



URBAN GREEN LAB™

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

ADOPT-A-CAFETERIA

Food Waste Composting Collection Services

Urban Green Lab Adopt-A-Cafeteria Program, in partnership with Metro Nashville Public Schools

Issue Date: September 15, 2026 **Proposals Due:** October 2, 2026, 11:59 p.m. Central Time

1. Introduction and Background

Urban Green Lab (UGL) is a Nashville-based sustainability education nonprofit. Through its Adopt-A-Cafeteria program, UGL will partner with Metro Nashville Public Schools (MNPS) to bring cafeteria food waste composting to Nashville schools, supported by a combination of Metro Nashville Waste funding, corporate sponsorships, and potential city budget allocations.

UGL serves as vendor of record to MNPS for this program and will subcontract compost collection services to the provider selected through this RFP.

Initial program scope is anticipated at approximately 9–11 school sites, with the possibility of expansion in future years subject to available funding. Proposers should note that funding availability may affect the final number of sites awarded under this contract.

2. Project Objectives

Adopt-A-Cafeteria diverts food waste from Nashville school cafeterias through composting, funded through a mix of public support and corporate sponsorship. The program pairs measurable environmental impact, tracked in pounds of waste diverted and equivalent greenhouse gas reductions, with a hands-on sustainability lesson for the students eating lunch there every day. Beyond the pilot, the goal is a durable model that can scale across MNPS as funding grows. This program lives at the intersection of two major national campaigns led by the World Wildlife Fund and the EPA: Recycling Education and Outreach (REO) and Ending Wasted Food in a Generation (EWF).

3. Scope of Services

- Cafeteria food waste collection at each participating school site.
- Minimum pickup frequency of twice weekly per site, consistent with the prior pilot program. Please indicate whether alternate frequencies would affect pricing.
- Provision of collection bins/containers appropriate for K-12 cafeteria settings.

- Contamination management protocols, including your approach to rejected or contaminated loads.
- Whether your composting process accepts liquid food waste (e.g., milk); if not, your proposed alternative handling approach.
- Training support for cafeteria and custodial staff at each site.
- Continuity or not of service during school holidays and summer sessions, as applicable.
- Identification of the composting facility(ies) that will process collected material, including relevant permits or certifications.
- Availability of a return-of-product option (finished compost) to participating schools, including any associated cost, minimum order quantities, and delivery logistics.
- Metrics and reporting: regular reporting of pounds of food waste collected per site, and an estimate of greenhouse gas emissions avoided, including a description of your calculation methodology. Additional metrics may be requested during the scoping of this project.

4. Contract Term

- Initial term of up to five (5) years, consistent with MNPS's stated procurement preference.
- Annual continuation contingent on available program funding. The contract will include a non-appropriation clause permitting UGL/MNPS to terminate or reduce scope if funding is not renewed in a given year.
- Early termination for cause, and for convenience with 30 days' written notice.
- Please indicate any pricing implications tied to contract term length or early termination.

Pricing under any resulting contract is subject to Section 7, including the possibility that an applicable Metro Nashville negotiated rate supersedes the rate quoted in this proposal.

5. Insurance and Legal Requirements

The selected vendor must carry and provide certificates of insurance for the following, naming Urban Green Lab and Metro Nashville Public Schools as additional insureds:

- Commercial General Liability: minimum \$1,000,000 per occurrence / \$3,000,000 aggregate.
- Automobile Liability, covering all vehicles operating on school property: minimum \$1,000,000.
- Workers' Compensation: statutory limits under Tennessee law.
- Sexual Abuse and Molestation Liability: minimum \$1,000,000 per occurrence / \$3,000,000 aggregate.

Additional requirements:

- Indemnification: Proposer must agree to indemnify and hold harmless UGL and MNPS from claims arising out of proposer's performance under the contract.
 - Note that MNPS cannot provide indemnification to the vendor as it is a public entity.
- Background checks: All proposer staff and subcontractors who will access school property must be able to pass a background check consistent with MNPS's vendor/visitor screening policy prior to beginning work.
- Compliance with all applicable federal, state, and local procurement and safety requirements.
- Minority and Women-Owned Business Enterprise (MWBE) Participation: This program is not currently subject to Metro's MWBE participation requirements.
- If federal funds become a funding source for this program, proposer must certify it is not debarred, suspended, or otherwise excluded from participation in federal programs, and disclose any conflicts of interest with UGL, and/or MNPS, and Metro Nashville Government staff involved in this procurement.

6. Vendor Qualifications

Proposers must submit:

- Company overview and years in business.
- Description of experience providing composting collection services to K-12 schools or comparable institutional settings.
- Disclosure of any existing negotiated rate agreement or contract with Metro Nashville Government (including Metro Nashville Waste Services, Metro Nashville Public Schools, or any other Metro department) for composting or organic waste collection services, including the applicable rate(s), if any.
- At least three (3) professional references with contact information, ideally from institutional or school-based clients.
- Description of the composting facility/end destination for collected material, including relevant permits or certifications.
- Description of contingency or backup plans for service interruptions.

7. Pricing Table

Because the final number of school sites has not been confirmed, applicants must clearly state pricing to reflect potential economies of scale. Please complete or provide the table below.

Number of School Sites	Price per Site per Month (2x weekly pick-ups)
1 – 5	\$ _____
6 – 10	\$ _____
11 – 15	\$ _____
16 – 20	\$ _____
21+	\$ _____

In addition, please address:

- Any one-time setup or bin delivery fees, itemized.
- Whether pricing varies based on pickup frequency (e.g., 2x vs. 3x weekly).
- How long quoted pricing will be honored (minimum 90 days from submission is requested).
- If pricing is contingent on solids only, or if liquids are included.
- Your proposed annual pricing adjustment methodology for a multi-year term.
- Proposed invoicing frequency and payment terms. UGL requests quarterly invoicing, with payment due net 30 from UGL's receipt of invoice, to align vendor payment with UGL's own collection timeline from Metro Nashville and corporate sponsors.
- Any late payment fees, interest, or other penalties that would apply if UGL's payment falls outside the agreed terms.

Note: UGL is partnering with Metro Nashville Public Schools on this program. If the selected Proposer holds an existing negotiated rate agreement with Metro Nashville Government, Metro may require UGL to utilize that negotiated rate for services under this contract in lieu of the pricing submitted in response to this RFP. Proposers should disclose any such rate above so UGL and MNPS can evaluate total program cost accurately. UGL reserves the right to apply an applicable Metro-negotiated rate if required as a condition of this partnership.

8. Proposal Submission Requirements

- Proposals must be submitted in writing (PDF or Word format) via email to Noah Spiegel, Senior Director of Operations via email management@urbangreenlab.org or mail no later than Friday, September 18, 2026 at 5:00 p.m. Central Time.
- Late or incomplete proposals will not be considered.
- Proposals should follow the section order of this RFP, with headers corresponding to each numbered requirement above.

- Direct questions to Noah Spiegel at management@urbangreenlab.org. Questions and answers will be shared with all invited proposers.

9. Evaluation Criteria

Proposals will be reviewed and scored by the evaluation committee according to the following weighted criteria:

Evaluation Criteria	Weight
Qualifications & Experience (incl. references)	25%
Pricing & Value (incl. scale efficiencies)	25%
Scope & Operational Approach (contamination handling, liquids, contingency planning)	20%
Insurance, Compliance & Risk Management	15%
Metrics & Reporting Capability	15%

Where a Proposer holds an existing Metro Nashville negotiated rate that Metro requires UGL to use, the Pricing & Value score will be based on that negotiated rate rather than the rate submitted in the proposal.

UGL and MNPS reserve the right to request interviews, site visits, or additional information from any proposer prior to final selection, and reserve the right to reject any and all proposals and to award the contract in the manner determined to be in the best interest of the program.

10. Timeline

- RFP Issued: September 8, 2026
- Deadline for Questions: September 30, 2026
- Proposals Due: October 2, 2026, 11:59PM Central Time
- Vendor Selection: October 16, 2026
- Contract Start: October 30, 2026

11. Contact

Noah Spiegel
Senior Director of Operations
Urban Green Lab

management@urbangreenlab.org

Proposals submitted in connection with this RFP are made in partnership with Metro Nashville Public Schools, a public entity, and may be subject to disclosure under the Tennessee Public Records Act. Proposers should clearly mark any information they consider proprietary, confidential, or a trade secret. UGL and MNPS cannot guarantee such information will be exempt from disclosure, but will make reasonable efforts to identify it as such if a records request is received.

Please email your proposal to Noah Spiegel, Senior Director of Operations, at management@urbangreenlab.org. **Combine all documents into one PDF file with your company name as the file name and write AAC Proposal in the subject line of the email.**

12. Appendices

Appendix 1: Pricing Table

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6 – 10	\$ _____
11 – 15	\$ _____
16 – 20	\$ _____
21+	\$ _____