

The ORF/ORS Green Team's Recycle Right Campaign

The NIH Green Teams host a number of programs that allow NIH staff to contribute to environmental stewardship. One such program is the Recycle Right Campaign, which was created by the ORF/ORS Green Team in 2018. The ORF/ORS Green Team members mutually shared a common concern about improper recycling procedures in the NIH cafeterias. As a result, they created the Recycle Right campaign to educate NIH staff about proper recycling protocol in the NIH Bethesda campus cafeterias.

Currently, only about 10% of the recyclables from NIH cafeterias can actually be recycled. The remaining 90% of recyclables must be disposed in the trash. The main offenders for non-acceptable recyclables in the NIH cafeterias are compostable silverware, plastic bags, napkins and items contaminated by food. Educating NIH staff about what can and cannot be recycled is a simple and effective method for improving the quality of recyclables from NIH cafeterias. To support this goal, the Recycle Right Campaign has created a few succinct guidelines for easy recycling.

Recyclable items include (**CLEAN & EMPTY**):

- Glass bottles, jars and containers
- Plastic bottles, containers and caps (#1,3 and 5 rigid plastics)
- Aluminum cans and foil

Items that **should not** be recycled include:

- Compostable utensils
- Paper napkins and tissues
- Food and drink
- Anything soiled with food or food residue
- Plastic bags cannot be recycled in the cafeterias but can be recycled in the Building 10 Supply Store

The Recycle Right Campaign has also [created a flyer](#) that may make it easier to follow and share these guidelines. Please consider sharing this flyer with other NIH staff or posting the flyer in shared kitchen/recycling areas. By increasing awareness of proper recycling techniques, we can help NIH learn to recycle the right way!