

California State University Dominguez Hills

Zero Waste Strategic Plan

2025 Update



Contact: CSUDH Office of Sustainability, Facilities Services, LIB 2514

Introduction

As part of a strategic push to become a net zero waste campus before 2045, the Office of Sustainability is proposing that California State University Dominguez Hills (CSUDH) reach a goal of 90% diversion from the landfill in its waste streams by or before that date. According to the Zero Waste International Alliance (ZWIA), “Zero Waste is a goal that is ethical, economical, efficient and visionary, to guide people in changing their lifestyles and practices to emulate sustainable natural cycles, where all discarded materials are designed to become resources for others to use. Zero Waste means designing and managing products and processes to systematically avoid and eliminate the volume and toxicity of waste and materials, conserve and recover all resources, and not burn or bury them. Implementing Zero Waste will eliminate all discharges to land, water or air that are a threat to planetary, human, animal or plant health.”¹

Adopting this much-needed principle will challenge campus users’ basic day-to-day behavior, putting CSUDH in alignment with other leading CSU’s sustainability practices, as well as in compliance with state legislation (AB 341, SB 1381, etc.). This will ultimately help the campus save on waste hauling costs and reduce CSUDH’s negative impact on the environment as well as the regional community.

I. Current Waste Hauling Services & Volumes

CSUDH provides waste hauling services to the campus for the following types of materials via the following commercial providers:

- *Republic Services:*
 - Trash
 - Mixed Commercial Recycling
 - Cardboard
 - Commercial Organics (food scraps)
 - Green Waste (for Grounds staff operations)
 - Construction & Demolition Waste (C&D for Trades staff operations)
- *Independent Contractor:*
 - Scrap Metal (for Trades staff operations)
- *North State Environmental:*
 - Battery Recycling
 - Chemical Disposal (laboratory users only)
- *Recycle International:*
 - E-waste

Only volumes from Republic Services are currently tracked by the Office of Sustainability for the purposes of internal and state recycling reporting. As these other services are for recycling/diverting these materials, they are left out of the scope as they do not contribute negatively to the diversion rate, and weights are not easily tracked (or otherwise not provided by the hauler).

Based on the available data, in the 2023 calendar year, CSUDH generated the following tonnages:

Waste Type	Annual Republic Services (tons)
Trash (Landfill) ² & Disposed C&D ³	706.95
Mixed Recycling ⁴ & Recycled C&D	885.23
Organics Recycling	307.43 (food scraps and green waste combined)
Total Landfill Diversion Rate	62.78%

In order to achieve a 90% diversion rate assuming similar waste generation volumes year by year, CSUDH would need to identify solutions that would divert or avoid 516.99 more tons of trash from ending up in the landfill.

Some reductions are possible simply through better tracking and assessment on actual volumes as these numbers are based solely on service levels, not true weights.

Additional reductions can result from a variety of infrastructure and behavior-based strategies as detailed later in this plan.

II. Current User Services & Challenges

The Office of Sustainability provides several user services for campus students, staff, and faculty designed to prevent waste from entering the landfill.

Bin Types

There are three standard bin types on campus: Interior Rubbermaid Bins (23-gallon Slim Jims), Public Metal Interior Bins (Clean River TMF-35), and Exterior Standard Bins (Clean River TXZ-72).

Approximately 180 23-gallon Slim Jims have been placed in office spaces and breakrooms where metal interior receptacles do not fit or are not necessary (e.g. staff areas that are not readily accessible to the general public). These bins are paired with sorting signage positioned at eye level for easy visibility.

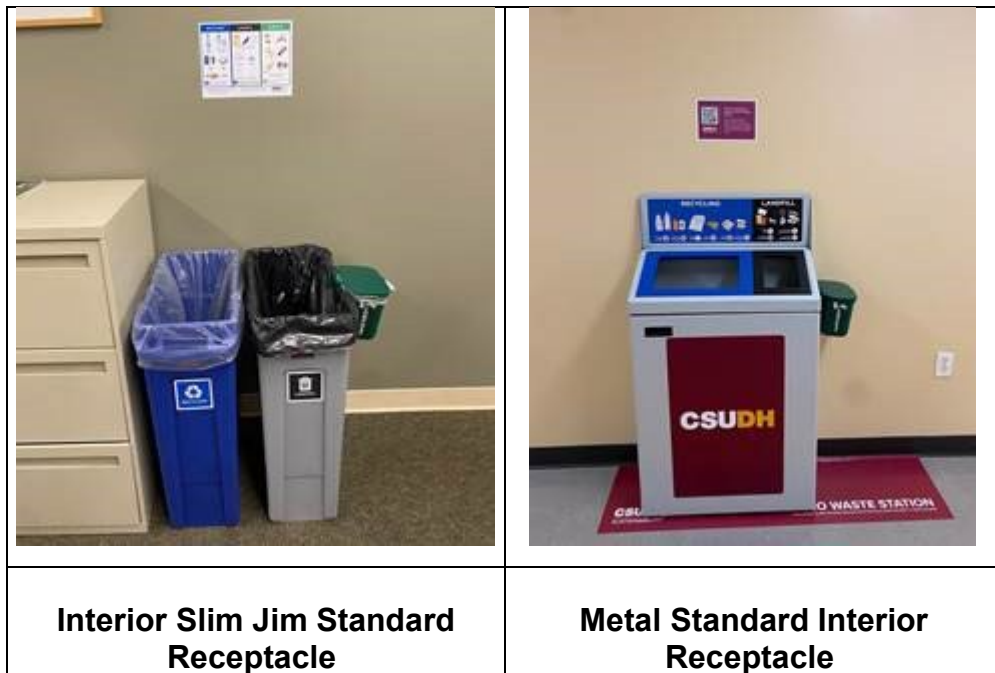
Public metal interior bins are located in building hallways and front-facing office spaces and also include sorting signage to support proper waste disposal.

Memorandum of Understanding

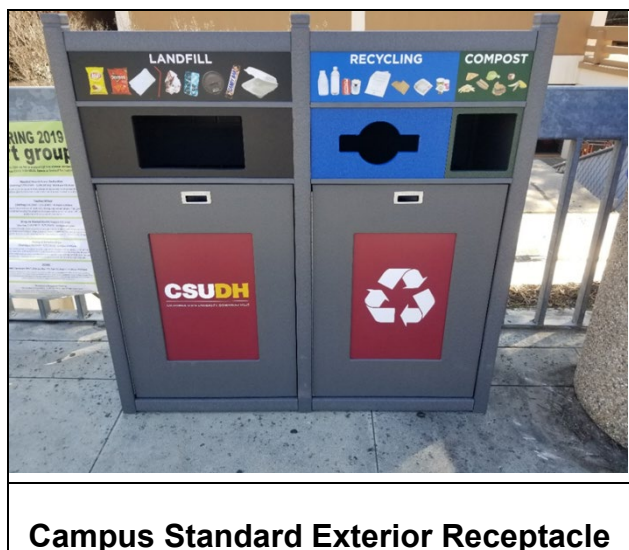
In support of California Senate Bill 1383 and the CSU system's commitment to sustainability, an agreement was established on January 12, 2022, between California State University (CSU), California State University, Dominguez Hills (CSUDH), and the California State University Employees Union (CSUEU) to guide the implementation of the Zero Waste Initiative on campus.

Under this agreement, all desk-side bins were removed and replaced with centralized waste and recycling stations to enhance waste diversion efforts and improve compliance with state-mandated organics and recycling regulations. However, CSUEU members may request a personal desk-side bin with the understanding that they are solely responsible for its maintenance, including emptying, cleaning and providing their own liners.

Additionally, the custodial staff's responsibilities were redefined under the MOU. Custodians are no longer responsible for servicing individual desk-side bins. Instead, they are responsible for maintaining centralized internal waste containers, such as the 23-gallon Slim Jim bins and public metal receptacles. This shift optimizes custodial efficiency and ensures proper waste sorting at designated collection points.



Exterior bins have been upgraded from stone trash bins to three stream trash, recycle, and compost receptacles per SB 1383. The front openings and slanted roof protect the bin from the elements, while high-visibility, eye-level graphics help maintain clean and organized waste streams. There are currently 138 bins placed on campus walkways and courtyards.



Commercial Compost Services

In alignment with Senate Bill (SB) 1383, CSUDH is committed to combating climate change by providing organic waste collection wherever trash and recycling bins are available. Currently, Republic Services only accepts food scraps in their organic waste collection. Food-soiled paper products—such as napkins, pizza boxes, and food packaging containers—are not accepted.

Beyond campus-wide organics collection, Campus Dining has partnered with the Office of Sustainability to ensure proper organic waste disposal inside the main Urban Mosaic central kitchen in the Loker Student Union and among its food court tenants, which include Subway, Panda Express, Green Olive, and Compton Vegan. To help prevent contamination, organics containers are lined with clear bags for easy monitoring.

Battery Recycling

Battery recycling is available across campus for students, faculty, and staff. Yellow 23-gallon Slim Jim bins (pictured below) are placed near every cardboard recycling station, which also serves as a collection point for ink cartridges. These battery recycling bins can be found at the following locations:

- **Welch Hall:** 3rd and 4th floors in corridors A and B
- **University Library North:** 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, and 5th floors (The 2nd-floor bin is located inside the Office of Sustainability, LIB 2514)
- **College of Education:** Main entrance
- **Social and Behavioral Sciences (SBS):** 3rd floor
- **Natural Sciences and Mathematics (NSM):** 1st floor, Corridor A, across from A146
- **Student Activities Center (SAC 3):** Athletics entrance



Yellow bin located on the 4th floor of Library

Additionally, the Office of Sustainability has partnered with staff in select buildings to offer voluntary battery drop-off locations for all campus users. Collection buckets for battery recycling are available at:

- **Welch Hall:** Visitors Information Center (2nd floor)
- **College of Education:** Mailroom (COE 1403)
- **LaCorte Hall:** Room E303
- **Innovation & Instruction (I&I) Building:** Faculty Collaboration Office (4th floor, Room 4500)

Challenges

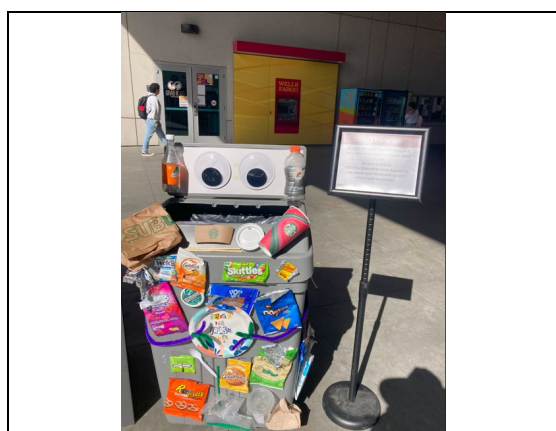
The organics containers placed in interior waste stations are side-saddle bins that attach to the side of larger waste containers. Due to their design, they are more susceptible to being accidentally removed or misplaced, leading to the disappearance of some bins in certain areas and the need for frequent replacements.

CSUDH's location in the South Bay, with convenient access to major freeways, results in a heavily commuter population with over 95% of the student body commuting to campus daily. A 2024 waste audit found that more than 40% of the waste on campus consisted of food packaging from off-campus restaurants, primarily fast-food establishments. This poses a challenge, as campus waste bin signage is designed to reflect waste commonly generated on-site, making it less effective in guiding proper disposal of off-campus packaging. To address this, improved waste education and updated signage are needed to enhance sorting accuracy and reduce contamination.

III. Current User Education: Resources & Past Events

Race to Zero Waste

Since 2022, the Office of Sustainability has participated in the Campus Race to Zero Waste—a national eight-week competition managed by the National Wildlife Federation, formerly known as RecycleMania. CSUDH achieved first place nationally by conducting waste audits in key areas, including an administrative building, the food commons, and student housing. These audits provided valuable insights into waste generation patterns and helped raise awareness about waste reduction strategies. To further engage the campus community, students, faculty, and staff were encouraged to sign weekly pledges committing to waste reduction efforts.



Terry the Trash Bin in front of Welch Hall

During March's Race to Reduce campaign, the Office of Sustainability introduces *Terry* the Traveling Trash Bin, a campus mascot designed to educate the community on proper waste sorting. Terry is strategically placed in various locations across campus to collect items that individuals may be unsure how to dispose of correctly. Since waste types vary by location, the bin is positioned in Welch Hall to assess administrative waste, Loker Student Union to capture food-related and takeout waste, and Student Housing to gather household-related waste.

At the end of each week, student volunteers, under the supervision of the Zero Waste Coordinator, conduct waste audits to analyze collection trends. The results are then shared on Instagram to educate the campus community and encourage better waste-sorting practices.

Mandatory Employee Training

To comply with SB 1383's training requirement, all CSUDH employees must complete an annual Zero Waste Training via CSU Learn, the university's online learning platform.

This training provides a comprehensive overview of waste sorting, proper disposal of organics and recyclables, and contamination reduction strategies, ensuring that employees are informed and equipped to follow waste management protocols. By making this training mandatory, CSUDH strengthens its compliance with state waste diversion laws while reinforcing a culture of sustainability on campus.

Student Pre-Orientation Training

Similarly, all incoming students must take mandatory pre-orientation in order to enroll in classes at CSUDH. The Office of Sustainability has secured a module within pre-

orientation which requires viewing of a zero waste orientation video on sorting and infrastructure as well as a sustainability survey/pledge which incorporates zero waste behaviors. This ensures zero waste training and information is shared with all new incoming students to CSUDH.

IV. Current Source Reduction Efforts

Toro Token Program

Through the Toro Green Initiative Fund—an initiative initially funded by President Parham to support student-led sustainability projects on campus, the Office of Sustainability was able to fund about 200 reusable green Ozzie containers and coins for circulation at Toro Fresh in 2018. The program has continued to be successful, and anyone who would like to opt into the program can approach Toro Fresh during business hours and request to purchase a Toro Token for \$5. The food is then served in the reusable container and charged the one-time fee of \$5 plus the cost of the food.

CSU Single Use Plastics Policy

Per CSU Policy, plastic water bottles as well as plastic bags, styrofoam take out containers, and plastic straws are not allowable on CSU campuses. These items are no longer provided in the food court and weekly Farmers Market or offered for sale.

Additionally, university purchasing prohibits the use of campus funds to purchase plastic water bottles. Campus users are encouraged to order aluminum water bottles through Aramark and/or identify alternative containers and methods for serving drinking water on campus.

Pop Up Thrift:

One key initiative supporting zero waste efforts is the Pop-Up Thrift, held on the first Tuesday of each month at the Farmers Market. This event provides students, faculty, and staff with an opportunity to exchange and repurpose clothing, office supplies, and household items, extending the life cycle of reusable goods while fostering a culture of reuse. By reducing demand for new products and diverting items from landfills, the Pop-Up Thrift plays a crucial role in advancing waste reduction efforts on campus.

Sustainable Procurement:

In addition to reuse initiatives, CSUDH has several procurement policies in place to promote sustainable purchasing practices. Departments are encouraged to prioritize durable, reusable, and environmentally preferred products, opting for items with minimal packaging, high recycled content, and sustainability certifications. These policies aim to reduce reliance on single-use plastics in office supplies, catering, and event planning by promoting alternatives such as bulk purchasing, compostable foodware, and refillable products. By embedding sustainability into purchasing decisions, CSUDH ensures that waste prevention is considered at every stage of campus operations.

Paperless Certification:

Another initiative supporting source reduction is the Paperless Certification track of the Green Office Certification program, which recognizes departments making the transition to digital filing systems, e-signatures, and electronic submissions. Departments and offices are encouraged to adopt paper-free workflows, while campus printers are set to double-sided printing by default to minimize paper waste. The use of QR codes, digital agendas, and reusable signage further reduces the need for printed materials, ensuring that unnecessary paper consumption is eliminated wherever possible.

Many departments have voluntarily adopted these tools outside of formal certification, significantly lowering CSUDH's paper consumption since pre-2020/COVID with no subsequent increase despite full return-to-work conditions.

V. Proposed Measures for Achieving Zero Waste

Improved Bin Infrastructure

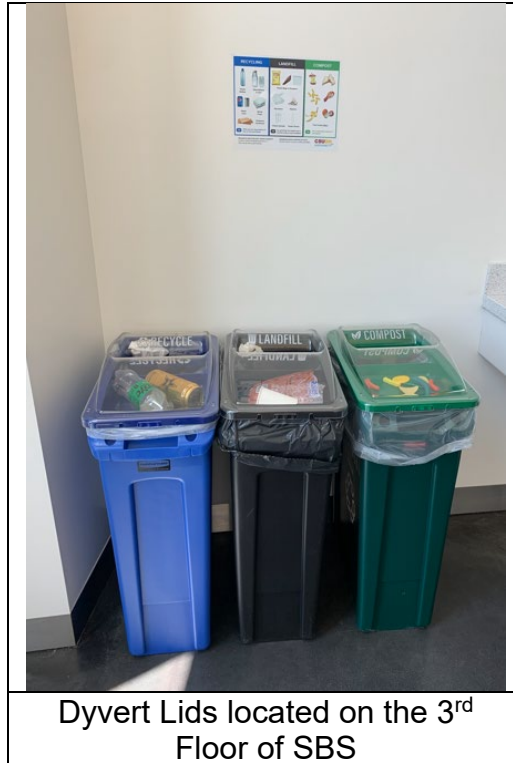
To ensure diversion rates continue to increase, CSUDH will be strategically improving bin infrastructure as follows.

Food Soiled Paper Compost Expansion: In order to increase diversion rates, CSUDH will be taking advantage of increased commercial hauler capacity to add services that will enable the composting of food soiled paper (a large contributor to its waste). In line with this future service expansion, CSUDH will have to increase compost bin sizes to accommodate the greater volume of compostable materials.

This will require retrofitting of existing campus standard bins to add larger compost bins, modifying zero waste stations to add additional receptacles, and/or reducing the size of the other streams (recycling and/or landfill). This rollout will begin once hauling services for this material have been confirmed (anticipated fiscal year 2025-26).

Dyvert Lid Expansion: As part of CSUDH's commitment to improving waste diversion and streamlining proper waste sorting, Dyvert lids have been piloted on select waste bins across campus. These specially designed lids feature visual and structural cues that help users quickly identify the correct disposal stream, reducing contamination in recycling, landfill, and organics bins.

To evaluate their effectiveness across different campus demographics, Dyvert lids have been installed in the Social and Behavioral Sciences (SBS) building and the Leo F. Cain Library (LCH) –two locations that serve a diverse mix of students, faculty, and staff. This strategic placement allows the Office of Sustainability to assess how different campus groups interact with the bins and determine the impact of enhanced signage and restrictive openings on overall waste-sorting behaviors. Data collected from these pilot locations will inform future decisions on expanding Dyvert lid installations to further support CSUDH's zero waste goals.



Dyvert Lids located on the 3rd
Floor of SBS

Employee & User Training/Services

To ensure that faculty and staff actively contribute to CSUDH's zero waste and sustainability goals, the university will continue to offer a range of training programs and resources designed to educate, engage, and empower the campus community. These initiatives provide essential knowledge on waste reduction, proper disposal practices, and sustainable resource management. In addition to the current services already offered, CSUDH will be expanding those services and/or incorporating new services to further its zero waste efforts as follows.

Green Office Program: A key component of employee training is the Green Office Program, which supports sustainable workplace practices across campus departments. This voluntary program provides offices with a Green Office Checklist that the Zero Waste Coordinator reviews during a walkthrough of an office or department, allowing them to assess their current sustainability efforts in areas such as waste reduction, energy and water conservation, and sustainable purchasing. Once the walkthrough is complete, participants receive a Green Office Certification, along with recognition and a prize. Certification must be renewed once every two years, ensuring that offices remain engaged and continuously improve their sustainability efforts. The program also includes sub-programs like Green Labs, which focuses on sustainable practices in research and teaching labs, and Green Events, which helps campus organizations and departments implement zero waste strategies for meetings, workshops, and large-scale gatherings.

To support continued zero waste efforts, this program will continue to expand to more departments and an ongoing basis to further sustainable behaviors related to zero waste.

Toro Surplus App: CSUDH started a contract with iWasteNot Services in the 2024-25 fiscal year to develop and launch a campus-wide reuse platform that facilitates the exchange of surplus office supplies, furniture, and other reusable materials among faculty and staff. This initiative reduces waste by diverting items from landfills and encouraging resource-sharing across departments. Employees can post available items or request needed supplies, supporting a circular economy within the university. Reviewing the app listings for items prior to purchasing new items will be a requirement under the campus purchasing protocol once the app is launched.

Recyclopedia: To further support waste diversion efforts, CSUDH will implement Recyclopedia, an interactive waste-sorting tool that provides guidance on proper disposal methods for various materials. This resource will help students, faculty, and staff make informed decisions about recycling, composting, and waste reduction, ensuring that items are diverted correctly and contamination in waste streams is minimized. Recyclopedia will be integrated into campus waste reduction initiatives and promoted through educational campaigns, workshops, and signage to enhance sustainability practices across the university. Additionally, Recyclopedia will be available on our website for easy access to waste sorting information.

OSCAR AI: To further improve waste tracking and management, CSUDH's dining provider Aramark has also begun a two-year pilot OSCAR Technologies, an AI-powered waste recognition and auditing system. These smart waste stations analyze disposal behaviors in real time, providing data on sorting accuracy, contamination levels, and waste diversion rates. Locations include the LSU, Library, and I&I building. By leveraging this technology, CSUDH can identify areas for improvement, enhance waste education, and refine its zero waste strategies.

Through these combined efforts, CSUDH plans to continue to make significant strides toward its zero waste goals. By prioritizing reuse, sustainable purchasing, and digital solutions, the university is creating a more environmentally responsible campus while reducing its overall waste footprint.

Conclusion

Final Strategy: Reduce & Reuse

A core pillar of CSUDH's Zero Waste vision is prioritizing reduction and reuse to minimize overall waste generation. By shifting away from single-use materials and encouraging durable, reusable alternatives, the campus can significantly lower its environmental footprint while fostering a culture of sustainability.

Currently campus food options are limited to vending machines and a central food court at the Loker Student Union. However, the campus is already in the midst of construction for its first-ever dining hall for Housing residents, slated to open in 2026 which will drastically change the existing campus waste stream. As part of ongoing zero waste efforts, the Office of Sustainability will continue to partner with Aramark to ensure the new dining hall will fully enforce reduction and reuse strategies by eliminating single-use plastics, incorporating reusable dishware, and expanding composting efforts. Through these measures, the aim will be to ensure this new dining facility will serve as a model for sustainable operations on campus.

Additionally, the university will continue to strengthen existing programs such as refill stations, reusable to-go container systems, and partnerships with vendors to prioritize waste-free packaging. Sustainable procurement practices will be encouraged across departments to reduce unnecessary purchases and prioritize reusable office supplies, furniture, and equipment.

Event waste reduction will also be a key focus, with guidelines ensuring that campus events utilize durable dishware, digital materials, and waste-free promotional items. To support long-term success, the university will expand education and outreach efforts to instill a reuse-first mindset among students, faculty, and staff. By embedding reuse and reduction strategies into campus operations, CSUDH will make meaningful progress toward achieving its zero waste goals.

With a combination of the above-proposed measures, and adequate administrative and financial support from the campus, CSUDH could achieve a 90%+ diversion rate from landfill streams well before 2045. Based on a five-year action plan, we propose achieving the following diversion rates in order to achieve an 80% diversion from landfill streams by 2040, and continued progress to 90% diversion by 2045.

Calendar Year	Target Diversion Rate	Strategy
2025-2030	65%	Procure hauler capable of processing food-soiled paper for composting
2030-2035	70%	Full-scale implementation of zero waste pilot projects & aggressive scale down in landfill waste services
2035-2040	80%	Annual employee and student recycling training & continued zero waste education initiatives
2045 and beyond	90%	Full integration and re-emphasis on all measures

Contact Information



Office of Sustainability, Facilities Services
LIB 2514
California State University Dominguez Hills
1000 East Victoria Street
Carson, CA 90747
Tel: (310) 243-2303
sustainability@csudh.edu

Additional questions? Contact Zero Waste Coordinator Scarlett Zamora at szamora24@csudh.edu or (310) 243-2161

Information on the Office of Sustainability

California State University, Dominguez Hills and other state institutions are major consumers of energy and natural resources. The university has a responsibility to be a wise steward of scarce resources by reducing the use of non-renewable resources, increasing energy efficiency, and as part of the larger CSU system, promoting continued economic and ecological viability in California. CSU Dominguez Hills is on the cutting edge of sustainability efforts by an urban campus, and is actively providing leadership in engaging faculty, students and staff in on-campus sustainability efforts. We are looking at ways to increase partnerships and funding to support the educational, research, and public service missions of the university as they relate to sustainability.

