue
Brooklyn, NY 11205
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.

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/](http://commongroundcompost.com/)

---


---

“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

---

NYSP2I PARTNERS

**R·I·T**

*The State University of New York*

New York Manufacturing Extension Partnership

Funding provided by the Environmental Protection Fund as administered by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation.

© 2017 Rochester Institute of Technology

Any opinions, results, findings, and/or interpretations of data contained herein are the responsibility of Rochester Institute of Technology and its NYS Pollution Prevention Institute and do not represent the opinions, interpretation or policy of the State.

For more information please contact us:

111 Lomb Memorial Drive, Bldg. 78
Rochester, NY 14623

Tel: 585-475-2512
Web: nysp2i.rit.edu
E-mail: nysp2i@rit.edu