

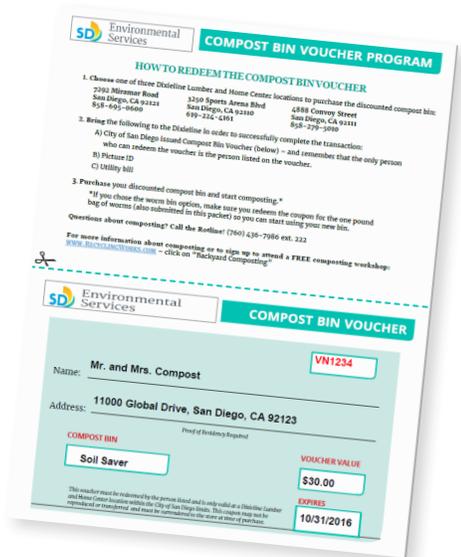


# City of San Diego, California

▲ A compost demonstration site owned by the City Environmental Services Department and run by Solana Center. Source: City of San Diego Environmental Services Department

## Program Summary

The City of San Diego's Environmental Services Department (ESD) distributes discount vouchers for home composting bins to residents in conjunction with Dixieline Lumber & Home Centers, a San Diego county hardware store chain. To obtain a voucher, residents fill out an application available on the City's web page ([recyclingworks.com](http://recyclingworks.com)) or at three Dixieline Lumber & Home Centers locations within San Diego city limits. Environmental Services then emails the vouchers to residents with a brochure called *A Guide to Backyard Composting* and links to additional resources. The web page clarifies: "One voucher per household, proof of residency required, while supplies last." Residents can claim a \$30 voucher for a Soil Saver unit, a \$50 voucher for a Terra Dual-Batch Tumbling Composter, or a \$40 voucher for Can-O-Worms unit. The Can-O-Worms also comes with a voucher for a free pound of red wiggler worms (residents pay the cost of shipping from Triformis Corporation). These vouchers are redeemable at any of the three Dixieline Lumber & Home Centers' San Diego locations. (See Appendix A for voucher, application, and other resources.)



▲ Sample voucher sent to a resident for a Soil Saver unit. Printed vouchers used to be sent through mail to residents, but now the City sends them out as PDFs via email. Source: City of San Diego, Environmental Services Department



### POPULATION:

1,406,630

### PROGRAM START DATE:

November 2012

### BIN TYPE AND PRICE TO RESIDENTS (AFTER VOUCHER)

Soil Saver – \$47.99 + tax  
 Can-O-Worms from Triformis Corporation – \$59.99 + tax  
 Terra Dual Batch Composter – \$129.99 + tax

### VOUCHERS DISTRIBUTED/ REDEEMED FROM 2014-2017:

3,715 distributed / 1,973 redeemed

### TRAINING AND EDUCATION:

Training available but not required to obtain bin

In the past, the City annually held compost bin truck sale events with three stops, ending at the San Diego's SDCCU Stadium (San Diego County Credit Union Stadium). City staff were present at the event to pass out vouchers for

the bins. That former program was discontinued due to budget cuts, but new funding allowed the City of San Diego to start the current year-round program in 2012. The City's Recycling Specialist designed the current program in order to provide residents with more bin options and the ability to see bins in-store before deciding which to buy.

The Department has not yet released analysis of its bin or home composting programs, but it has begun inputting data and plans to release a report in the future.<sup>41</sup> The report will include information such as the number of vouchers claimed per zip code and per bin type, the number of people still using bins, and any problems people have encountered using the subsidized bins. The information will be collected via Survey Monkey from residents who agreed to be contacted in the voucher application. The feedback will be used to adjust and improve the program.

TABLE 9. SAN DIEGO NUMBER OF VOUCHERS DISTRIBUTED/REDEEMED BY YEAR AND BIN TYPE

Bin Type	2014	2015	2016	2017
Soil Saver	457/269	519/300	421/199	463/193
Can-O-Worms	317/204	296/172	228/120	251/134
Terra Dual Batch Tumbler	180/100	264/152	159/67	160/63

Source: City of San Diego Environmental Services Department

## Budget

The total yearly budget for San Diego's program is \$50,000, which comes out of the City's recycling funds. There has yet to be a year where funds have been exhausted. Recently, the Department has decreased both paper usage and mailing expenditures by switching over to an email format for its vouchers.

## Staffing

The bin program is managed by Edward Baskin, the City Recycling Specialist. He spends an estimated 15% of his time on the program.



▲ An advertisement posted in the elevator of the San Diego Environmental Service Department shows (from left to right) the Soil Saver, Terra Dual Batch Composter, and Can-O-Worms. Source: City of San Diego Environmental Services Department

## Partners

Vouchers are redeemable at Dixieline Lumber & Home Centers, a San Diego hardware store chain. The City also contracts with a nonprofit organization, Solana Center for Environmental Innovation, for a variety of services, including composting and waste reduction.



▲ San Diego advertises the home composting program on the City's waste hauling trucks. Source: City of San Diego Environmental Services Department

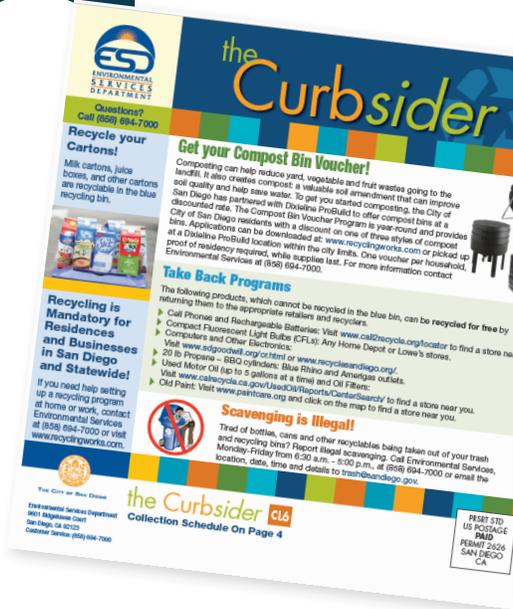
## Impacts and Benefits/Costs

This information was unavailable at the time of writing.

## Marketing and Outreach

The Department advertises the bin program by distributing flyers, passing out applications at community events, posting on social media, and displaying signs on its trucks. Included in the appendix is an advertisement posted in ESD's elevator. The Department always mentions the program in its annual newsletter called The Curbsider, which is sent out to the approximately 280,000

41 The program administrators were able to share with ILSR some of the information that will go into that report. We used the information for Table 9.



▲ Left: An advertisement in the fall 2012 newsletter, The Curbsider. Source: City of San Diego, Center: An advertisement sent out in the Winter 2014 newsletter, The Curbsider. Source: City of San Diego, Right: An advertisement in one of Dixieline Lumber & Home Centers weekly flyers mailed to residents. Source: City of San Diego Environmental Services Department

single-family City-served residences (see Appendix A). Dixieline Lumber & Home Centers also promotes the program; there is always a spike in interest when they feature the discounted bins in their weekly ads that are mailed to approximately 300,000 residents (see Appendix A).

## Education and Training

The City contracts with Solana Center to provide six free 2-hour composting workshops a year, a Master Composter course, and a compost hotline called the Rotline. The workshops are held throughout the city, while the Master Composter course is taught at a compost demonstration garden located outside the Environmental Services building. The workshops cover backyard composting and vermicomposting basics, what composting is and why it is important, tools and materials needed to compost, which items are compostable and which are not, and how to harvest and use compost. The 5-week Master Composter course costs \$25 in materials fee and requires attendance once a week and completion of 30 hours of community outreach in composting education and promotion.

## Tips for Replication

- Ensure residents are using their bins correctly. Getting the compost bin in the hands of your residents is only half the battle.
- Work with a good partner that has solid supply lines.

## Contact

Edward Baskin, Recycling Specialist for San Diego Environmental Services Department  
**Phone:** 858-492-5058  
**Email:** EBaskin@sandiego.gov

## Links

### The City of San Diego's Backyard Composting Site

- 🔗 <https://www.sandiego.gov/environmental-services/recycling/residential/composting>
- 🔗 <https://www.sandiego.gov/environmental-services/recycling/residential/compostbinvoucher>

### Solana Center

- 🔗 <https://www.solanacenter.org/>