



DECEMBER 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](#)

Food Waste Warrior Project



Calling all **Chicago Public Schools K-12 teachers!** Help your students become Food Waste Warriors with this opportunity from the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) and Seven Generations Ahead.

Teachers will use the WWF's Food Waste Warrior curriculum to teach their students about food waste. The lessons are available in K-2, 3-5, 6-8,

and 9-12 grade level bands. As part of the project, teachers will conduct 3-5 food waste audits in their classroom or lunchroom and submit the data to the WWF's Food Waste Warriors Dashboard. The waste audits will involve students sorting their meal discards into categories (milk waste, other liquid waste, fruit and vegetable waste, other food waste, recycling, landfill trash, and uneaten whole fruit/ unopened packaged items) and then weighing it.

Learn more [HERE](#).

CPS teachers who complete the project by May 5, 2022, will receive a \$100 stipend.

To participate or for more information, contact:
Susan Casey, Zero Waste Schools Program Manager, Seven Generations Ahead
susan@sevengenerationsahead.org

The Plastic Bag Store is coming to Chicago!

January 20-30, 2022
The Wrigley Building, 410 N. Michigan Ave.
In a ground level storefront on Chicago's Magnificent Mile

The Plastic Bag Store is the feature attraction of the **2022 Chicago International**

Puppet Theater Festival.

"New York artist Robin Frohardt's tragi-comic ode to the foreverness of plastic appears to be a storefront grocery, but it's actually stocked with hundreds of hand-made items—fruits, vegetables, sushi, deli meats and more — all crafted from organic NYC trash.



Several times a day, the *Store* transforms from an installation into a micro-cinema for a series of dynamic puppet-films that transport the audience from the distant past into a dystopian future. With her distinct sense of humor, Frohardt challenges us to think about how future generations will misinterpret us by the waste we leave behind."

Learn more about *The Plastic Bag Store* [HERE](#), including a video tour by the artist.

Store visits are free and appropriate for all ages.

Tickets to timed film screenings: \$30 Regular, \$20 Students
Film running time: 60 minutes. The film is appropriate for ages 8 and up.

Green your holidays



Give the planet a gift by getting closer to zero waste this holiday season. Check out these tips:

Holiday lights: If you need to replace your lights this year, opt for LED strands - they are much more energy-efficient and last longer than traditional lights. Consider using a timer for your lights so they only shine when you can see them.

Planning your feast: Treat your guests to real dishes and avoid single-use foodware when setting the table or preparing a buffet. Have leftovers? Be sure to have containers on hand to send extra food home with guests or to freeze for another time. Composting leftover food scraps is also a great option. Learn how to compost at home [HERE](#).

Gift wrapping: Choose reusable wrapping materials like cloth napkins, scarves, or cloth bags. Repurposing old maps, newspaper, and brown paper bags is also a great option - plus these materials can easily be decorated and recycled.

Gift ideas:

- Give a compost collection service subscription. Find service options at the [Illinois Food Scrap Coalition](#).
- Give a Zero Waste Eating Out Kit complete with a metal straw, reusable utensils, cloth napkin, reusable container for leftovers, insulated coffee mug, reusable water bottle, and a nice cloth bag to hold it all.
- Donate to a [local food bank](#) in honor of a loved one.
- Gift experiences, not things. Some great ideas include certificates for spa treatments, restaurants, and local shops.
- Did you know that returns from online shopping created 5.8 billion tons of landfill waste in 2020? Avoid shopping online and choose to shop locally when you can.

Holiday lights and tree recycling

Holiday light recycling: Have broken lights? String Lights are

made primarily of wire and can be recycled, but never in a curbside container.



Tree recycling:

- Chicago offers tree recycling every January. The mulch created is used to nourish plants and soil in parks and will also be made available to Chicago residents, free of charge.
- Outside of Chicago? Check with your local public works department to see if they have a curbside pick-up option for recycling trees.
- Several [compost subscription services](#) will also collect your tree for a fee.

Go to [Recycle by City](#) later this month for light and tree recycling locations in Chicago.

Illinois Green Ribbon Schools applications due soon!



The [Illinois Green Ribbon Schools application](#) deadline is almost here-- but you've still got time.

The program recognizes schools that have active programs, actions, and dedication to promote and educate about sustainability. Working in partnership with the Illinois State Board of Education and the Illinois Board of Higher Education, Illinois Green Alliance accepts applications from schools across Illinois. Showcase your school's achievements and let your community know what steps you've taken to green your school!

Top scoring schools from Illinois will be submitted to the U.S. Department of Education's Green Ribbon Schools program for consideration at the national level.

Contact Liz Wimmer with questions: lwimmer@illinoisgreenalliance.org.

Application deadline: Jan. 24, 2022.

Tips for the 2022 Application

1. Gain best practices from a past honoree by watching this [short video clip](#) from Joseph Sears School (2020 Honoree) to learn tips for preparing and completing your application.
2. Visit the [Green Strides](#) website for standards, programs, and grants to help you complete the application and for tools to green your school.
3. Read about past winning Illinois Green Ribbon Schools from [2021](#), [2020](#), [2019](#), [2018](#), and [2017](#) for additional insights on the application process.
4. Include 5 photos of your school in action as a part of your application to highlight the green things your school has done.

Greening America's Schools at COP26

Greening America's Schools: An Opportunity for Climate Mitigation, Health, and Equity



Hosted by the U.S. Green Building Council and the U.S. Climate Action Center at COP26, this data-driven presentation makes a compelling case as to why school sustainability matters when working to combat climate change. During this webinar, expert speakers discuss various opportunities for greening schools in order to advance efforts around climate mitigation, resilience, and equity. This is a must-see for anyone working with or for a school district!

Watch the presentation [HERE](#).

Lead a household food waste challenge



Teachers, are you interested in leading a seriously fun COVID-safe project-based learning opportunity that students and their households can do together; one that will save them money, encourage healthy eating habits, and contribute to the #1 solution to global climate change?

If so, then [register](#) to learn to lead your class as a team in the 4-week ***Make the Most of Food Challenge!*** Join like-minded teachers in a team

training course in February 2022 and/or go ahead and pre-register to lead a team in the annual April (Earth Month) 2022 challenge.

Teachers can receive certificate(s) for up to (12) professional learning units for participating and/or leading a team.

For a limited time only, request sponsorship for the \$150 registration fee by using the coupon code "WAITLIST2022." Learn more [HERE](#).

This challenge is organized by [Recycle Leaders](#) in partnership with the [Audubon Naturalist Society](#).

New composting infographic

Check out the USDA's new [infographic](#) about composting.

This easy-to-read one-pager explains in simple terms the why, what, and how of composting food scraps. This guide is great to share with individuals, schools, and businesses to help get them started with recycling food scraps.



Plant Chicago: Closed Loop Labs



**PLANT
CHICAGO**

Plant Chicago offers a variety of [educational programming](#) for all ages around circular economy topics in which students develop a deeper understanding of closed-loop systems through supervised, interactive projects. All workshops are aligned with Next Generation Science Standards and can be adapted for adult audiences.

Visits can be tailored to highlight different aspects of food production, energy, and material reuse. See closed-loop systems in action, including an aquaponics farm, indoor victory garden, compost gardens, and more. Workshops are also available in virtual formats.

Cost: \$150, Back of the Yards Residents: Free

Educate for a sustainable future with GreenPrint™

The [Green Schools National Network](#) (GSNN) recently released an update to [GreenPrint™](#), their framework for creating schools and school districts that are healthy, equitable, and sustainable.



**GREEN SCHOOLS
NATIONAL NETWORK**

GSNN has gathered best practices from across the field and can be used as "a tool for strategic planning and provides a checklist for diagnosing existing strengths and areas for improvement." GreenPrint™ is founded on the following ideals:

- Systemic change endures. Healthy, equitable, and sustainable schools can only be achieved through whole-district/whole-school transformation.
- Equity matters. Students from all backgrounds and zip codes and regardless of social identities should have an equitable opportunity for academic success and equitable access to healthy environments.
- Everyone is a leader and a learner. While leadership is key to creating healthy, equitable, and sustainable schools, every member of the school community should have a voice and a hand in creating a just and sustainable future.

Grants and other opportunities

One Earth Film Festival's Young Filmmakers Contest seeks short, 3- to 8-minute environmental films from youth in third grade through age 25. Animated films of 45-seconds minimum are also accepted. There are four \$1,000 top prizes for live-action, animation, creativity, and post-grad categories. **Deadline: Jan. 5, 2022.**

USDA Farm to School Grant assists eligible entities with the implementation of farm-to-school programs that improve access to local foods in USDA Food and Nutrition Child Nutrition Programs through grants and technical assistance. **Deadline: Jan. 10, 2022.**

School Nutrition Foundation Equipment Grants Eligible applicants have the opportunity to win equipment grants, each worth between \$20,000 to \$100,000. Applications must be submitted by a school nutrition director. **Deadline: Jan. 31, 2022.**

USDA 1890 National Scholars Program For high school students who want to study agriculture, food, natural resource sciences, and related disciplines at an 1890 Land-Grant University (see list of qualifying universities at the link above). Full tuition and room/board included. **Deadline: Jan. 31, 2022.**

President's Environmental Youth Award Your student's project could be an award winner! Encourage your students with an existing environmental stewardship project or an idea for a project to apply so that their achievements can be further recognized. Applicants from all 50 states as well as U.S. territories are eligible to compete for a national Presidential award. **Deadline: Feb. 18, 2022.**

Presidential Innovation Award for Environmental Educators For K-12 teachers who employ innovative approaches to environmental education and use the environment as a context for teaching their students. Up to two teachers from each of the EPA's 10 regions, from different states, will be selected to receive this award. **Deadline: Feb. 18, 2022.**

Whole Kids Foundation Salad Bar Grant Any district or independent school participating in the National School Lunch Program can apply. The Salad Bars to Schools grant program donates salad bars to U.S. schools to give kids daily access to fresh fruits and vegetables. **Applications are accepted on a rolling basis.**

Events

Breaking Down Compostable Products: Facing Reality and Meeting the Challenge

Dec. 15, 10:30 am-12 pm

Presented by the Illinois Recycling Association and Illinois Recycling Foundation, this webinar will explore recent public legislation in California to establish compostable product standards. The systematic approach of a manufacturer, hauler, and compost facility in Illinois that has successfully navigated lifecycle complexities to recycle compostable products will also be presented. **Free for members, \$50 for non-members.**

Community and Citizen Science: Making Your Data Count

Dec. 15, 2-3 pm (CST)

Attend this webinar to hear about the tools and practices used in community science projects that involve grassroots activities to address local concerns. Learn how the EPA, states, and tribal governments can better support these efforts.

[The Quiet Transition: Leading by Example in Clean, Quiet Lawn Care](#)

Dec. 16, 11 am-12:30 pm

Gas-powered land care has brought chronic noise and pollution to neighborhoods across the US, raising concerns about worker health, public health, and the environment. Hear from municipal and government leaders making successful transitions away from gas-powered land care and discover what it takes to make change happen.

Seven Generations Ahead | [Email](#) | [Website](#)



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PEOPLES GAS®
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Food:Land:Opportunity
Localizing the Chicago Foodshed

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