

[Resolution supporting Additional Environmental Education and Awareness for San Francisco Youth]

Resolution urging the Department of Children, Youth, and Their Families to coordinate with the Department of the Environment to offer trainings and workshops for grantee organizations and their youth participants.

Whereas, the City and County of San Francisco has a duty to protect the natural environment, the economy, and the health of its citizens¹, and

Whereas, in 2002, the San Francisco Board of Supervisors adopted a goal of achieving 75% diversion from landfill by 2010 and a long-term goal of achieving zero waste, and

Whereas, zero waste means sending zero discards to the landfill or high-temperature destruction and promotes highest and best use of materials and a waste reduction hierarchy that includes: preventing waste, reducing and reusing first, and then recycling and composting², and

Whereas, as stated in the Mandatory Recycling and Composting Ordinance (BOS File NO. 081404), all persons in San Francisco must separate their refuse into recyclables, compostable, and trash, placing each type of refuse in a separate container designated for disposal of that type of refuse. No person may mix recyclables, compostable or trash, or deposit refuse of one type in a collection container designated for another type of refuse, except as otherwise provided in this Chapter³, and

Whereas, the San Francisco Department of Environment provides education, outreach, technical assistance, trainings, and resources about recycling and composting to residents, businesses, employees, students, and visitors to San Francisco, and

¹ https://sfenvironment.org/sites/default/files/policy/sfe_zw_sf_mandatory_recycling_composting_ord_100-09.pdf

² Ibid

³ Ibid

1 Whereas, the San Francisco Department of Environment has conducted extensive outreach to
2 K-12 students throughout the city for more than fifteen years resulting in significant increases in waste
3 diversion,

4 Whereas, the Department of Children, Youth, and their Families provides grant support to 294
5 organizations a year and serves 53,956 participants, 55% of which are between the ages 11-17⁴ and

6 Whereas DCYF can reach out to an even broader range of youth via their grantees, especially
7 the underrepresented, and can provide a vital link between education from the Department of the
8 Environment, and these youth, and

9 Whereas, due to a variety of factors (including Principals, Custodial Services and Student
10 Nutrition Services), middle and high school communities (including students, school administration, and
11 afterschool providers) would benefit from greater awareness and education about how to recycle and
12 compost more in order to send less trash to the landfill, and

13 Whereas, to assess the needs of middle and high school communities around sorting waste,
14 the Youth Commission conducted a survey of 530 young people in San Francisco to better understand
15 their practices and commitment to zero waste, and

16 Whereas, the young people surveyed offered an array of recommendations for how San
17 Francisco can better support their efforts to sort waste such as additional classroom lessons, making it
18 easier for residents and students to recycle and compost at home, and providing greater opportunities
19 to recycle (such as at dedicated recycling centers), and

20 Whereas, when asked “how often do you compost and recycle at home, school, and in public
21 spaces?”, youth age eleven to twenty-four responded as follows -- 3% said they never compost at
22 home, 8% said they rarely compost at home, 24% said they sometimes compost at home; 2% said they
23 never compost at school, 7% said they rarely compost at school, 41% said they sometimes compost at
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⁴ <http://www.dcyf.org/modules/showdocument.aspx?documentid=5333>

1 school; 3% said they never compost in public places, 13% said they rarely compost public places, 65%
2 said they sometimes compost in public places⁵;

3 Whereas, when asked “how often do you compost and recycle at home, school, and in public
4 spaces?”, youth age eleven to twenty-four responded as follows -- 2% said they never recycle at home,
5 2% said they rarely recycle at home, 15% said they sometimes recycle at home; 1% said they never
6 recycle at school, 3% said they rarely recycle at school, 26% said they sometimes recycle at school;
7 1% said they never recycle in public places, 9% said they rarely recycle in public places, 54% said they
8 sometimes recycle in public places⁶;

9 Whereas, when asked what would make sorting waste easier, 50% of respondents wished to
10 learn about the big impact sorting waste has on the environment, and 74% of youth respondents
11 expressed a desire for clear and larger signs in even more school areas detailing how to sort waste⁷,
12 and

13 Whereas, when young people are exposed to positive behaviors in elementary school, such as
14 recycling, composting, and voting, they are more likely to model the behavior as they move into
15 adulthood, and

16 Whereas, it is important to extend this education beyond the walls of the classroom, and into
17 other environments like after-school programs, and,

18 Whereas, when educated on the importance and the practice of recycling and composting
19 young people can also become ambassadors in teaching their families and peers how to recycle and
20 compost, and

21 Whereas, to get to zero waste, it will take all San Franciscans including young people to make
22 it a reality, and
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⁵ https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSd2Hmz8m3E42nFvKZvvO_377yNtpORLK6U--jDJG6FRdP_2xg/viewform

⁶ Ibid


⁷ Ibid

1 Whereas, by educating and empowering our youth about the important practice of recycling and
2 composting, we can foster social norms that make the daily practice of this duty a more common and
3 acceptable behavior among middle school and high school students, therefore

4 Be It Resolved, that the San Francisco Youth Commission urges the Department of Children,
5 Youth, and their Families (DCYF) to offer environmental trainings lead by the Department of the
6 Environment (SFE) to DCYF grantee organizations, and encourage grantees to host environmental
7 workshops for their youth participants each year focused on sorting waste and other environmental
8 awareness education deemed necessary, and

9 Be It Further Resolved, that the Youth Commission urges DCYF to coordinate with the SFE and
10 their School Education Team, who are willing and able, to provide these trainings for DCYF grantees
11 and their youth participants assuming time and resources allow for it.

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Chiara Lind, Chair, 2017-18 Youth Commission
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