

FARM SCHOOL NYC

To NYC City Council,

My name is Onika Abraham,
I'm dismayed to learn that the City is planning to cut the community composting and recycling outreach programs of the NYC Compost Project and GrowNYC.

Although the Mayor's Executive Budget eliminates funding for these programs to address the recent fiscal shortfall, these cuts, outlined in the Citywide Savings Program, **do not** contribute to a public health strategy for our ongoing COVID-19 crisis.

NYC Compost Project and robust recycling help make the city healthier, safer, and more resilient. They make irreplaceable contributions to the measurable goals of thriving neighborhoods, healthy lives, and a livable climate as stated in the Mayor's One New York plan. If these programs are removed from the FY 2021 budget, these goals are imperiled.

Our city must continue to be a leader in waste reduction and reuse through our innovative community based approaches. NYC's approach to composting leverages Sanitation, large nonprofits and small community based organizations to provide different opportunities to compost organic waste. The NYC Compost Project unites non-profits and activists from all five boroughs, leveraging local knowledge. All of their activities work together to build a coalition in support of composting - enabling strategies that not only reduce organic waste, but redirect finished compost into urban soil building, food production, science education and green job opportunities. While large scale municipal collection efforts may be the easiest to quantitatively measure, programs that encourage home and school compost systems, community garden compost systems and innovative approaches to composting should not be discounted in the value they provide.

Cutting NYC Compost Project and Zero Waste programs in this Fiscal Year 2021, would compound the damage done cuts in previous years to recycling operations, civic education, and compliance, ensuring our city will never approach the Mayor's stated Zero Waste goals. At a time when public health requires a sustainable city, New Yorkers deserve better. Restore the cuts to recycling education and baseline NYC Compost Project funding starting in FY 2021 as part of your commitment to a healthier NYC.

Thank you,
Onika Abraham
Executive Director
Farm School NYC