

# HOW MADISON, WI KEPT THEIR FOOD SCRAP PROGRAM ALIVE

## BACKGROUND

The City of Madison, WI began a community food scrap program in 2011. Contamination problems and associated processing availability issues officially shut that program down in 2018. Still, the 260,000 residents from the progressive state capital and home to the University of Wisconsin demanded new options for a city organic waste diversion program.

## THE PILOT

In 2019, City Recycling Coordinator Bryan Johnson found an anaerobic digester willing to participate in a new food scrap diversion program. Communication with residents had to be the new emphasis of the pilot. The anaerobic digester involved accepted only a custom list of organic waste. Materials such as yard waste, meat and bones, and certified compostable cutlery and food packaging were not allowed.

The Summer 2019 pilot program featured the recruitment of 165 residents in a west-side neighborhood to participate in the eight-week curbside pick-up program. Enhanced communication efforts with participants included:

1. The Betterbin app
2. Madison Food Scrap Program web page
3. Bi-weekly email updates

## A NEW BEGINNING

Successfully minimizing contamination allowed the City to open a city-wide drop-off program in Spring 2020. The City brought Betterbin back to support communication with residents about the acceptability of materials allowed in the program. The program's three drop-off sites were finally allowed to open in May 2020 after the COVID-19-induced city-wide safer-at-home order was lifted.

85



BETTERBIN  
USERS

652



MATERIAL  
SEARCHES

3



# OF CARTS WITH  
CONTAMINATION

4.7



TONS OF FOOD  
WASTE DIVERTED

**Betterbin**

[about.betterbin.app](https://about.betterbin.app)

RECYCLING. COMPOSTING. FOOD WASTE PREVENTION.

# consumer education **RE-IMAGINED**



## OUR MISSION

We harness the power of data to make localized consumer recycling, composting and food waste prevention education relevant, convenient and accessible to all consumers.

## OUR VISION

We pair data and technology to change disposal messaging, re-distribute the education and bring consumer sustainable materials management learning into the digital age.

## OUR STORY

Frustrated with the lack of accurate, accessible recycling education, we decided to create our own. Our journey as a Wisconsin-based startup began in 2018 as a participant in the Ideadvance Seed Fund Program. Here's a peek at our progress:

2018 & 2019 Ideadvance Seed Fund Program Participant

2019 BETA LAUNCH: Weston, WI

2019 WI Governor's Business Plan Contest Finalist

2019 BETA LAUNCH: Madison, WI

2019 Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources Recycling Excellence, Innovation Award

2020 Pitch & Pilot Finalist - City of Philadelphia

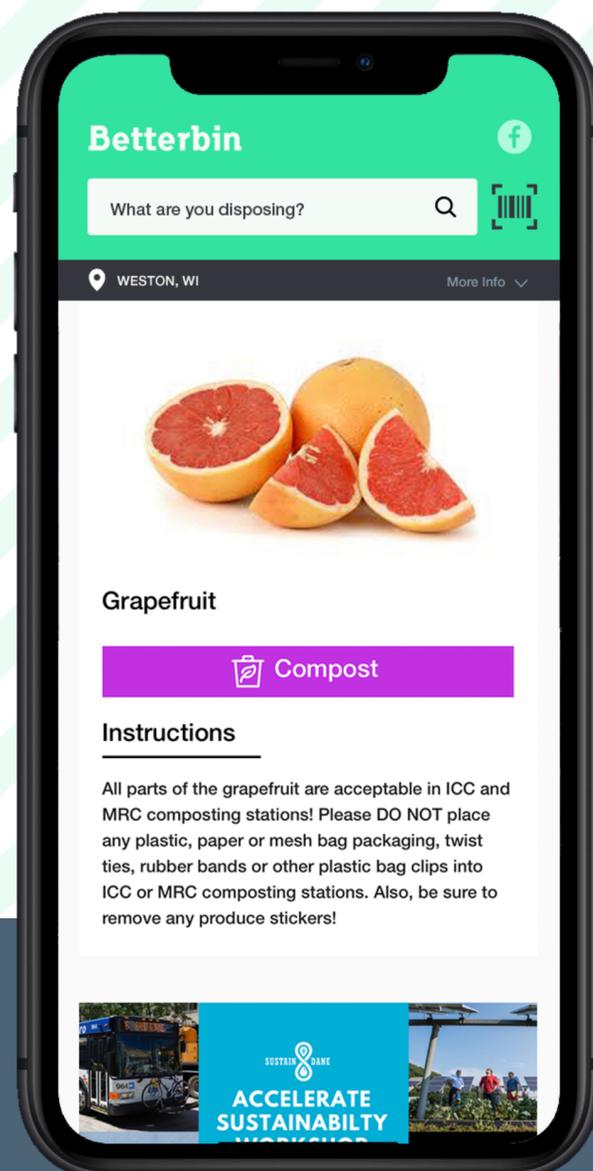
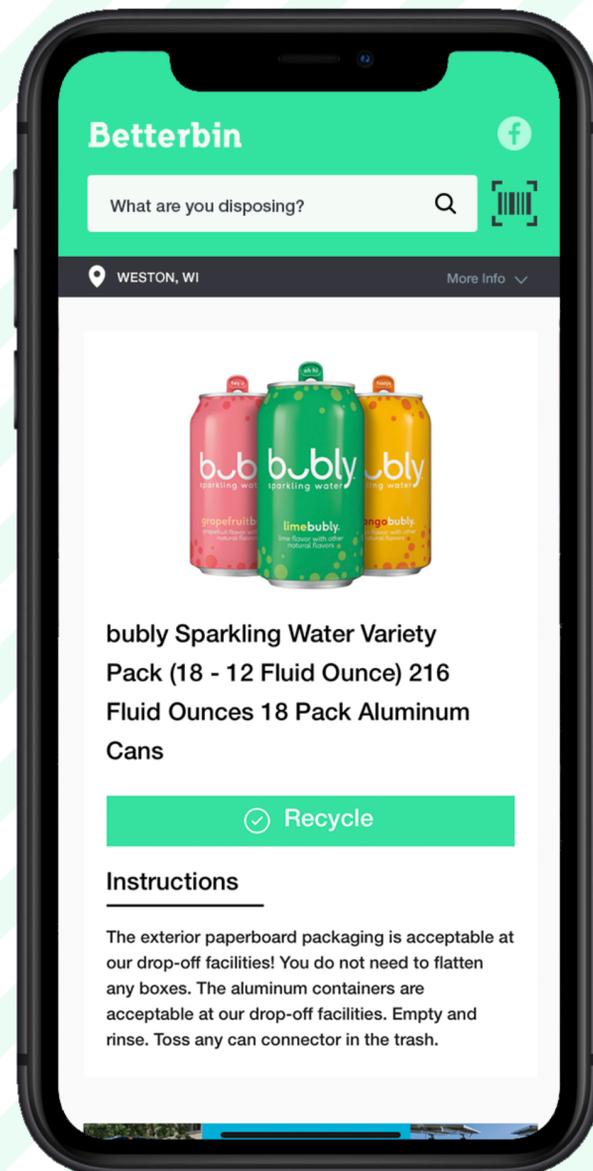
2020 LAUNCH: University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point

2020 LAUNCH: Edgewood College, Madison, WI

2020 LAUNCH: Madison, WI

2020 LAUNCH: Rivanna (Charlottesville), VA

2020 LAUNCH: Brown County, WI



CONTACT: Michelle Goetsch  
mgoetsch@erbinusa.com  
about.betterbin.app

