



JULY NEWSLETTER

The Zero Waste Schools newsletter will help you get your school on a path toward generating zero waste through waste prevention, recycling, composting, and food recovery. You'll also find resources that connect zero waste to healthy eating, school gardens, and environmental education and action.

Share the newsletter with friends, colleagues, and students interested in zero waste.

[Sign up for ZWS news](#)

Webinar on the *Food Waste Reduction Toolkit for Illinois Schools*

July 27, 12 pm CST

Interested in reducing school food waste?
Join this webinar to learn how!
The *Food Waste Reduction Toolkit for Illinois Schools* is a comprehensive resource that identifies the main sources of wasted food and offers strategies for food waste prevention, food recovery and redistribution, composting, education and engagement, and celebrating success. The Toolkit's numerous case studies provide examples of these strategies in action.

Susan Casey & Becky Brodsky from SGA's Zero Waste Schools program will provide an overview of the food waste reduction strategies in the Toolkit.

You'll also hear from these inspiring case study contributors:

- **Lauren Roberts, Gourmet Gorilla**, will highlight the Chicago-based school food service company's food waste tracking system which has led to a 10-15% waste reduction in serving lines.
- **Greta Kringle, Science Teacher, Solorio Academy High School**, will share how she integrated zero waste thinking and food waste reduction into her chemistry curriculum and how it became a focus for the Zero Waste Ambassadors Club at this Chicago Public School.



Now is the time to plan how your school can reduce food waste to benefit your students, your community, and the planet.

Click [HERE](#) to register for the webinar. Download a pdf of the Toolkit [HERE](#).

The *Food Waste Reduction Toolkit for Illinois Schools* is a project of the [Wasted Food Action Alliance](#) and was developed by SGA in collaboration with partners from the Wasted Food Action

Plastic Free July

Celebrate **Plastic Free July**, the global movement that helps millions of people be part of the solution to plastic pollution. Here are just a few ways you can started on a plastic free life:



- Support the [Break Free From Plastic Pollution Act](#)
- Get started early on planning a [Plastic Free Lunch Day](#) for your school
- Join the ["Reopen with Reuse"](#) campaign
- Support [Let's Shedd Plastic](#) restaurants
- Organize or join a litter clean-up at a [beach](#), park, [river](#), or in your neighborhood (tongs and gloves make it easier and safer)
- Join the [Plastic Free Eco-Challenge](#), the month-long challenge that will help participants move away from their dependency on single-use plastics
- Join these webinars organized by the Shedd Aquarium for Plastic Free July:
 - July 15 at noon: [Clean Composting for a Better Future](#)
 - July 21 at noon: [Let's Shedd Plastic with Chicago Restaurants](#)
 - July 21 at 6pm: [Conservando Nuestro Raices: Celebrating Our Zero Waste Roots](#)
 - July 28 at noon: [Policy Change for a Plastic-Free Future](#)

Ditching Disposables: A Toolkit for Healthier Foodware in K-12 Schools

The Center for Environmental Health recently released [Ditching Disposables: A Toolkit for Healthier Foodware in K-12 Schools](#) to help school districts address the growing amount of disposables in their schools, the toxic chemicals found in these products, and the impacts that they have on our health and environment.



The toolkit is designed to guide K-12 schools in making the transition from single-use food service ware to healthier, more sustainable alternatives. Highlights include:

- Purchasing options, including general product pricing information
- Case studies of schools that have transitioned to reusables or are on their way
- Information regarding the toxicity of various food service ware material types
- Dishwashing equipment suggestions

Illinois Farm to School Summer Institute



The 2021 virtual institute opened on June 1 and is **available through August 15**. At no cost, participants can discover tools, review resources, and receive training on the topics needed to move their programming forward. Attendees will build a personalized agenda from over 100 documents and toolkits, 28 pre-recorded virtual sessions, and shared links to best practices for 18 Farm to School topics, many often overlooked by participating programs.

Please share this fantastic opportunity with child garden and feeding sites in your region! Check out a sample of farm to school training sessions [HERE](#) and click this [LINK](#) to read more.

Do you know an Illinois grower, distributor, or food hub that would like to share their information with institutional buyers? Help them build their market by sharing the Local Food Poster application for the Local Food Gallery wall [HERE](#).

Students eat more, waste less with longer lunch time

While schools might schedule 20-minute lunch periods, the amount of time students are actually seated and able to eat is often much shorter.

[Effects of Longer Seated Lunch Time on Food Consumption and Waste in Elementary and Middle School-age Children](#), a recently published study by researchers at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, concludes that policies requiring 20 minutes of seated lunch time result in increased fruit and vegetable consumption and decreased waste during lunch.

The authors conclude that the results "support a 20-minute seated lunch policy, which could improve diet quality and reduce food waste in children." They also note that while health experts recommend at least 20 minutes of seated lunch time, "no federal policy for lunch period duration exists in the United States."



Photo: Seven Generations Ahead

How Schools Can Use Federal COVID Relief Funds to Ensure Healthy, Green Schools

FIVE GUIDING PRINCIPLES

How Schools Can Use COVID Relief Funds to Ensure Healthy, Green Schools



THE CENTER FOR GREEN SCHOOLS UNDAUNTEDK12

The **Center for Green Schools** and **UndauntedK12** have released [Five Guiding Principles: How Schools Can Use Federal COVID Relief Funds to Ensure Healthy, Green Schools](#), which provides actionable information for school districts as they consider how to use these relief funds to meet local needs. The resource identifies examples of school facility improvements, as well as curriculum and training that both align with allowed uses and provide long-term benefits.

A virtual training on **July 22 at 1pm CST** will address how to navigate the COVID-19 relief funding policy language, understand who in the state/district is responsible for setting expectations on funding, and how best to leverage the funds for sustainability efforts in order to further healthy, green

school goals. This training is intended for advocates both within and outside of school districts. Register [HERE](#).

New report makes policy recommendations for reducing school food waste

In order to help meet our national goal of reducing food waste by 50% by 2030, the Harvard Law School Food Law and Policy Clinic, in collaboration with ReFED and the Natural Resources Defense Council, recently published a new report, [Leveraging Child Nutrition Reauthorization to Reduce Food Waste](#).

The report makes policy recommendations that Congress can implement as part of the Child Nutrition Reauthorization (CNR) process to address food waste in federal child nutrition programs and food waste generated at home. The report outlines 14 recommendations for the CNR in total, with the following five recommendations for school meals:



1. Incentivize school food waste audits
2. Mandate an Offer Versus Serve model across more levels of the school system
3. Authorize financial incentives to schools that register with the EPA Food Recovery Challenge
4. Offer grant funding to schools to implement food waste reduction and recovery programs
5. Modify existing school grant program selection processes to preference applicants that have food waste reduction or food donation plans

Photo: Seven Generations Ahead

Grants and other opportunities

World Wildlife Fund's Food Waste Warriors mini-grants and large grants are now open. Two types of grants are available this year: (1) mini-grants for schools, school districts, or nonprofits; and (2) large grants for school districts, nonprofits, and for-profit organizations. The focus will be on food waste measurement and interventions; supporting underserved communities; and (for the large grants only) helping to drive more lasting food waste policy change in schools. **Applications due July 20.**

Driving a Cleaner Illinois (grants for all-electric school buses): The Illinois EPA is currently accepting applications to replace old diesel school buses with new all-electric school buses through its Driving a Cleaner Illinois grant program. Grants are available in the **Chicago Metro** and **Metro-East** areas. **Applications due August 9, 2021.**

USDA Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production Grants: Applications are open for grants that support the development of urban agriculture and innovative production that initiate or expand the efforts of farmers, gardeners, citizens, government officials, schools, and other stakeholders in urban and suburban areas. Projects may target areas of food access, education, business and start-up costs for new farmers, urban agroforestry or food forests, and development of policies related to zoning and other needs of urban production. **Applications due July 30, 2021.**

'Beyond Plastic Pollution' online class: Registration is now open for the fall session of this environmental policy class offered by Bennington College. The course is **open to the public, high school age and up**. Class meets every Wednesday on Zoom, Sept. 1 - Oct. 13, 2021, 7-9 pm. The fee to audit the class is \$100; the cost is \$400 to receive credit.

Events

Chicagoland Regional Climate Action Plan Launch

July 13, 12-1:30 pm

Attend this online event to learn about one of the first regional climate plans in the United States that will help municipalities make impactful changes in their own operations and encourage policies that will reduce greenhouse emissions and build resilient communities.

2021 Midwest Environmental Education Conference

July 26-29, Luther College, Decorah, Iowa

This year's theme, *Exploring Community: Land, Water, People*, focuses on re-defining community to include all land, water, and people, and building healthy, resilient, vibrant communities for all.



This newsletter was created by **Seven Generations Ahead**.
Funding for Zero Waste Schools is provided by **Peoples Gas, North Shore Gas,** and
Food:Land:Opportunity, a collaboration between Kinship Foundation and The Chicago Community
Trust and funded through the Searle Funds at The Chicago Community Trust.



Food:Land:Opportunity
Localizing the Chicago Foodshed

