



**DATE:** February 10, 2022

**TO:** Programs & Administration Committee  
Planning Committee/Recycling Board

**FROM:** Justin Lehrer, Operations Manager

**SUBJECT:** Reusable Foodware Project Update

---

## **SUMMARY**

At the February 2022 Programs & Administration and Planning Committee/Recycling Board meetings, staff will provide an update on recent progress and near-term plans for the Reusable Foodware project. Based on Waste Management Authority (WMA) Board direction, staff is advancing several efforts, including grants, technical assistance, and outreach, designed to support implementation of reusable foodware in dining establishments in Alameda County.

## **DISCUSSION**

The Reusable Foodware project focuses on developing policy, infrastructure, and capacity for greater adoption of reusable foodware in Alameda County. At its January 2020 meeting, the WMA Board directed staff to conduct research and pilot projects to better understand the challenges of implementing reusable foodware at dining establishments in Alameda County. COVID-19 impacted the timing of this effort, due to effects on food service businesses as well as public perception of the safety of reusables. In light of these challenges, the project team was able to adjust course, address safety concerns, and still fund four pilot projects in FY 2021-2022. We plan to fund additional projects this fiscal year through the current open grant solicitation. Through these projects we aim to test new solutions, further develop both market supply and demand for reusables, and gain a better understanding of the opportunities, requirements, and challenges we must address in order to build a more robust reuse infrastructure in the county.

During this period, staff issued a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) in order to identify providers of reusable foodware solutions to catalyze and launch pilot projects, as well as providers of technical assistance services to guide and support food service operators switching from single use to reusable foodware. A list of approved providers resulting from this process can be viewed [here](#).

Recent activity includes work with food service businesses in three focus areas: education on the safe use of reusables; direct technical assistance to businesses implementing reusable foodware for on-site dining; and working closely with Member Agency staff and food business operators to

identify and launch pilot projects to test, validate, and learn more about models for reuse in food service. At the February 10 meeting, staff will provide an update on these activities and near-term plans for the project.

**RECOMMENDATION**

This item is for information only.