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# City Receives \$3 Million Grant to Improve Composting Operations

PROJECT INCLUDES FOOD RESCUE COMPONENT TO BENEFIT LOW-INCOME RESIDENTS, HELPS SUPPORT ZERO WASTE AND CLIMATE ACTION PLAN GOALS

SAN DIEGO – The City of San Diego’s Environmental Services Department (ESD) was awarded a \$3 million grant from the State of California’s Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery (CalRecycle) to upgrade its current composting facility, the Miramar Greenery and fund a food rescue program. Through a public/private partnership with [Kitchens for Good](#), unused produce and food from grocery stores that would otherwise end up in the landfill, is made into free, nutritious meals that are delivered to seniors and low-income residents. Aspiring cooks and chefs working for Kitchens for Good will benefit from culinary industry job training and education. This program, along with upgrades to ESD’s composting facility, align with the City’s Zero Waste Plan approved by the San Diego City Council in June 2015. The Zero Waste initiative is also a critical component of the City’s innovative Climate Action Plan, which won Council approval in December 2015.

**“With this grant funding, the City will be taking another step toward achieving its Zero Waste goals,” said Environmental Services Department Director Mario X. Sierra. “Additionally, odor control and expansion of the food waste diversion program are both important priorities for the department. This grant will help fund major improvements to the Miramar Greenery’s composting operation at the landfill complex. It really is a win-win for everyone involved.”**

Plans for expanding the compost program involve converting the City’s open air composting operation to a closed system that will enhance operations, reduce air emissions and protect the quality of water at the Miramar Landfill complex. This will help the City continue as a national leader in diverting materials going to the landfill by recycling as much as possible. The City currently diverts 104,000 tons of organic waste annually. ESD converts green and food waste into quality compost, mulch and wood chips made available for purchase by the public. This helps cover operational costs at the Greenery and saves valuable landfill space.

According to CalRecycle, about 40 percent of materials going to landfills is compostable and/or digestible organic material (grass, yard waste, food waste, lumber and wood waste). California Senate Bill 1383 establishes targets to achieve a 50 percent reduction in the level of the statewide disposal of organic waste from the 2014 level by 2020, and a 75 percent reduction by 2025. Additionally, the state has set a goal that 20 percent or more of currently disposed edible food should be recovered for human consumption by 2025. Methane emissions resulting from the decomposition of organic waste in landfills are a significant source of greenhouse gas emissions contributing to global climate change. From a climate change perspective, significant methane emission reductions can be achieved by redirecting organic materials from landfills to composting and digestion facilities.

This grant is made possible through CalRecycle's [Greenhouse Gas Reduction Organics Grant Program](#), funded by the State's Fiscal Year 2016-17 Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund.



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