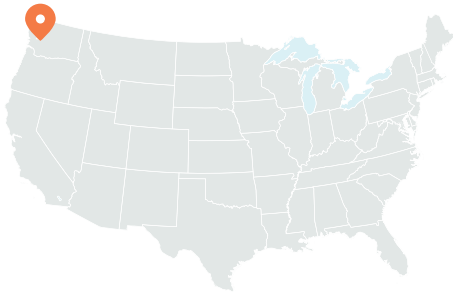




Oregon Metro, Oregon

▲ A family tending to an Oregon Metro provided FreeGarden™ Earth compost bin in their backyard.



POPULATION:

1,790,607

PROGRAM START DATE:

1993

BIN TYPE AND PRICE TO RESIDENT:

FreeGarden™ Earth compost bins – \$49

BINS DISTRIBUTED:

109,090³⁶

TRAINING AND EDUCATION:

No training available

Program Summary

Oregon Metro – the regional planning government for the Oregon portion of the Portland metropolitan area – started selling backyard compost bins in 1993. By 2012, it had sold 109,090. Oregon Metro sells home composting bins at wholesale prices to residents at a government-run recycled paint store called Metro Paint. At Metro Paint, residents can obtain FreeGarden™ Earth bins by Enviro World for \$49 each, P845 Compost aerators by Bosmere for \$16 each, and Sure-Close kitchen pails for \$8 each. In the past, the local government sold Earth Machine™ backyard composting units. Oregon Metro decided to switch to FreeGarden™ bins because Metro’s review of composting bin manufacturers gave Enviro World the highest overall scores in a wide range of criteria covering performance, materials, sustainability, corporate responsibility, and cost.

The program reached peak sales in 1996 with 13,564 bins sold. In October 2011, Portland became the first city in Oregon Metro to start curbside collection of food scraps. Since 2012, bin sales have declined, and now average 400 a year.

Budget

The program has no set budget. Oregon Metro purchases around 500 bins at a time.

Staffing

Carl Grimm, a Senior Solid Waste Planner working on resource conservation and recycling at Oregon Metro, advises on bin specification and program design (see Appendix D for a copy of the most recent request for proposals for composting bins issued by Oregon Metro). The Hazardous Waste Operations program carries out the rest of the program tasks, such as stocking and sales at Metro Paint.

36 From 1993 through the end of 2011.

Partners

Metro Paint, a regional government-run recycled paint store, holds and sells the bins to residents.

TABLE 8. OREGON METRO ANNUAL BIN SALES

Year	Bin Sales
1993	909
1994	7,400
1995	10,958
1996	1,3564
1997	9,621
1998	8,406
1999	8,994
2000	9,514
2001	7,930
2002	6,107
2003	5,596
2004	3,131
2005	1,309
2006	2,495
2007	3,014
2008	3,656
2009	2,925
2010	1,784
2011	777

Data calculated from spreadsheet provided by Oregon Metro. Source: Institute for Local Self-Reliance, 2018.

Oregon Metro sells home composting bins and equipment at a City-run recycled paint store located near downtown Portland. Source: Oregon Metro



Impact and Benefits/Costs

Oregon Metro could not provide this information.

Marketing and Outreach

While Oregon Metro used to conduct a more extensive publicity campaign for its compost bin program, it has ceased doing so in recent years.

Training and Education

Oregon Metro no longer offers a comprehensive compost education program, but it maintains two home composting demonstration sites: one at the Blue Lake Natural Discovery Garden located in a public park and the other at the Oregon Zoo. These sites are open to the public every day for self-guided tours and feature home compost bins, a worm bin, interpretive signs, and free brochures. Oregon Metro invests about \$15,000 per year for seasonal educators to maintain the Discovery Garden and lead weekend family programming. Oregon Metro also answers home composting questions via its Recycling Information Center Hotline through a partnership with Oregon State University Extension Service Master Gardeners.

Tips for Replication

- Subsidize bins for residents.
- Make sure the bin you distribute is rodent resistant (with a floor, lid, and no holes or gaps larger than ¼ inch).
- Collaborate with your jurisdiction's authority on disease vector control.
- Be proactive and upfront with composting education and support – workshops, demonstration sites, a hotline, and ideally a Master Composter Program that generates community engagement and support.
- Do the math. Make sure the program makes sense from a financial standpoint, that you are reaching community residents equitably, and that you are evaluating your efforts for future improvements.



▲ Mixing an Oregon Metro provided FreeGarden™ Earth compost bin.

Contact

Carl Grimm, Senior Solid Waste Planner, Oregon Metro

Phone: 503-797-1676

Email: Carl.Grimm@oregonmetro.gov

Links

Oregon Metro's web page for composting education

<http://www.oregonmetro.gov/tools-living/yard-and-garden/composting>

Information on the compost equipment available through Oregon Metro

<http://www.oregonmetro.gov/tools-living/yard-and-garden/composting/buy-composter>

Instructions for a do-it-yourself backyard bin

<http://www.oregonmetro.gov/tools-living/yard-and-garden/composting/build-compost-bin>