

# COMPOSTING IN HARTFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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COMMUNITY RESEARCH FELLOWS 2023



## BACKGROUND

- By 2024, CT aims to divert 60% of its waste (DEEP, 2016). Composting can effectively divert waste.
- A portion of funds spent on trash services for HPS could potentially be used for composting.
- There is a lack of sustainable awareness and education programs

## RESEARCH QUESTION

What would be the costs, benefits, as well as financial barriers to developing a municipally-sponsored composting program for Hartford Public Schools?



## COMPOSTING IN CT

- CT DEEP funded a manual to help schools reduce waste (2002)
- CT DEEP provides resources for individuals interested in composting at home and work places
- sSB-1046 bill:
  - ensures districts with solid waste  $\geq$  26 tons compost & recycle properly in FY 24'
  - CT DEEP administration of pilot program
  - SDE required to develop guidelines for implantation

## METHODS

Developed action plan with Hartford City Councilors

Examined neighboring school districts that have integrated composting

Interviewed sustainability coordinators and food service workers

Analyzed data and formulated recommendations

## TAKE AWAY MESSAGE

“It helps to have some kind of motivation and that motivation might be somebody promoting it, encouraging it.”  
-- Virginia Walton

## COST AND SAVINGS ESTIMATES

factors include: number of students, type of school, number of meals, and number of bin locations

**\$110,000**

the approximate annual cost of composting for all 17,000 students at 39 Hartford Public Schools via Blue Earth

**\$670,000**

the approximate annual cost of trash for all 17,000 students at 39 Hartford Public Schools

## KEY THEMES FROM INTERVIEWS

1. **Mansfield**
  - a. Sustainability educator seminars
  - b. Compost supervisor
  - c. Reusable tray
2. **Hartford**
  - a. Student GREEN clubs
  - b. Dress down revenue profit use for compost costs
  - c. Intended Blue Earth partnership
3. **Blue Earth**
  - a. Cost estimate analysis
  - b. Transport & Handling
  - c. Programming guide set



## POTENTIAL AVENUES TO SUPPORT COMPOSTING IN SCHOOLS

- Community support and outside assistance
- Student sustainability clubs
- Composting leadership positions
- More awareness about school-based sustainable education and programming

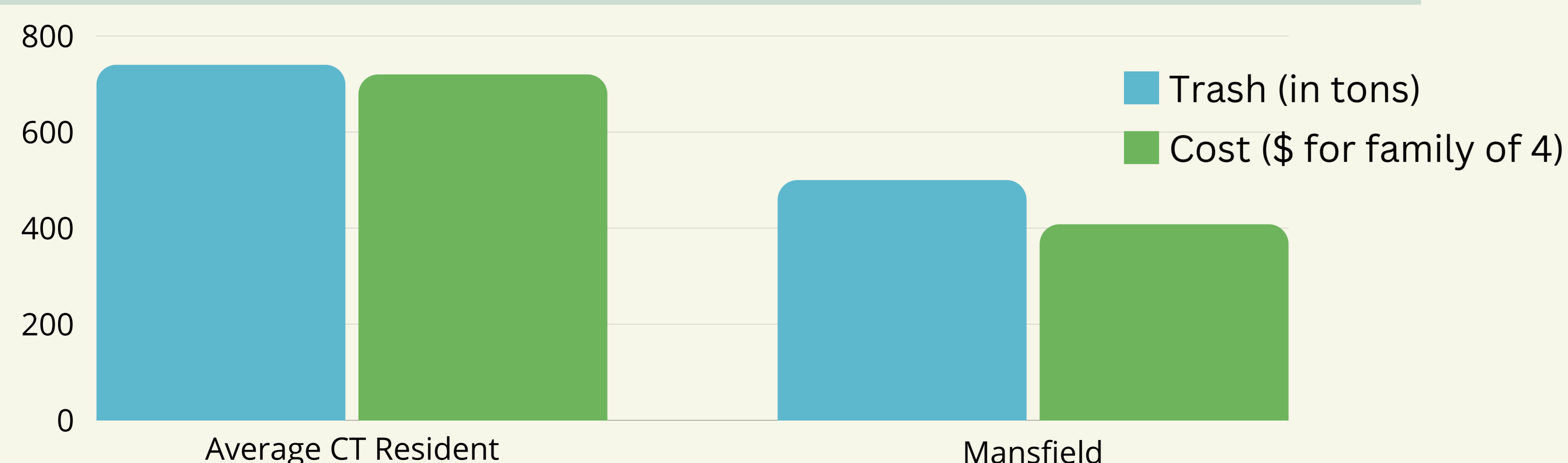
## POTENTIAL COSTS IDENTIFIED IN RESEARCH AND INTERVIEWS

- Cost of transporting
- Handling of compost
- Bin, bags and compost resources

## POTENTIAL BENEFITS

- Cost effective progress
- Sustainable education
- Improvements to urban living

## POTENTIAL COST SAVINGS IN A COMMUNITY THAT COMPOSTS



## LIMITATIONS & FUTURE DIRECTIONS

### Limitations:

- Lack of available information; approximations made for much of the study
- Unavailability of direct sources of statistical information for composting

### Future Direction:

- State funding requests and outside donor ship i.e CT Deep
- Community investment i.e dress down day, fundraising revenue collection
- Partnership with Blue Earth for programming, transport and handling