

# STUDENT IMPACT PROJECT IDEAS

## Sustainability Ambassadors

*Rapidly advancing a sustainable future*



## FOOD SYSTEMS

Take action at home, at school or in the community. Communicate your impact to peers, stakeholders, and policy makers to urge collective action. Post your actions [on the map](#).

**TOP TEN:** If you are especially proud of the impact of your project, and it meets our criteria, we invite you to submit your work to our Annual Top Ten Impact Projects.

1. [Family Low Carbon Diet Assessment](#) How do your food choices relate to your [water footprint](#) and [carbon footprint](#)?
2. **Eat more vegetables.** It takes [an enormous amount of water](#) to produce animal products like meat and dairy, because livestock and poultry in the US eat large amounts of water-intensive feed – usually corn and soybeans. And you also reduce carbon emissions. Eating a plant-rich diet is one for the best (easiest and cheapest) actions each of us can take to reduce our carbon footprint. See [Project Drawdown - Plant-Rich Diet](#)
3. [Home Food Waste Audit](#) Take action to reduce food waste. It's [too good to waste](#) and has a huge footprint. One-in-six people in Washington state (1.15 million people) are hungry and unsure where their next meal will come from – an unacceptable reality in a state that boasts the fastest growing economy in the nation and throws away over 370,000 tons of edible food a year. Food waste is a social, environmental, and economic issue that affects all of us. The main goal, of course, is to make sure that everyone has access to affordable and adequate nutrition, but reducing food waste also saves money, reduces greenhouse gas emissions, and conserves energy and water needed to grow the food that ends up being wasted. For example, American families throw away about 25% of the food they buy. This costs each family on average about \$2,000 a year. Preventing your food waste will mean more money for you and a healthier environment for all of us. Uneaten food accounts for 23 percent of all methane emissions in the U.S. – a potent climate change contributor. Learn more and take action.
4. [Project Drawdown - Reduce Food Waste](#); A third of the food raised or prepared does not make it from farm or factory to fork. Producing uneaten food squanders a whole host of resources—seeds, water, energy, land, fertilizer, hours of labor, financial capital—and generates greenhouse gases at every stage—including methane when organic matter lands in the global rubbish bin. The food we waste is responsible for roughly 8 percent of global emissions.

5. [Washington State Food Waste Reduction Plan](#): In April 2019, the Washington Legislature passed the Food Waste Reduction Act. This law requires the Washington departments of Ecology, Health, Agriculture, and the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, to recommend actions to achieve a 50% reduction in food waste in Washington by 2030. They will use [2015 waste disposal figures](#) as the baseline for this goal.
6. Grow food to eat in your garden. Call the free [Garden Hotline](#) at Tilth Alliance, ask some questions, get started.
7. Participate in a community garden. Learn about the [P-Patch Garden Program](#) in Seattle and join or start something similar in your community.
8. Subscribe to a CSA – [Community Supported Agriculture](#). You buy a subscription to a weekly box of produce straight from a local farm. This supports the local economy by keeping your food dollars from going to big corporations out of state. It reduces urban sprawl and housing developments from gobbling up farmland. It supports organic farming methods which are good for you and good for salmon in the streams and rivers that run near the farms. It keeps healthy food on your table. It helps you relate to the four seasons and to develop recipes for those plants that can actually be grown during a certain part of the year.
9. Subscribe to [Imperfect Food](#). This is another subscription program. By investing in perfectly good food that can't be marketed because of the way it looks, you are eating well and helping to reduce food waste. Learn more about the reasons that perfectly good food gets rejected by grocery stores.
10. Regularly shop at a [local Farmer's Market](#). Invest in local farmers and eat fresh produce. Also try [King County Farmer's Markets](#).
11. Shop in grocery stores for local and organic foods. Read about why it matters to shop at places like [PCC Natural Markets](#)
12. **Plan your meals** so you only buy what you need and not more.
13. **Cook and eat what you buy**. Get creative and make something delicious with even the most random assortment of ingredients lurking in your kitchen.
14. **Try going vegetarian one day a week**. It could significantly lower your footprint.
15. **Okay, go vegetarian every day of the year**. See actions #1 and #2 above.
16. **Eat less processed food** like chips, pre-made meals, candy and soda, because processing requires more water, more energy, more plastic packaging.
17. **Compost**, if you do end up with food scraps or unwanted leftovers. [Learn how to compost.](#)

