



Chabot College

Chabot College is part of the Chabot–Las Positas Community College District, which was founded in 1961. Located in Hayward, Chabot College employs 1,400 people and has 15,000 students.

Facts-at-a-Glance

Challenges

- How to cost-effectively compost food scraps
- Controlling odors from food composting
- State law requiring waste reduction
- Limited budget for environmental projects

Solutions

- On-site composting technical assistance
- \$10,000 grant for on-site composting
- Composting equipment purchase with grant funds
- Inclusion of construction and demolition debris language in contracts
- \$5,000 grant for campus recycling bins

Benefits

- Provides \$10,000 cost savings
- Composts 47 tons of organic materials each year
- Improves quality of landscape compost
- Creates healthier soils and landscape

The Story

Chabot College already had a high recycling rate—over the level mandated by State law. In addition to traditional recycling, its composting operations took care of most campus plant debris, turning it into soil amendment, mulch, and top dressing for campus turf. To improve its environmental performance even more, the college contacted the StopWaste Partnership to take advantage of waste reduction funding opportunities. A positive relationship developed that has led to many successful projects, increased waste diversion, and cost savings.

“It is not difficult to predict that the cost benefits of composting for Chabot College could double, or even triple, in the next few years.”

TOM FULLER
Grounds Manager

Challenges

The goal was to improve Chabot’s landscape composting operations and initiate on-site food scraps composting, despite the college’s limited capital to fund environmental projects.

Chabot College staff knew that food scraps composting wouldn’t be acceptable to neighbors of the college unless the compost was contained, which would require a separate system from its open windrows. Also, meeting California requirements for composting this much material would be challenging.

In addition, Chabot needed funds to purchase containers and equipment, and technical assistance to select a system, and start a new program. But the district was experiencing budget short-falls and money was not available for the project.



Chabot uses a self-dumping “tipper” to load food waste into its earth tub composter.





Solutions

Increase the effectiveness of Chabot's landscape composting operations and develop a food scraps composting system.

"Besides saving money and producing a usable product, composting has raised the economic and environmental awareness of our employees. People are starting to look more aggressively for ways to recycle, reduce waste, and save even more money."

TOM FULLER
Grounds Manager



Food Scraps Composting

Pre-consumer food scraps from the cafeteria are now diverted into special bins by the very cooperative kitchen staff. Then the Grounds department puts the waste into a "tipper" that a forklift takes to a Green Mountain Earth Tub for composting. The scraps are mixed with equal parts wood chips or leaves. The Earth Tub has a biofilter and a motorized auger that mixes the materials; odors and excess moisture are contained. After about five weeks, the tub is emptied and another batch is started. StopWaste provided research and training for the project, and provided grant funding for equipment.

Landscape Composting

For over 20 years, Chabot College has been composting grass clippings, wood chips, and leaves. Virtually no plant debris generated on this 93-acre campus is landfilled. Materials are mixed and a windrow built, usually 8 feet high and up to 100 feet long, with a front-end loader. With assistance from StopWaste, the college was able to purchase professional compost covers that keep moisture in but rainwater out. Piles used to take three years to decompose to marginal quality. With the windrow covers, they now take only 18 months and produce high-quality compost, with minimal turning or labor needed. Finished compost is used throughout the campus as soil amendment.

Other Projects

Chabot has accomplished more than composting. Paper, cardboard, bottles and cans, and scrap metal are collected for recycling. The StopWaste Partnership provided construction and demolition debris contract language that the college has incorporated into new construction contracts to help ensure waste reduction. Surplus campus property is reused as much as possible; for example, the newest compost bins were made from old bleachers.



The StopWaste Partnership

The StopWaste Partnership is a free technical assistance service dedicated to improving the environmental performance and reducing costs of Alameda County businesses and public agencies. The program provides expert support and funding to prevent waste, conserve water and energy, and use all resources more efficiently.



The bottom line:

- \$7,500 annual garbage bill reduction
- \$2,500 annual reduction in soil amendment purchases
- \$15,000 in environmental grants
- \$10,000 compost equipment purchase

Visit www.stopwaste.org/partnership or call 1-877-STOPWASTE.