



# sanitation

Edward Grayson Commissioner

October 27, 2021

The Honorable Bill DeBlasio, Mayor  
Speaker Corey Johnson, New York City Council

Re: Local Law 22 (2019) Agency Organics Pilot Memo

Dear Mayor,

Local Law 22 of 2019 mandated the Department of Sanitation (DSNY) to pilot the curbside collection of organic waste from 15 buildings wholly occupied by one or more city agencies, in no fewer than 10 city-owned buildings, across 3 boroughs. This pilot was to commence no later than July 1, 2019 and continue through at least June 30, 2021. DSNY was required to conduct outreach and education to occupants of buildings participating in the pilot program.

No later than October 31, 2021, the Commissioner was required to submit a report to the Mayor and the Speaker of the City Council on the success of the pilot program, including any recommendations.

Unfortunately, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the pilot pursuant to this Local Law 22 (LL22) had to be suspended prematurely. City guidance related to Covid-19 ended all non-essential outreach and forced most administrative city workers to work from home starting in March 2020. Additionally, due to Covid-19 related budget cuts, all curbside collection of organics by DSNY was suspended in May 2020, more than a year before the pilot was set to end. The pilot was able to conduct training and outreach and roll out the service but was suspended before meaningful data collection and evaluation could be pursued beyond anecdotal observations.

In lieu of a comprehensive and conclusive report, please accept this memo highlighting our accomplishments and learnings up to March 2020. We present this information with the caveat that we did not have enough time to complete a full pilot evaluation. We look forward to reestablishing a similar pilot when circumstance, priority and budget permits.

Thank you for reading, and please reach out with any questions.

Edward Grayson

# Local Law 22 (2019) Agency Organics Pilot Summary

Submitted October 2021

## Pilot Sites

DSNY worked closely with the Department of Citywide Administrative Services (DCAS) to select NYC Agency sites to participate in the LL22 pilot and to plan the operational roll out. Together, we reviewed a list of all DCAS Administrative buildings, and with their feedback, selected a wide variety of sites, from high-rise, to low-rise, to multi-use buildings. Additionally, we worked directly with several agencies to ensure the pilot was tested at a variety of facility types. We purposely included a few operationally challenging sites to gain a full picture of all considerations related to operating a successful agency organics collection program, while meeting the Law’s requirements (see Law in Appendix A.)

As shown in the table below, 24 sites were chosen covering facilities or offices across at least 10 agencies and institutions. This surpassed the minimum number required by the pilot in case one or more had to drop out for any reason.

## Local Law 22 (2019) Agency Organics Collection Pilot Sites

Site #	Agency Name	Site Name	Building Address	Borough	BBL	Owned by NYC?	Removed?
1	DCAS	DCAS: 125W (DSNY & DOHMH)	125 Worth St	Manhattan	1001680032	Yes	
2	DCAS	DCAS: 22 Reade St	22 Reade St	Manhattan	1001540023	Yes	
3	DCAS	DCAS: 115 Chrystie St	115 Chrystie St	Manhattan	1004230022	Yes	
4	DSNY	DSNY 44 Beaver St	44 Beaver St	Manhattan	1000290073	Yes	
5	DSNY	DSNY: BK S BORO OFFICE	1824 Shore Pkwy	Brooklyn	3069430030	Yes	
6	DSNY	DSNY: BK N BORO OFFICE	161 Varick Ave	Brooklyn	3029680001	Yes	
7	FDNY	FDNY Engine 325	41-24 51 St	Queens	3001310031	Yes	
8	DCAS	DCAS: 345 Adams St	345 Adams St	Brooklyn	3001407503	Yes	
9	NYPD	NYPD 108 Precinct Q	5-47 50 Ave	Queens	4000320006	Yes	
10	NYPD	NYPD 78 Precinct Bk	65 6 Ave	Brooklyn	3011360001	Yes	
11	DCAS	DCAS: Brooklyn Boro Hall	209 Joralemon St	Brooklyn	3001390001	Yes	
12	ACS	ACS Children's Center	492 1 Ave	Manhattan	1009620100	Yes	
13	NYPD	NYPD Stables	550 W 54 St / 553 W 53 St	Manhattan	1010827501	No	
14	DCAS	DCAS: City Hall	City Hall	Manhattan	1001220001	Yes	
15	DCAS	DOE Tweed Building	52 Chambers St	Manhattan	1001220001	Yes	
16	DCAS	DCAS: 253 Broadway	253 Broadway	Manhattan	1001347501	Yes	
17	DOE	DOE 65 Court St	65 Court St	Brooklyn	3002660020	Yes	
18	FDNY	FDNY EMS Station 35	332 Metropolitan Ave	Brooklyn	3023680012	Yes	Removed
19	PARKS	Parks: The Arsenal	830 5th Ave	Manhattan	1011110001	Yes	
20	PARKS	Parks: Asphalt Green Rec Ctr	555 E 90 St	Manhattan	1015870001	Yes	
21	WCS	WCS: Central Park Zoo	830 5th Ave	Manhattan	1011110001	Yes	
22	DCAS	Brooklyn Municipal Building	210 Joralemon St	Brooklyn	3002667501	No	Removed
23	DCAS	LIC Courthouse	25-10 Court House Square	Queens	4000830001	Yes	Removed
24	FDNY	FDNY Fleet Maintenance Division	48-34 35 Street	Queens	4002540001	Yes	

## Removals

Three sites were removed from the pilot after further review due to a variety of factors.

1. The Long Island City (LIC) Courthouse (25-10 Courthouse Square) was removed as they were unresponsive to outreach, and DSNY / DCAS collectively determined it was a difficult site to coordinate for the pilot.
2. The Brooklyn Municipal Building (210 Joralemon Street) was removed due to a significant construction/renovation project that hampered operations and resulted in the building being largely vacant shortly after the start of the pilot.
3. FDNY EMS Station 35 (332 Metropolitan Avenue) was removed in consultation with FDNY, as they produced virtually no putrescible waste, as EMS staff did not eat on site, and mostly used the facility to fuel up or use the restroom.

## Outreach, Education & Training

Prior to the pilot's start, DSNY and DCAS made phone calls to leadership at each participating agency informing them of the coming pilot and requirements. Additionally, a formal notice was emailed to each agency head, copying DCAS as appropriate, with background on the pilot and law, collection schedules, and an alert that we would be reaching out to schedule initial site visits, as well as subsequent outreach.

For this effort, DSNY produced a 2-page guide to participation and operations, aimed to educate operational staff as well as office staff. This guide was provided by email and brought to each site visit and training. (See Guide in Appendix B.)

The guide included information on

- Why organics collection is an important new program and about the recycling laws,
- What and how to separate food scraps in the building,
- How to manage and maintain the brown organics bins, and set them out for collection,
- Instructions on how to find the building's collection schedule, how to report missed collections, how to obtain additional bins,
- Contact information for DSNY outreach staff and additional educational and training resource.

DSNY conducted initial site visits at each site with agency leadership and operational staff, with DCAS joining at every DCAS site. The goals of these visits were to explain the program, meet lead staff, determine the number of bins needed, review site-specific issues and considerations, and plan subsequent outreach and training.

DSNY then conducted at least two staff trainings/site visits at each participating site, with follow-up site visits as needed.



**Trainings at the NYPD 108th Precinct (above) and DSNY 44 Beaver St Facility (below)**



## Learnings

- *Where most food waste can be found and captured from agency sites*

One of the major takeaways from the pilot was that administrative office buildings do not produce a significant amount of putrescible waste. Most food scraps and food soiled paper produced in these settings are leftovers from office workers' lunches and are a minor component of the waste generated overall of the building. In buildings where there was some form of meal service or institutional feeding program, however, more significant quantities of food waste was generated and able to be diverted. (See Successes below.)

Based on our observations of how much food waste was generated in the pilot buildings, we determined that one small (13 gallon) brown organics bin per break room or lunch area was more than adequate to handle the food waste being generated at most of the sites.

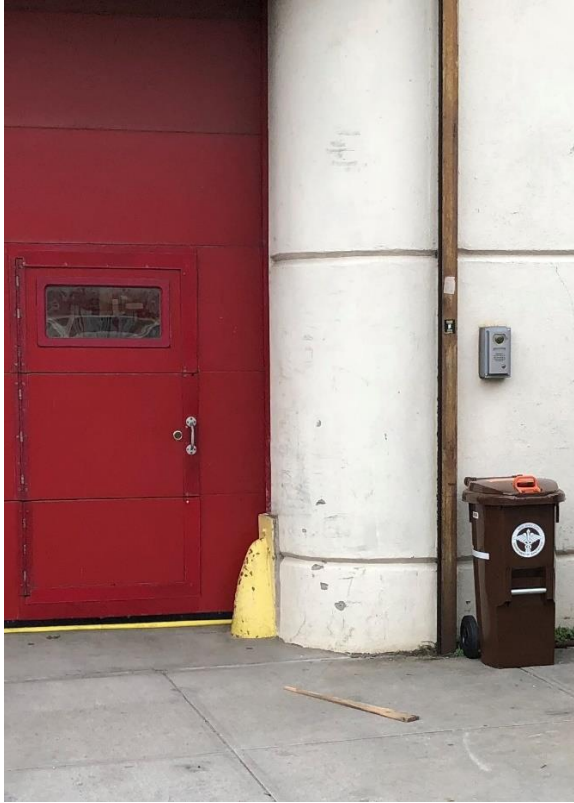
- *Don't under-estimate ongoing logistics and on-the-ground leadership*

Critical to successful participation was conducting an in-person briefing and facility walkthrough with both leadership and operational staff. We were not able to do this in every building, and locations where we were able to do this were more likely to participate and set out bins.

Additionally, for the large buildings, employee trainings on each and every floor were imperative to program buy-in and participation. Employees tend to keep to the floors where they work and not seek out a brown bin on another floor.

Program success was observed to correlate to whether buy-in for participation *and* maintenance was or was not established floor by floor; a "chicken and egg" scenario. Operational staff would follow participation trends; they would service and maintain bins on floors where the bins were being used and start to skip floors with no or low participation. Conversely, employees who wanted to participate would complain when bins were not set up and maintained on their floors causing them to opt out of participating.

Based on these observations, we identified that it was critical for each building to designate a facility point person who is responsible in an ongoing way to ensure each floor has bins in a designated location(s), and that operational staff is maintaining those bins. In parallel, there needs to be a designated person in each agency to continue to train and motivate employees to participate, so the bins get used. Sporadic visits from DSNY staff was not enough to establish ongoing and routinized participation.



**FDNY Facility Brown Bin (48-34 35 St)**



**Central Park Zoo Brown Bins & Yard Waste**

**DCAS Office Building Kitchen (253 Broadway)**



**DCAS Office Building Hallway (125 Worth St)**



## Challenges

At the time when the pilot was suspended, the biggest challenge was facility operation staff accountability. There was little recourse for DSNY if operational staff did not maintain the brown bins in designated areas or properly set them out for collection. In many ways, training employees working in the buildings to divert their food waste and lunch leftovers was the easiest and most straightforward part of this pilot. Employees were largely receptive and agreed that if organics bins were placed next to refuse and recycling bins in break rooms, they would, and did, participate. If bins were not properly maintained, participation languished.

Buildings housing multiple agencies in particular reflected this challenge. Two examples are 125 Worth Street, which houses DOHMH and DSNY, and 345 Adams Street, which houses Department of Finance (DOF), Department of Education (DOE), Administration for Children's Services (ACS), Department of Probation (DOP). These buildings required central coordination at the building level coupled with leadership buy-in at each agency to ensure full building participation. Pilot observations found that bins were not set up for employee use on all floors, and only selected agencies actively participated.

## Highlighting Successes

### *115 Chrystie Street*

When well-coordinated, shared sites have the potential to successfully divert organics. 115 Chrystie Street was one such location, which houses multiple Human Resource Administration (HRA) units and the Chinese-American Planning Council Child Care Center. Facilities staff were cooperative and placed composting bins wherever trash and recyclables were collected. They also ensured bins were properly labeled. The childcare center located in the building was eager to participate. We worked to get them smaller containers to allow for the children to sort their material. The site consistently set out composting bins when surveyed.



**115 Chrystie Street brown bins set out for collection**

## *FDNY*

Another success story is the ongoing partnership between FDNY and DSNY. FDNY had three sites in the LL22 pilot, one firehouse, one EMS station and an office location. Our partnership through LL22 inspired our joint mission to enroll all firehouses in curbside organics that were in organics districts. At the start of the pandemic, we had enrolled over 20 firehouses. Although the LL22 pilot was cut short due to Covid-19, we are currently enrolling firehouses in all districts where composting service is starting again. A key part of this program has been the support from FDNY's facilities management. Facilities staff attends the enrollment site visits, which ensures cooperation at the firehouses. Firehouses produce a substantial amount of organic waste because meals are cooked on-site, which make them perfect candidates for this program.

## **Recommendations**

First and foremost, we recommend a new Agency organics pilot be funded, prioritizing Agency sites that provide meal services or institutional feeding, such as firehouses, Pre-K's, correctional sites, ACS sites, supportive housing, etc.

To address accountability issues, we recommend sites assign a point person from the operational staff who will be tasked with self-reporting weekly participation to DSNY as well as their agency leadership, confirming bins are set out and providing photos of bins and the quantity set out. Additionally, we'd like to assign a point person from administrative staff from each agency, that will report any issues to DSNY and their Agency leadership, as it relates to access to bins or need for additional outreach.

Lastly, DSNY recommend the implementation of a NYC Agency Recycling Workshop that will cover NYC Agency requirements and best practices for the successful implementation of a recycling and curbside composting program. Led by DSNY's Bureau of Recycling and Sustainability staff, this training will provide Agency staff with the tools they need to ensure their office and Agency have set up a successful recycling and curbside composting program that allows them to maximize diversion and improve their recycling participation.

This workshop would be most effective if it were made mandatory for both the operational and administrative point people identified at each site.



## Appendix A

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### LL22 (2019) Agency Organics Pilot

**Enactment date:** 1/20/2019    **Enactment #:** 2019/022

Proposed Int. No. 1075-A

By The Public Advocate (Ms. James) and Council Members Holden, Kallos, Levin, Constantinides, Rosenthal, and Rivera

#### A LOCAL LAW

In relation to an organic waste curbside collection pilot program

#### Be it enacted by the Council as follows:

Section 1. As used in this law, the following terms have the following meanings:

Commissioner. The term “commissioner” means the commissioner of sanitation.

Department. The term “department” means the department of sanitation.

Institution. The term “institution” means a not-for-profit corporation receiving department collection service.

Organic waste. The term “organic waste” means organic waste as defined in section 16-303 of the administrative code of the city of New York.

Pilot program. The term “pilot program” means a program established pursuant to this law by the commissioner for the curbside collection of organic waste from selected buildings wholly occupied by one or more city agencies and institutional special use buildings.

Special use building. The term “special use building” means any premise or structure during the period in which any such premise or structure is exempt from real estate taxation by the city.

§ 2. No later than July 1, 2019, the department shall establish a pilot program, in consultation with the department of citywide administrative services, in no fewer than three boroughs. Such pilot program shall include a total of no fewer than 15 buildings wholly occupied by one or more city agencies. Such 15 buildings shall include no fewer than 10 city-owned buildings containing the administrative offices of one or more city agencies. Such pilot program may also include institutional special use buildings. Such pilot program shall continue through at least June 30, 2021.

§ 3. The commissioner shall have the authority, during the duration of the pilot program, to discontinue curbside collection of organic waste to a building wholly occupied by a city agency or an institutional special use building, provided, however, that the commissioner may select a replacement building wholly occupied by one or more city agencies or an institutional special use building to receive organic waste curbside collection service within 60 days of any such discontinuation. If any such discontinuation results in fewer than 15 buildings wholly occupied by one or more city agencies or fewer than 10 city-owned buildings containing the administrative offices of one or more city agencies being included in the pilot program, the commissioner shall select a replacement building of the same type as the building that was removed from the pilot program.

§ 4. The department shall conduct outreach and education to occupants of buildings participating in the pilot program. Such outreach and education shall include, but need not be limited to, instructions on how to properly source separate organic waste for curbside collection and the environmental benefits of reducing and composting organic waste. The department shall also provide any necessary equipment, including separate bins for the disposal of organic waste, to occupants of buildings participating in such pilot program.

§ 5. No later than October 31, 2021, the commissioner shall submit a report to the mayor and the speaker of the city council on the pilot program, which shall include, but need not be limited to, information on:

- (i) the number of buildings participating in the pilot program, disaggregated by buildings wholly occupied by one or more city agencies, institutional special use buildings, and city-owned buildings containing the administrative offices of one or more city agencies;
- (ii) amount of organic waste diverted;
- (iii) outreach and education conducted, including number of trainings and number of individuals who have participated in such trainings, if applicable, and materials provided;
- (iv) the costs associated with the pilot program, including costs for outreach, bins and labor;
- (v) feedback from occupants of buildings participating in the pilot program concerning such pilot program, including the adequacy of the receptacles used for such pilot program and any other issues of concern;
- (vi) a list of buildings that had organics collection discontinued during the pilot program and the reason for such discontinuation; and
- (vii) a list of buildings that were considered for the pilot program and, if applicable, the reasons such buildings were not included. The department shall disaggregate such information by agency, building address, and borough, block and lot.

Such report shall include recommendations as to whether the pilot program should be expanded and, if so, a schedule for expanding such pilot program.

§ 6. This local law takes effect immediately and shall expire and be deemed repealed upon receipt of the report due pursuant to section five of this local law.

# APPENDIX B

## Guide to Organics Collection

for Agencies & Nonprofits

Don't trash your food scraps and plant waste.



### Why participate in organics collection?

34% of what New Yorkers discard is organic waste. Instead of letting your organics rot in landfills, you can help DSNY turn food scraps, food-soiled paper, and plant waste into compost and clean energy.

By providing your site with a latching brown bin for organics, you also help deter pests in and around your building, and keep your sidewalk and street cleaner.

### What goes in the brown bin?

**Food Scraps:** fruits, vegetables, meat, bones, dairy, prepared foods



**Food-soiled Paper:** napkins, towels, tea bags, plates, coffee filters, compostable utensils



**Leaf + Yard Waste:** plants, leaves, twigs, grass



**No** Recyclables: Metal, Glass, Plastic, Cartons, Clean Paper + Cardboard

**No** Trash: Pet waste, medical waste, diapers, hygiene and foam products

### Keeping your building cleaner:

Organic waste in the brown bin produces no more odor than when it's put into the trash. Our bins come equipped with:

- Tight-fitting lid and latch, to minimize odors between collections.
- Hard, chew-resistant plastic, which helps to deter pests.
- Odor-resistant plastic to avoid odor buildup over time.

### How to educate staff & visitors:

DSNY offers the resources below to help you educate staff and visitors about organics collection:

- Flyers and signs to post in your building.
- Decals for your organics bins.
- A "Welcome Packet" for each employee, including participation instructions, and What To Recycle reference stickers.
- A presentation from DSNY at your next staff meeting.

[nyc.gov/organics](http://nyc.gov/organics) | call 311  
f t @ NYCsanitation • NYCzerowaste



sanitation



### How to manage your brown bin:

1. Determine the most appropriate locations to place your brown bins:
  - Wherever food scraps are commonly discarded, such as pantries and kitchens.
  - In existing indoor or outdoor recycling areas.
  - In an outside courtyard or other accessible space.
2. Make sure to:
  - Line your bins with a clear plastic liner.
  - Close and lock the lid after organic waste is deposited.
  - Write the building address on the side of the bin so that it is not mistakenly taken by a neighbor.
  - Rinse bins regularly between collections.



### How to set out your organics:

1. Tie off and collect clear bags of food scraps from all locations in your building.
2. Consolidate several tied bags into one brown bin.
3. Set out brown bin at the curb with the tied up bags inside.
4. For extra leaf and yard waste, use a paper lawn and leaf bag or an unlined bin labeled "Yard Waste Only." Bundle small branches with twine.

### FAQs

#### Where can I find my collection schedule?

Find your collection schedule at [on.nyc.gov/collectionday](https://on.nyc.gov/collectionday).

#### How can I report a missed collection?

To report missed organics collections, please use the form located at [on.nyc.gov/missed-collection](https://on.nyc.gov/missed-collection).

If you continue to experience missed collections, you can email [Agencies@dsny.nyc.gov](mailto:Agencies@dsny.nyc.gov) for further review.

**Please note:** Materials set out after DSNY services your area is not a missed collection.

#### What if we need more brown bins?

To request additional bins or replacements for your missing or damaged bins, visit [on.nyc.gov/replace-bin](https://on.nyc.gov/replace-bin).

#### How can I learn more about recycling at my agency or nonprofit?

To learn about NYC recycling regulations and optional programs to donate clothing or food, go to: [on.nyc.gov/agency-recycling](https://on.nyc.gov/agency-recycling).

#### How can I get signage and info?

Request free decals, signage, and other info to educate staff and visitors about recycling and organics at: [on.nyc.gov/recycling-materials](https://on.nyc.gov/recycling-materials).

#### Questions?

Contact: [Agencies@dsny.nyc.gov](mailto:Agencies@dsny.nyc.gov)

[nyc.gov/organics](https://nyc.gov/organics) | call 311

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