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Composting and Donation Program Case Study

Boston Public Market Boston, MA

The Boston Public Market (BPM) is the first indoor, all local, year round marketplace in the nation. Developed and operated by the Boston Public Market Association, the facility opened on July 30, 2015 and is located above the previously vacant Haymarket MBTA station. The market serves as a retail space for 40 small, permanent vendors and approximately 20 seasonal vendors from across New England. BPM operates with the mission to combat hunger and reduce food waste, and accepts Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits to provide everyone access to fresh, local produce, meat, seafood, bread, and other specialty foods. The market is also home to a 3,200 square foot kitchen that serves as a space for community events, including cooking demos, educational lectures, and family activities.

At-a-Glance:

- *The Boston Public Market opened in July 2015 and operates with the mission to provide local and healthy food to customers of all income levels.*
- *The market partners with Lovin' Spoonfuls, Food For Free, and The Greater Boston Food Bank to donate surplus food.*
- *In the first 8 months of operation, the Market donated enough food for over 17,000 meals and composted more than 14 tons of food scraps.*

Program Development

When planning and designing the facility, the Boston Public Market Association knew that they wanted to incorporate waste diversion.

A BPM intern suggested that staff contact the RecyclingWorks technical assistance hotline for information about how they, as a new institution, could set up food rescue, food scrap collection, and recycling programs. With the direction provided in a ten minute call to the hotline, BPM got the information they needed to get started.



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BPM has formed relationships with Lovin' Spoonfuls, Food for Free, and The Greater Boston Food Bank, which collect and distribute surplus food from BPM vendors to pantries and shelters. The market also works with Cooperative Energy Recycling & Organics (CERO) to divert food scraps for composting. CERO is a Boston based, worker-owned co-op that began food scraps collection in conjunction with the Massachusetts Commercial Organics Material Disposal Ban instituted in October 2014.



Program Evaluation

The waste diversion systems put into place at the market have been very successful. In the first eight months, BPM donated 21,000 pounds of food (an average of over 2,500 pounds per month); these donations provided enough food for over 17,000 meals! In addition, BPM has been composting an average of 3,500 pounds of food scraps per month.

Donating and composting are regular practices among vendors at the market. According to Danny Cambria from Red's Best Seafood, a BPM vendor specializing in locally harvested seafood, "All our extra rolls and everything else goes back to the donation shelf and is distributed among local homeless shelters and food banks."

Lorenzo Macaluso, Green Business Director at the Center for EcoTechnology states, "Boston Public Market is a great example of how just a little bit of help can point you in the right direction to setting up a great diversion program."

