

City of Phoenix

Student Council Sustainability Officer (SCSO)

2023 – 2024 Sustainability Challenge Guidelines

Celebrating 10 years of the SCSO Program!

ABOUT THE PROGRAM:

The City of Phoenix City Manager's Office of Sustainability (COP), Phoenix Union High School District (PXU), and the Arizona State University Sustainable Cities Network (SCN) are pleased to present the 2023 - 2024 Sustainability Challenge: **Lettuce Reduce Waste**. This year marks the 10-year anniversary of the SCSO Initiative, and the COP will be challenging participating Phoenix Union High Schools to help educate their communities and peers about waste mitigation and reduction through various promotions and sustainability-related activities. High school is a period where students can be heavily influenced by the events and themes around them. Creating meaningful and engaging activities for the student body and their communities can invoke more significant change and spread awareness of issues on a larger scale.

The COP Sustainability Challenge is an endeavor that focuses on building a culture of sustainability where communities are educated and united under an important cause. This year's theme, **Lettuce Reduce Waste**, will focus on waste mitigation, from composting food waste to reducing, reusing, and recycling. Throughout this challenge, there will be a focus on sustainable practices and ways to help communities become more aware of their actions that have intertwined social, environmental, and economic implications.

This challenge intersects with the City of Phoenix's goal to reach zero waste by 2050, through participation in the "Circular Economy" system. Since 2013, the COP Public Works Department has been working towards the zero-waste goal with sustainability initiatives such as Reimagine Phoenix. For more information about the city's zero waste efforts, visit the [Phoenix Public Works Education and Outreach](#) page.

WHAT IS SUSTAINABILITY AND ZERO WASTE?

Sustainability is pursuing a healthy environment, economic prosperity, and social justice to ensure the well-being of present and future generations. Sustainable practices have helped us preserve diverse life and ecosystems and are fundamental for our society. Sustainability is an everyday practice, a lifestyle, and a pledge to grow and change.

Waste Mitigation is a strategy to minimize the resources needed for everyday consumption and alleviate negative impacts on the environment.

Circular Economy is a system where materials never become waste and nature is regenerated. (Ellen MacArthur Foundation) It reflects a shift away from exploiting the environment to one that works with nature to replenish it in a sustainable manner.

Zero Waste is achieved by rethinking waste from an unusable item to a resource. It is achieved at the approximate 90% waste diversion of materials from the landfill through but not limited to recycling, composting, and donating everyday items.

ELIGIBILITY:

To Participate, PXU Schools:

- Must have an Elected/Identified Sustainability Officer through Student Council or a student strongly identifying with sustainability.

2023 CHALLENGE DATES:

- Monday, January 29th – Friday, March 1st
(NOTE: Challenge Guidelines and other marketing materials will be released SUNDAY, 1/28/24, at 11:59 pm, Phoenix, AZ time)

CHALLENGE DESCRIPTION & GUIDELINES:

The 2023 – 2024 Sustainability Challenge will occur over five weeks, from **January 29th, 2024, to March 1st, 2024.** The challenge placings will be announced weekly and the finalists by the end of March. Winners will be acknowledged at an event planned by the COP. The goal of this challenge is to help educate and bring awareness of current waste mitigation challenges, efforts, and goals.

Starting January 29th:

- Schools will be divided into two groups and compete within their respective groups based on size of student population - large and small schools:
 - **Large** schools are defined as having **more than** 1000 students.
 - **Small** schools are defined as having **less than** 1000 students.
- Scoring will be based on a point system. There will be at least two ways to earn points each week – participating in Surveys and Weekly Activities. The more students partake, the more points earned. **(See “Scoring” Section)**
- Weekly posters will have a QR code linked to a **Google Forms Survey** related to the theme/activity:
 - The City of Phoenix will provide the QR codes weekly and the poster for Week One only.

- The number of responses to the survey will be added up for points. Submissions will be accepted up until 11:59 PM on the Friday of that week's activity. **Only one response per student will be counted towards earning points.**
- Participating in weekly activities and submitting proof **also** earns points. *Submissions may include photos, videos, and project outcomes (i.e., designs, plans, etc.).*
 - With submissions, **include your school's name.**
 - Please submit to @lettucereducewastephx on Instagram or to Michael Marting at michael.marting@phoenix.gov

DESCRIPTIONS OF “5” WEEKLY THEMES ARE AS FOLLOWS:

Week One: Weigh the Waste

January 29th – February 2nd

Nearly a quarter of waste generated in the United States in 2018 was food waste, and only a fraction of that was composted. In landfills, food waste breaking down produces methane, a greenhouse gas more potent than carbon dioxide, but composting food waste avoids this and turns the waste into a valuable resource for growing food all over again. This week, students will be asked during lunch to measure their food wasted, and throughout the week, Sustainability Officers will be working to educate their peers on how to reduce the amount of food waste produced. ***Creating the posters, participating in the survey, posting, submitting requested materials, or submitting photos is how to earn points. **Include your school’s name***** (See “Scoring” Section)

Activity: Food waste collection during lunch for that week, Monday – Friday. Sustainability Officers will in charge of getting students to dump their uneaten food in a different bin to be weighed and keeping track of the number of students who participate.

- It is okay if you don’t get everyone, but the more students the better
- Submit the total weight of the food waste **at the end of lunch** after the total is calculated.
- You will need:
 - Separate bin for the food waste collection.
 - A way to weigh the food waste.
 - A way to keep track of the number of students who participated.
- Tip: Using a 5-gallon bucket to collect the food will help it from getting too heavy to be picked up and weighed. You may have to weigh it multiple times.

Goal of the Activity: To see how much can be reduced within that week. Who *reduced* their waste the most? Who produced *the least* all weeks?

Resources:

- [Composting and methane production – Western Australia | Agriculture and Food](#) – From Western Australian Government, but great explanation of why composting is important.
- [Excess Food Opportunities Map Experience Builder, \(arcgis.com\)](#) – Great interactive map of the entire country, play around and see what you learn.
- [Public Works Recycle+](#)
- [Public Works Composting in Phoenix](#)

Fun fact: The “greenest” Super Bowl to date happened in Phoenix, AZ in 2023! With a waste diversion rate of 92%; 81% of waste was recycled, and 11% was composted.

Week Two: Trim the Waste

February 5th – February 9th

The first step to reducing waste is to reduce what we consume, the less single-use items we buy, the less we will throw away. Being mindful of what, where, and how you shop can have a huge impact. For example, bringing your own cup on a coffee run keeps you from getting a single-use paper or Styrofoam cup (which isn't even recyclable), and you *might* get a discount! This week is all about learning how to make waste-reducing choices via scavenger hunts.

Creating the posters, participating in the survey, posting, submitting requested materials, or submitting photos is how to earn points. **Include your school's name** (See "Scoring" Section)

Activity One – "Caught Green Handed": Happening in school, every day the goal is to see who is using reusable items such as but not limited to:

- Reusable water bottles
- Metal straws
- Coffee cups/tumblers
- Beeswax wraps
- Reusable food containers (Tupperware, Pyrex, reusable sandwich bags)
- Other reusables

For this in school activity, anyone can send/submit/post, make sure to tag the Instagram and use [#LettuceReduceWaste2024](#) for the challenge pictures of their friend and themselves using reusable items. Try to get as many different items as possible. Daily limit of 10 submissions per school.

Activity Two – "Green Business Scavenger Hunt": Happening outside of school, students are challenged to go into their communities and find "green" businesses in the valley. In "resources" you will find the checklist, feel free to use this to double check, or to see if your favorite place is sustainable.

- Take a picture of the business, to prove you were there taking a selfie or hold up your water bottle or something in the picture.
- If you use the checklist, submit that with your photo.
- ****Bioscience High School is a certified green business but will not count for submission! ****

Goal for the Activities: To get students thinking about how, where, and what they shop for and how they can make more sustainable choices.

Resources:

- [Reducing Waste: What You Can Do | US EPA](#)
- [Public Works Green Business Program](#) – COP green business program site, has a map of where all the certified green businesses are.
- [Green Business Leader Checklist](#) – COP green business program checklist
- Use Google to search for a list of everyday reusable items.

Fun fact: Waste generated *per person* increased 83% from 1960 to 2018.

Week Three: Second Life Sustainability

February 12th – February 16th

The second step in reducing waste is to reuse items instead of throwing them away. Recycling isn't the only thing you can do with old, out of style, no-longer-of-use-to-you things, they can be reused, upcycled, or refurbished, and if not by you, then someone else! With a clothing drive activity and an upcycling challenge, this week students will be exploring the possibilities of giving their things a second life. ***Creating the posters, participating in the survey, posting, submitting requested materials, or submitting photos is how to earn points. **Include your school's name** (See "Scoring" Section)***

Activity One – School-wide Clothing Drive: Instead of throwing clothes away, bring them to school to be donated instead. Working with The Welcome to America Project (WTAP), schools will host a week-long clothing drive and encourage students to bring in their clothes that aren't their style anymore, don't fit, or its just time to move it along! This local non-profit does clothing closets and provides clothing to refugee families in need, as well as other services provided by donations!

- Points will be awarded for donations collected, **measured by weight in pounds**.
- The school with the most donations wins for this activity.
- WTAP will come and pick up the donations at the end of the week.

Activity Two – Upcycle Challenge: Could be clothes, could be furniture, could be creating something from "trash". Upcycling is a great way to give something old and outdated new life, it could be repairs with some updates, painting so it fits your style, or creating from "nothing".

- **MUST include before and after pictures to get any credit.**
- Take this opportunity to be creative! Upcycling is a creative and sustainable hobby to have.

Goal for the activity: To start thinking before something gets thrown away, "could I use this again?" or "could someone else use this?"

Valentine's Day Bonus: If you are doing something for your loved ones for Valentine's Day, make it sustainable! Take a picture and submit it on **February 14th** to earn your school extra points. ***Must include your school's name.***

Resources:

- [28 Best Places to Donate Your Used Stuff](#)
- [Recycling and Salvage – Goodwill](#)
- [Needed Items – The Welcome to America Project](#) – Local non-profit in Tempe.
- [What Is Upcycling — and How Does It Benefit the Planet?](#) – Use Pinterest or a Google
- [Reducing and Reusing Basics | US EPA](#)

Fun fact: In 2018, 11 million tons of textiles were sent to landfill and only 2.5 million tons were recycled.

Week Four: One Bin at a Time

February 20th – February 23rd

The last step to reducing waste is recycling, turning waste into a reusable material. Despite being an environmental issue of interest for many years, recycling is still a challenge; only 23.6% of waste got recycled in 2018! However, Phoenix has made steady progress from its 16% waste diversion in 2013 to approximately 35% today. Students will be competing within their school, and the district to see which school and which grade knows the most. ***Creating the posters, participating in the survey, posting, submitting requested materials, or submitting photos is how to earn points. **Include your school's name** (See “Scoring” Section)***

****Monday, February 19th, is President’s Day. There is no school, but still an opportunity to earn points! Watch the Instagram! ****

Activity: Every day during lunch or during a class-wide free period, the Sustainability Officers will host a recycling relay race. Sustainability Officers should keep track of the number of students participating, teams, and the times.

- 4 teams of 4-5 students (don’t force students to do it), they can come up with a name.
- 1 bag of “trash” (all clean!!); 3 bins to sort into (trash, recycling, and compost) per team. The bins are 47 feet (half a basketball court) away from the starting line.
- One at a time, a student will grab **one item** from the “trash bag” and run it down to the correct bin and runs back. Once that student crosses back over the start line, the next can go.
- **The first team to finish sorting the whole trash bag and get the most correct wins!**

If there is a lot of students who want to participate, it is okay to do multiple rounds. On Friday, add the additional “Friday items” to the trash bag. **Sustainability Officers only need to submit the winning team’s time each day.**

Days of Competition:

Tuesday 2/20 – Freshman

Thursday 2/22 – Juniors

Wednesday 2/21 – Sophomores

Friday 2/23 – Seniors

Goal for the Activity: Friendly competition to see who has the best recycling sorting knowledge within the different grade levels. Help students understand why proper sorting of waste is important.

Resources:

- [How Do I Recycle?: Common Recyclables | US EPA](#)
- [Recycling Center Search & Recycling Guides - Earth911](#)
- [Public Works Appliance Recycling \(phoenix.gov\)](#)
- [Public Works Household Hazardous Waste and Electronics \(phoenix.gov\)](#)

Fun Fact: Contamination (prohibited materials, such as plastic bags and hazardous waste) is one of the biggest hurdles to increasing the recycling rate.

Week Five: Global Green Wave

February 26th – March 1st

Think global, act local

Sometimes issues seem too big for us to have an impact, but if we think global and act local, we could have a huge impact, especially for our communities. Throughout the challenge, students have been learning about various ways to reduce waste; the activity for this week is to create a short video sharing what you want your school, community, or even state to know. Students are the future, and sharing the importance of waste reduction and mitigation will have a positive impact on our communities. ***Creating the posters, participating in the survey, posting, submitting requested materials, or submitting photos is how to earn points. **Include your school's name** (See "Scoring" Section)***

Activity: Create a 1-to-2-minute video about a zero-waste topic of your choice. There can be multiple submissions for schools, **but make sure the school is identified with every submission.**

- **MUST** be appropriate.
- Can be a PSA, infomercial, trailer-style, etc.
- It can be funny, serious, creative, or anything if it is appropriate and has a clear message.
- **Tip:** Using Instagram Reels or Canva can make you video to share, post, or send over Instagram. Using other video creators/editor applications may need to be submitted through email to michael.marting@phoenix.gov

Goal for the Activity: To encourage students to have a positive impact on their communities and share what they want other to know about zero-waste.

Fun fact: Hundreds of major cities around the world have reached zero waste or instituted a plan to achieve zero waste in the near future. Let's get Phoenix to zero waste together!

AWARDS:

- First place for both groups will be awarded \$4,000.
- Second place for both groups will be awarded \$1,000.
- **Awards MUST be used to create or enhance sustainability on the winning campuses (e.g., greening activities, projects, changes in the school, etc.) Project plans MUST be submitted to the COP within 30 days of challenge results being announced. The COP will conduct periodic follow ups with winning schools for updates and submissions of finished projects. Photos of planning and implementation of processes are required.**

SCORING (Refer to Weekly Activity Breakdown Document Attached):

Participating in, and submissions of weekly activities, will also earn points. *Submissions may include photos, videos, and project outcomes (i.e., designs, plans, etc.).* With submissions, include your school's name.

- Please submit to [@lettucereducewastephx](https://www.instagram.com/lettucereducewastephx) on Instagram or to Michael Marting at michael.marting@phoenix.gov

Points will be awarded for participating as follows **for each week**:

- Participation in the **weekly quizzes/surveys; only one response per student will count towards participation**. Points are awarded based on percent of the total student population that participate. See chart below.

Percent Participation	Points	Percent Participation	Points
1% - 10%	10	51% - 60%	60
11% - 20%	20	61% - 70%	70
21% - 30%	30	71% - 80%	80
31% - 40%	40	81% - 90%	90
41% - 50%	50	91% - 100%	100

- Sustainability Officers submitting the **weekly posters** on the theme and activity = 10 points
- "Action Shots" from participating in **weekly activities** = 2 points per submission
 - In the event of a tie the school with the most "Action Shots" will win.

CONTACTS:

For information on the COP Sustainability goals and efforts and the 2023-2024 Sustainability Challenge, please visit www.phoenix.gov/sustainability.

PXU STUDENTS: If questions about the challenge, please divert to your school's Sustainability Officer.

PXU SUSTAINABILITY OFFICERS and ADVISORS: If questions or a need for information about the challenge, please email the AmeriCorps VISTA Student Engagement Coordinator Michael Marting at michael.marting@phoenix.gov, or Sustainability Specialist Darice Ellis at darice.ellis@phoenix.gov. You may also DM the [@lettuce_reduce_waste_phx](https://www.instagram.com/lettuce_reduce_waste_phx) Instagram page managed by Michael Marting.

