



Business Recycling Toolkit

Helping Central Ohio Businesses Reach Their Sustainability Goals

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Introduction:

This document is intended to provide businesses with the tools necessary to implement a successful and sustainable recycling program. It isn't intended solely for those businesses that do not currently have a recycling program in place but contains valuable insights and techniques to help businesses that already recycle improve their programs. This toolkit will guide you through the process to design an effective program; teach you how to analyze the different streams of waste materials that are generated in your business; learn how to successfully work with recycling service providers; provide employees with impactful education; and create a structure for continuous improvement. With this information in hand, you can join the hundreds of businesses in central Ohio that embrace recycling as a fundamental part of their day-to-day operations and achieve an important sustainability goal for your business.

BENEFITS OF A RECYCLING PROGRAM

Creating a recycling program in your place of business has several far-reaching benefits. While recycling is not always cost-free, it often costs less than trash disposal services, and therefore can provide your company with savings on collection costs. In addition, consumers are more conscious than ever about where they spend their money, seeking companies that demonstrate concern for their environmental impacts. For example, a recent public opinion poll, [conducted by SWACO](#), indicated that 93% of Franklin County residents view recycling as a point of pride in their community. For many Central Ohio residents, recycling is becoming an expectation not only at home, but where they work and where they spend their money. As the workforce in the region becomes younger, many firms also find that their potential employees want to work for companies with commitments to sustainability, community involvement, and social responsibility.

There are also many important environmental benefits to recycling. It is well-known that recycling helps to extend the life of Franklin County's landfill. Recycling also conserves natural resources like timber and minerals while also reducing the amount of energy required to create goods. Through this reduction in energy use, recycling reduces greenhouse gas emissions which contribute to adverse health impacts from air pollution and human-caused climate change. Finally, recycling **creates jobs and contributes to a strong economy**. In a [2019 report](#) published by SWACO, over 370 businesses in the central Ohio region relied on some sort of recycling related activity, (collecting, processing, and remanufacturing goods) supporting over 5,000 jobs and generating \$1.3 billion in combined revenue. Participating in these types of activities helps to strengthen our regional circular economy and contributes to a more resilient community.



Develop a Recycling Plan

The most successful recycling programs have a simple plan in place to guide the program. This plan can usually be created internally, but if your company is large or unusually complex third-party consultants are available to help draft a recycling plan for you.

In order to create an effective plan, you'll want to include a cross-section of departments and employees in the development of the plan. Involving the right people in the planning of a program not only allows for the identification of potential challenges that need to be addressed prior to starting a program, it creates a deeper understanding of the program and buy-in when it is time to move to implementation.

Consider including the following representatives when developing a plan. (The size and complexity of your business will determine who should be involved):

- ▶ **Upper Management**
 - ▷ It's important to have high-level support for a successful recycling program.
 - ▷ Having direct involvement of upper management in developing a recycling plan may not be necessary but having upper management *support* of the plan is!
- ▶ **Facility Manager**
- ▶ **Operations Manager**
- ▶ **Housekeeping/Custodial**
 - ▷ This is critical for the success of the program! These team members should be involved in development of the plan whenever possible. To learn more about how to involve your custodial staff review the section **Ensuring a Sustainable Program**.
- ▶ **Department Managers**
- ▶ **Interested employees**
 - ▷ Many successful business recycling programs are created due to employee initiatives or as a result of a company "Green Team" or Sustainability Committee.
- ▶ **Your Recycling Service Provider (if you have one)**

A recycling plan helps to organize the information necessary for a successful recycling program. The plan can also identify responsibilities for implementing elements of the program and the goals that you would like to

GREEN TEAMS

Some businesses organize a "Green Team" or Sustainability Committee to help identify, research, and implement sustainability initiatives within the organization. Green Teams are typically comprised of employees who are highly interested and engaged in sustainability issues. The most successful Green Teams are supported by their leadership.

Benefits of a Green Team:

- ▶ Employees who are interested in sustainability issues are eager to put in the time and effort to work on relevant issues like business recycling
- ▶ Green Teams can provide valuable feedback and recommendations on sustainability programs to upper management
- ▶ Green Teams can organize and engage other co-workers on sustainability projects
- ▶ Green Teams are an easy way for businesses to show that sustainability is part of its values

achieve. A recycling plan also serves as an important reference document when things change. For example, if a contracted custodial service provider changes, the plan is a great reference for how recycling is handled in your place of business. Similarly, elements of the plan can be helpful during on-boarding of new employees or opening of a new location. By the time you finish reading this guide, you should be prepared to put together a successful recycling plan. In fact, we've provided a template recycling plan in **Appendix A** to get you started!

WHAT TYPES OF QUESTIONS SHOULD YOUR RECYCLING PLAN COVER?

▶ Goals for Program

- ▶ Goals can be helpful to organize and prioritize the appropriate actions to take
- ▶ Consider making your goals: **Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, Time-Bound ("SMART")**

▶ What materials will be accepted in the recycling program?

- ▶ Determined by your Recycling Service Provider
- ▶ Does this change for specific parts of your operation?

▶ What type of collection containers will be used?

- ▶ Will different containers be used in different places, such as deskside, adjacent to copiers, in break rooms, and in public spaces?

▶ What kind of signage will be used on the containers?

▶ Where will the recycling collection containers be located?

- ▶ Floor Plans showing the exact locations of the containers can be helpful

▶ Who is responsible for service/collection of the recycling containers?

- ▶ Internally (Housekeeping/Custodial)
 - ▶ How often is that service to be expected?
 - ▶ Who is responsible for maintaining internal recycling containers?
 - ▶ Where will recyclables be stored internally prior to collection by your service provider?
 - ▶ Who will be the point of contact for the internal service?
- ▶ Externally (Service Provider/Hauler)
 - ▶ How often is that service to be expected?
 - ▶ Where will the recyclables be stored externally?
 - ▶ Who will be the internal point of contact for the service provider?

Understand Your Waste and What Can Be Recycled

Whether your business is big or small there is value in learning about what waste your operation is generating. Waste is generated in every place of business, but the profile of the waste stream and the amount of waste can be wildly different from establishment to establishment. SWACO recommends that you conduct some type of “waste audit” to familiarize yourself with your waste in order to design the most effective recycling program. A waste audit is an analysis of the types and quantities of waste that you generate, and where that material is generated. Even if you have a recycling program currently in place, there is still value in conducting a waste audit.

Initial questions you will want to answer with a waste audit:

- ▶ What are the types of materials are generated during typical operations?
- ▶ How much of each of that material is generated during a typical operation timeframe?
 - ▷ Look at a one-week timeframe
- ▶ What portion of that material is recyclable?
- ▶ Where is this material being generated within your operation?

There are different methods of waste audits that can be conducted. Each audit method will require different levels of preparation and supplies before conducting an audit. The different audit methods also provide varying levels of detail and precision to results for businesses to analyze.

Waste Audits

A waste audit is considered a best practice and will provide more detailed and precise information. When conducting a waste audit, the waste materials are collected, physically sorted into specific material categories and weighed. The results from this type of audit are detailed, quantified data that can be useful for helping develop a program and future evaluations on that programs success. It is also helpful information when determining the costs or revenues associated with recycling certain waste streams. While conducting a waste audit is probably more useful for a larger business or a business with a complex waste stream, it can be valuable data for a business of any size.

EXAMPLE OF COMMERCIAL WASTE STREAM COMPLEXITY:

A **waste stream** is an aggregate flow of waste materials from generation to treatment.

A small office might generate the following recyclable material in their waste stream:

- ▶ White Office Paper
- ▶ Corrugated Cardboard
- ▶ Envelopes
- ▶ Junk Mail
- ▶ Plastic Bottles
- ▶ Aluminum Cans

In contrast, a food production facility might generate these recyclable materials:

- ▶ Corrugated Cardboard
- ▶ Film Plastics
- ▶ Steel Cans
- ▶ Food Waste
- ▶ Rigid Plastic Containers

Each operation would have to look at those materials, where they are generated within their process and determine the best system for collection and management of the

Visual Audits

Audits can be simple as a visual audit of all or select waste receptacles. The information gleaned from this approach will be less precise as you are simply walking through your building taking an inventory of the location of waste collection containers and the types and percentages of materials inside those containers. While the information obtained through this process isn't as detailed, it will require less time and planning to implement while providing you with useful insights. If your team or operation is smaller this might be the best method for you.

SWACO has provided more information and tools in **Appendix A** to help you conduct a waste audit. Once you understand the types and amounts of recyclable materials that you generate, the next step is to find a service provider that can collect and process your recyclable material.



UNDERSTANDING FRANKLIN COUNTY’S WASTE STREAM

In 2019, SWACO completed a Waste Characterization Study of the waste stream to better understand waste trends and determine the composition of the materials in the waste stream and how much of it could be captured or diverted.

- ▶ Up to 76% of the material being sent to the Franklin County landfill could be recycled/composted. Of that, 41% could be diverted today through existing programs and an additional 35% has the potential to be diverted with new programs and infrastructure.
- ▶ The top 3 materials entering the county landfill included- Food Scraps (15%), Corrugated Cardboard (10%) and other Compostable Fiber (8%), all of which can either be recovered through existing programs or have the potential to be captured and diverted if new programs and services are established.
- ▶ The study also assessed the value of the recyclable commodities (paper, cardboard, plastic bottles and jugs, glass bottles, metal cans) currently being landfilled at approximately \$23 million dollars.
- ▶ SWACO has a goal to increase Franklin County’s diversion from 50% to 75% by 2032 and the study identified food waste and cardboard as presenting the greatest opportunities to increase Franklin County’s diversion.

The results of the Waste Characterization Study reinforce the need to improve diversion from the landfill through reuse, recycling and composting and demonstrate the economic value of these wasted materials. SWACO has a variety of programs and activities that are designed to help our local businesses and communities reduce waste and divert more material, including our [Recycle Right, Make a Difference](#) educational campaign, community consortiums, a recycling cart initiative, business programming, as well as our economic development efforts. We appreciate your support of these efforts and look forward to advancing this important work alongside you!



Work with Your Waste and Recycling Hauler

In most cases, businesses already have an established waste hauling partner they've selected to handle their trash services. Oftentimes this service doesn't include recycling. Knowing how to navigate a conversation for recycling services from a hauler is essential to be able to establish a program that will achieve your goals within your budget.

1. Research Hauler(s) and Services

First, find out who is your current hauler for trash. If your current hauler offers recycling services (not all do), it is often advantageous to add this service through them. If your current hauler doesn't offer recycling, or if you would like to make sure that you are getting the best services and rates available, do some research on available haulers in the area. SWACO can provide a list of active service providers in Franklin County.

Gather a basic understanding on the services the haulers provide and the recyclable materials they can collect.

▷ Some initial questions to ask haulers:

- ▶ What recyclable materials do they accept?
- ▶ Will the business receive revenue on any of the materials? If so, how much will be received for those materials?
 - ▷ For example, cardboard can be a valuable material for some businesses that generate high volumes and are willing to handle it separately from other recyclable materials.
- ▶ What are the charges for the collection of recyclables?
 - ▷ It is a common misconception that recyclables are collected for free. While some materials, like white office paper or corrugated cardboard, may be collected for free or even generate a revenue, for most businesses there will be a cost for collection and processing of recyclables.
- ▶ If the hauler is collecting both trash and recycling, is there a price savings by bundling those services?
- ▶ Are there any requirements on how the recyclables must be prepared prior to collection?
 - ▷ For example, trash is usually placed in your trash dumpster in trash bags. Recyclables may need to be kept loose when placed in a recyclable container (not bagged).
- ▶ Are they willing to help in conducting a waste audit or educating staff on the recycling program?

CONSIDER:

- ▶ Have a detailed discussion with all prospective haulers on what materials they can accept for recycling. Have clear guidelines established, as it will be the backbone of your program and education to your staff.
- ▶ If your current hauler or new hauler can't collect all of types of recyclables that you generate, review your waste audit and look for opportunities to *reduce* waste from what your business is generating.

2. Walkthrough

Have all prospective haulers visit your facility for a walkthrough of your operation. Discuss what type of containers will be used to store the recyclables prior to collection by the contractor (i.e. a second dumpster for recycling adjacent to the existing trash dumpster, wheeled carts placed by the loading dock, etc.) Identify where the recycling containers will be placed. Is there adequate space? Share any expectations or restrictions to servicing the containers that the hauler needs to be aware of. For example, if there is a busy time for deliveries for your operation there should be communication well ahead of time to your hauler as to when service should be conducted on the waste containers.

If you conducted a waste audit share your findings with the hauler to give them more information on your operation.

3. Proposal

After the walkthrough the hauler should be able to put a proposal together for the requested services. Make sure you and your team review the following:

- ▶ **Rates:** Make sure that the rates to provide the service are clear. There could be multiple rates: rates to haul the containers, tonnage fees to process the materials, and potential monthly service charges. These rates need to be clear and understandable. Compare the prices to what your facility is expected to generate for recyclables and calculate the expected annual expense and/or revenues.
- ▶ Consider reviewing your trash collection agreement; often when starting a recycling program there is an opportunity to reduce your trash service. Consider conducting an audit or reviewing any previous audit data to get an idea of how much recyclable material is going to be pulled out from the trash that would previously have been disposed.



- ▶ **Surcharges:** Some companies will include other potential fees and surcharges, including fuel charges or “environmental fees.”. Make sure your team asks questions about those and has a clear understanding of how much those charges could amount to on a bill.
- ▶ **Contamination Charges:** Some companies charge a fee if the recyclables that are collected are contaminated with too many non-recyclable items. This occurs when employees are putting the wrong materials in your recycling containers. Heavy contamination of recyclables can cause problems when processing the materials resulting in additional expenses and requiring more material to be landfilled. While contamination charges are an acceptable practice, make sure that the terms and requirements are clear:
 - ▶ Make sure that you will receive at least one “warning” prior to receiving any charges, This will allow you time to correct the problem before incurring a charge.
 - ▶ If any charges are assessed, make sure that the contamination is documented with photographs and provided to you. This will allow for more certainty on the nature of the problem.
- ▶ **Extra Services:** Charges associated with pickups outside of scheduled services days.
- ▶ **Extra Containers:** Charges associated with adding more containers either permanently or temporarily.
- ▶ **Term of Agreement:** Make sure that the length of the contract is clear and fully understood. While less common than in the past, some waste contractors will include an “automatic renewal” provision in the contract that renews the contract for an additional full term if you don’t proactively terminate the agreement within a small window of time prior to the scheduled termination date of the agreement. This is not to your benefit and should always be removed if included in a proposed service contract. If the contract renews to a month-to-month basis that can be an acceptable option.
- ▶ **Primarily Compactor and Baler Oriented:**
 - ▶ **Installation charges:** Is the equipment or containers going to cost your facility any money to install?
 - ▶ **Maintenance Cost:** who will oversee maintaining the containers and repairs if the container is damaged. If they are conducting the repairs, make sure an understanding is met on the expected response and turnaround time for repairs.

ALTERNATIVE RECYCLING SERVICES

VALET WASTE SERVICES

- ▶ “Valet” waste services can sometimes provide recycling services when large service providers are not able (or are not interested) in providing service. Service may be declined because a business is small or their physical location is not typically serviced with recycling.
- ▶ Valet services may be a great option for tenants of office buildings.
- ▶ Contact SWACO if you need assistance locating one of these services.

SWACO RECYCLING DROP-OFF PROGRAM

- ▶ SWACO provides drop-off recycling locations throughout Franklin County that residents and local businesses can use free-of-charge.
- ▶ For small businesses, one solution is to take your recyclable materials to one of these drop-off locations.
- ▶ To find a drop-off location closest to your business please visit our [Recycle Right website](#).

4. Invoicing & Data

- ▷ **Discuss the billing process:** Make sure if you have specific invoicing needs for your own internal accounting process that those are communicated well ahead of time to the hauler.
- ▷ **Line Items:** Asking to have different services broken out by line item invoices can help associate direct cost saving measures for your program. Seeing one combined cost gives limited insight when tracking the savings, a recycling program can provide.
- ▷ **Data:** Inquire about reports on your volumes to allow for tracking of progress in your program. Typically, these reports can be generated at the same time as invoices are sent out by haulers. If actual volumes can't be given due to the type of services, check to see if a standard weight can be determined based on density of waste being hauled, the size of collection container or dumpster, and the frequency of service days over a week or months' time.

PROPERTY MANAGEMENT

If your business is currently leasing your space, you'll want to engage your landlord or property management group early. They should be able to help with providing information as well as adjusting any current agreements under their control.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

- ▶ **Whose is responsible for contracting waste services?**
 - ▷ If it is the property managements responsibility make sure there is discussion on how important the availability of recycling is to your company
- ▶ **Are they interested in helping provide input in your recycling plan?**
- ▶ **Are they responsible for contracting custodial services?**
 - ▷ If they are, ask for their help and support in making any procedural changes to how the custodial services operates
- ▶ **If in a building with multiple tenants, engage other businesses to gauge their interest in having recycling service offered at your building.**
 - ▷ The more tenants that are interested the more likely the property management or landlord is to make changes to make their tenants happy.
- ▶ **Engaging the property management or landlord group will be important if a hauler suggests any building improvements are needed in order to offer recycling.**



Recycling Container Placement & Signage

For any recycling program to be successful, recycling containers must be as easy and convenient for employees to use as your current trash receptacles. The design and signage on recycling containers is also very important for program success. Some items to consider as you are selecting and placing your recycling containers:

- ▶ **Place a recycling container with every waste receptacle**
 - ▷ Placing the containers together assures that it is always as easy to recycle as it is to throw something away. Employees should always have easy access to a recycling container.
 - ▶ Deskside
 - ▶ Copiers
 - ▶ Break rooms
 - ▶ Public areas
- ▶ **Make sure containers are visible and in easily accessible areas**
 - ▷ Placing containers behind doors, under counters, or obscuring signage inhibits the usage of the containers can lead to higher levels of contamination.
- ▶ **Use consistent signage and color coding of containers**
 - ▷ While containers may be different sizes or styles depending on their location, using consistent signage is important to reinforce what materials are accepted in your program. All recycling containers should be the same color (recommendation being blue) and all trash containers should be a different consistent color. This helps in being a self-identifier for the containers and what is acceptable to place in them.
- ▶ **Different container openings can help curb what goes inside your containers**
 - ▷ The type of opening in the recycling container can also help your employees easily identify that it is a recycling container and what materials should be placed inside. Common examples include the use of smaller round holes to indicate only bottles and cans should be placed in these containers, not paper or large cardboard boxes. A slot in the lid helps indicate the container is meant to collect paper only. Some containers will have a combination of these opening types to indicate both materials are acceptable.
- ▶ **Take the opportunity to assess the volume of your normal trash cans.**

RECYCLING SIGNAGE

- ▶ SWACO has electronic versions available of signage that you can use.
- ▶ Labeling needs to be consistent, not only for recycling containers but normal trash containers as well.
- ▶ Use images whenever possible.
- ▶ Make sure the labels are color coded to the container they represent.
- ▶ Labels should showcase what materials are accepted. Customize your labels to only show the accepted items that are generated in your facility.
- ▶ If possible have contact information posted nearby for employees and customers to contact if there are issues or questions.



- ▷ When you place recycling containers in your workspace consider reducing the number and size of trash containers at the same time. Making recycling containers equally or more prominent in your workspace will subtly send a message about the importance of the recycling program to your day-to-day operation.
- ▶ **Consider removing trash cans entirely from an area if primarily generating recyclables.**
 - ▷ Example: Copy rooms generate mostly just paper and some cardboard. Study those volumes. If a trash container can be removed from the location, feel confident in providing only a recycling container in this space.
- ▶ **Make sure the group that handles and disposes the trash is present during this process.**
 - ▷ Ensure they are aware on the locations of the containers and give suggestion based on their workflow or potential problem areas.
 - ▷ If they are not able to be present at that time, make sure you do a walk-through with them after the containers are present.
 - ▷ Check the section **Ensuring a Sustainable Program** to learn more about how to include housekeeping/custodians in your program

CENTRAL COLLECTION/STORAGE AREA

If your operation is in a multi-story building or a facility with a large footprint, you might need to identify areas in the building where recyclables will be temporarily stored prior to delivering to the loading dock or other final location for collection by your service provider. If this is the case, you must consider the volumes and length of time that containers will be stored in these areas to determine if there is enough space. Facilities that are able to bring their waste directly from the points of generation to the final collection point do not have this worry and can typically address their storage needs by working with their recycling hauler to receive an adequately sized recycling dumpster or compactor.

CONSIDER:

- ▶ Is the storage site large enough?
- ▶ Is there easy access to freight elevators and loading docks?
- ▶ Does the area meet with local fire and building codes?
- ▶ How much waste can be stored before safety and code violations are a concern?
 - ▷ This should also help determine how frequently recyclables will need to be removed.



Educate Employees

Educating employees on your recycling program is imperative to success. While most employees probably have a sense that recycling is “a good thing to do,” your employees will not know what materials can and cannot be recycled at work unless they are educated on the issue. Additionally, most won’t understand the wide range of environmental and economic benefits of recycling. Developing an understanding of the impacts of your recycling program will help cultivate a workplace culture that values your recycling program. Taking time to educate your employees is a very important step in ensuring the long-term success of your recycling program.

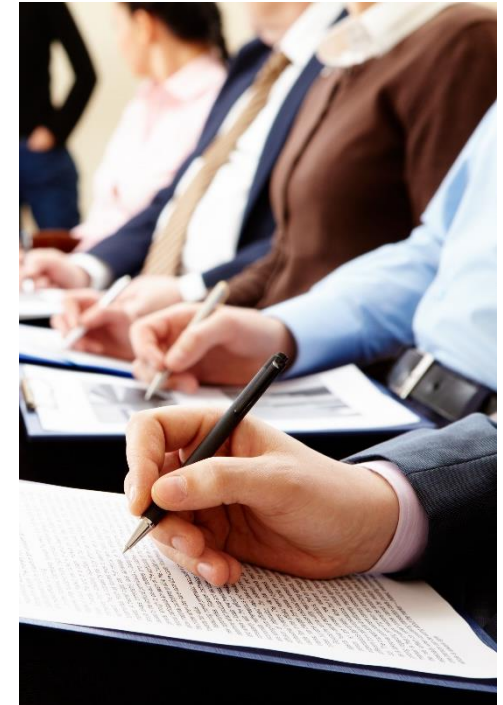
Initial Education

If you are kicking off your program, you’ll want to make sure an announcement or kick-off event is created to build awareness and excitement for the new program (see **Appendix B** for an example). If you have the buy-in of the executive leadership of your company, try and get them involved in the process. Having their involvement and presence can be important to get the necessary people to attend an event or pay attention to a distributed announcement of the program.

Types of notices or events that can be used:

- ▶ Newsletter or memo from leadership detailing the program and why it’s important.
- ▶ Tabling kickoff event where staff can learn about the program at their leisure and ask questions.
- ▶ Video highlighting the program and how to use it.
- ▶ Position volunteers at your waste stations helping build awareness and helping employees use the program correctly.
- ▶ Speaker or presenter – contact SWACO, we may be able to provide a speaker for you event.

When you begin to educate your staff, you will want to focus on emphasizing what materials are accepted and what is not. As mentioned previously, this will require clear communication between you and your hauler, as they will ultimately determine what materials you’ll be able to collect. Also make sure to communicate with staff about where they can find containers, familiarize them with the signage, and discuss any other protocols such as not bagging recyclables. Make sure they know who to reach out if they have any questions or if they notice contamination or service-related issues. If you conducted a waste audit you may want to share those findings with your staff to help them gain insight into your organization’s waste stream and any goals for the program that you would like to achieve. Setting the correct expectations for this program is essential for all staff members, from the proficient recyclers to the apathetic.



“

There is no such thing as ‘away’. When we throw anything away it must go somewhere.”

- Annie Leonard

Continuous Education

Not everyone in the organization will be able to turn into “super recyclers” right away. It is important to have a plan in place for continued education. There are a variety of reasons why you will have to continue educating staff.

- ▶ New employees are hired.
- ▶ Your company changes to a new service provider that accepts a slightly different set of materials.
- ▶ Renovations to work areas changes the location to containers.
- ▶ People forget! Periodic reminders on the company’s recycling program and procedures are important for a successful program.

Having a designated individual or group in charge of keeping tabs on when changes to the program arise and coordinating updates to staff can be useful. Also, building recycling education into any onboarding process can be beneficial to get new staff up to speed on what is accepted and where containers are located. There is also a benefit to having an interval-based training schedule where all staff are reminded on the program on a regular basis (quarterly, semi-annually, or annually). SWACO strongly recommends that you provide a program update/training on the program at least once a year.



Other Education Ideas

Below are some additional ideas that you may be able to use as part of your ongoing training efforts.

- ▶ **Report on Your Success!**
 - ▷ Report to all employees on the amount of material that you recycled in your facilities each year. Illustrate your increases over time.
- ▶ **Organize a “Lunch & Learn” Session on Recycling**
 - ▷ Invite a guest speaker to talk about recycling or other sustainability topics. Bringing in outside speakers is a good way to maintain interest and enthusiasm for your program. SWACO may be able provide a speaker for such an event. If we are unavailable, we may also be able to recommend some other local organizations that may be able to provide a speaker for your event.
- ▶ **Earth Day and America Recycles Week are Great Days to Promote Your Program and Celebrate Your Success!**
 - ▷ Earth day is celebrated each year on April 22nd. It’s a great opportunity to celebrate the successful of your program and provide some updated education material. Providing a tabling event in a high-traffic location is a great way for employees to ask questions and learn the most up-to-date information on your program.
 - ▷ America Recycles Day is celebrated each year on November 15th. It’s another great opportunity to celebrate your program and space out education activities to multiple times a year.

Ensure a Sustainable Program

Being able to reassess your programs at certain intervals in the year can help you stay on target for achieving your recycling program goals. Staying on task and keeping to the timeline set forth will help in the fostering a culture of recycling in your work environment.

► Check-In with Stakeholders

Make sure you touch base and review how things are going operationally for the program. Touch base with all the parties that you worked with to start this program and see how they think things are progressing. Let them give honest feedback on improvements.

CUSTODIAL STAFF:

- The importance of custodial staff to the success of your program cannot be overstated. Make sure to check in with them regularly. What are they seeing in the recycling and trash containers that they service? Are there certain areas of the building where they see more contamination in the recycling, or more recyclables in the trash? Are they experiencing any issues with the service provider?
- A check-in with custodial staff can be particularly important if you use outside, contracted custodial service. These companies sometimes experience high turnover, so the individuals who service your recycling containers at the end of the day may change frequently.
 - ▷ Are they being trained on where to take your recyclables once they are collected?
 - ▷ Do they understand your expectations regarding your recycling program?
 - ▷ Regular check-ins with a contracted service can be an important step to prevent mishaps in the servicing of your recycling containers.



▶ **Check-In with the Hauler**

As important as it is to touch base with internal operations, make sure you touch base and review the process with your local hauler. Your program is a partnership with them, and their guidance and insight can be helpful to find more streamlined avenues for service that might help their turnaround time and help your internal operations as well. They can also give great feedback on the quality of the material leaving your facility.

▶ **Survey Staff**

A survey can be conducted with all staff to determine if they correctly understand what can and can't be recycled and whether they have ideas to improve the program.

▶ **Schedule Follow-Up Trainings**

As recommended in the 'Educate Employees' Section, having periodic training sessions with your teams can help make sure messages are remaining consistent. Also helps highlight areas of improvement, while also recognizing champions who are maximizing the potential of the program.

▶ **Use Data Driven Reports if Possible**

Data can be a great tool to show tangible results to your company. Tracking how much trash vs. recyclables are being disposed each month can help illustrate progress and galvanize the rest of your employees to want to participate more or share new ideas on other recyclables that the company could target next. Data also can show cost savings to C-Suite members by illustrating the programs savings to the company's bottom line.

▶ **Conduct a Follow-Up Waste Audit**

Conducting a waste audits after your program has been implemented for a period of time can be a great tool to educate staff as well as understanding the progress they have made in recycling. Consider doing the audit in a highly visible area for staff to become engaged and see the results as well as ask questions. Make sure to publish results to the entire company to show progress.



Tell Your Story

Communicating your waste reduction and recycling performance can have a positive impact on your business. A study of customers by Sustainable Brands found:

- ▶ **88% expect companies to report on the progress of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) efforts**
- ▶ **88% will be more loyal (i.e., continue buying products or services)**
- ▶ **80% would tell friends and family about a company's CSR efforts**

Businesses of all types have learned that a good social media strategy is impactful because it can reach many people and it doesn't have to be expensive. It also provides you with direct interaction with viewers. However, you want to ensure the interaction and messages have the impact you are seeking. There are many benefits to recycling that you can incorporate into your social messaging.



EXAMPLE TALKING POINTS:

- ▶ When businesses go green, we give back to the local economy, environment, and community. [#GreenBusiness](#) [#WasteWarrior](#)
- ▶ Recycling supports more than 370 businesses generating more than a billion dollars in revenue annually in the central Ohio region. We are proud to support these efforts!
- ▶ Did you know that recycling supports 10 times more jobs than landfilling?
- ▶ Our recycling efforts have a positive impact on air quality, in addition to saving landfill space!
- ▶ When we utilize recycled paper, we save trees and create 70% less pollution.
- ▶ Our products are made from recycled material which conserves natural resources and our environment.
- ▶ We are saving energy by recycling!
- ▶ Our Green efforts also help our local economy. In fact, with our recycling efforts, we are helping to support more than 5,000 jobs in the central Ohio recycling industry alone.
- ▶ Our commitment to reducing the amount of waste we produce has reduced our reliance on our local landfill.

APPENDIX A- TEMPLATE RECYCLING PLAN

RECYCLING PLAN: <INSERT BUSINESS NAME HERE>

This document is intended to be a living document that is updated over time as processes, points of contact, or materials accepted change within our recycling program. Within this plan you should be able to find all of the basic information about our recycling program, including who you should contact if you have additional questions.

What Material is Accepted:

Recycling is based on a commodity-based market. As a result, some materials may not be recyclable in certain regions. Here at <insert business name> we currently recycle the following materials.

- ▶ Paper
- ▶ Cardboard
- ▶ Aluminum Cans
- ▶ Plastic Bottles
- ▶ Glass



Who are Points of Contact Internally for Recycling:

Here are the members of our team who oversee aspects of our recycling program. They should be able to handle service issues or answer questions on materials. Before reaching out to these individuals please review this document to see if your question can be answered.

▶ Facility Manager: <Name-Title>

- ▷ Phone Number:
- ▷ Email:
- ▷ Responsible for:

▶ Housekeeping Supervisor: <Name-Title>

- ▷ Phone Number:
- ▷ Email:
- ▷ Responsible for:

▶ Green Team Lead: <Name-Title>

- ▷ Phone Number:
- ▷ Email:
- ▷ Responsible for:

Who is our Recycling Service Provider:

Here is our current recycling service provider. They are responsible for collecting the recyclables from our facility and starting them on their journey to a downstream vendor for the material to be sorted or processed into new material.

▶ **Provider's Name: <Name>**

▶ **Material they are collecting:**

- ▷ Paper
- ▷ Cardboard

▶ **Point of Contact: <Name-Title>**

- ▷ Phone Number:
- ▷ Email:
- ▷ Customer Service Number:

▶ **Account Number:**

▶ **Service Schedule: (Mon-Wed-Fri Trash/ Fri Recycling)**

▶ **Equipment Used:**

- ▷ <example- 32 yd self-container compactor (Trash Only)>
- ▷ <example- 8 yd recycling dumpster (Recycling Only)>

▶ **Provider's Name: <Name>**

▶ **Material they are collecting:**

- ▷ Aluminum
- ▷ Plastic Bottles

▶ **Point of Contact: <Name-Title>**

- ▷ Phone Number:
- ▷ Email:
- ▷ Customer Service Number:

▶ **Account Number:**

▶ **Service Schedule: (Mon-Thu)**

▶ **Equipment Used:**

- ▷ <example- 96 gal toters (32 total onsite)>

Where is material collected from:

Each desk is provided with a small blue deskside container for paper. Certain rooms throughout the facility have containers for specific materials:

▶ Copy Rooms

- ▷ Material Accepted:
 - ▷ Paper
- ▷ Rooms: <example- 292B; 390A>
- ▷ Container Available: Blue 23-gal container

▶ Kitchens/Cafeteria

- ▷ Material Accepted:
 - ▷ Aluminum
 - ▷ Plastic Bottles
 - ▷ Paper
- ▷ Rooms: <example- 292B; 390A>
- ▷ Container Available: Blue 23-gal container

▶ Dock

- ▷ Material Accepted:
 - ▷ Cardboard
- ▷ Rooms: <example- 002B>
- ▷ Container Available: Gaylord/Baler

Who is responsible for the Internal collection service:

▶ Recycling Collected By: <insert groups name>

▶ Service Date:

- ▷ Floors- 1-3 are serviced on Mon-Wed-Fri during 2nd shift
- ▷ Floors- 4-6 are serviced on Tue-Thu-Fri during 2nd shift

▶ <insert groups name> is responsible for:

- ▷ Emptying recycling bins
- ▷ Transporting recycling to dock
- ▷ Dispose of recyclables into dumpster

- ▶ **Housekeeping Supervisor: <Name-Title>**
 - ▷ Phone Number:
 - ▷ Email:
 - ▷ Responsible for:

Education Resources:

Our recycling education flyer can be found at this link:

EDUCATION:

- ▶ **Onboarding**
 - ▷ Each new employee will receive training on what materials are accepted in their work areas for recycling within <insert time frame> of the employee's start date.
 - ▷ Training will be administered through <insert following method>
- ▶ **Continual Education**
 - ▷ Annual training refreshing staff members on location of containers and materials accepted will be conducted during April (typically Earth Day, April 22)
 - ▷ A tabling event in the cafeteria will be conducted each America Recycles Day (Nov. 15).

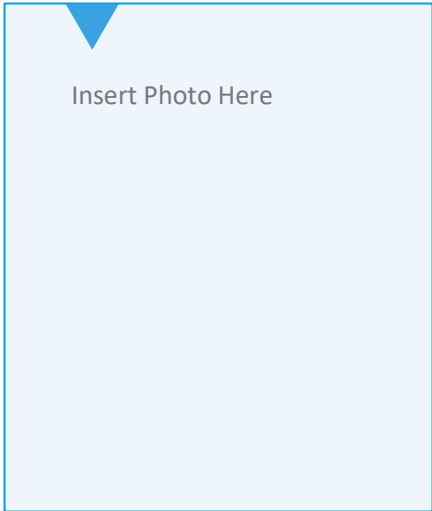
Staff will be required to have training on the recycling program in any one of these instances:

- ▷ Changes to the materials collected or other significant changes to the recycling program
- ▷ When one of these instances arise, staff are required to have received training within <insert time frame>

SIGNAGE:

Below are examples of the types of signage staff are expected to see for the recycling program. In the event the items accepted change, or any information needs to be updated please make sure the signage below reflects those updates.

- ▶ <insert link to where electronic copy of signage can be found>
- ▶ <insert link to where electronic copy of signage can be found>



Goals of Program:

In this section, the goals of the program should be listed. The goal should be succinct and built off the SMART goal template listed below.

FINAL GOAL:

▼

Insert Final Goal here

<example: <Company Name> will recycle 75% of the waste that we generate by 2025

► Broad Goal:

<example: Our company wants to start recycling>					
Specific	Measurable	Attainable	Relevant	Time-Bound	Financial Impact
Consider who, what, when, where, why and how in developing the goal.	How will you measure if the goal has been reached (list at least two indicators)?	Is it possible? Do you have the necessary knowledge, skills, abilities, and resources to accomplish the goal?	Is the goal consistent with the mission of your company?	What is the established completion date and does that completion date create a practical sense of urgency?	Are there associated costs/savings to implement this goal?
<example: Our company will install a recycling program in our office and breakroom areas to collect office paper, cardboard, aluminum cans, and plastic bottles>	<example: 1. We will have a contract in place with a recycling service provider2. All our workspaces will have recycling containers that are easy to identify and use. 3. Our team will measure the impact of the recycling	<example: Based on our research we will be able to acquire a waste hauler, containers, and signage to implement a successful recycling program>	<example: Starting a recycling program aligns with our company's sustainability mission of reducing amount of material going to landfill>	<example: Our company will have a full recycling program installed and functioning by Jan 1, 2021>	<example: By introducing recycling we expect to be able to reduce our trash service bill by 20%>

	<p>program by comparing weights of recycling vs. trash on a monthly basis></p>				
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Current Recycling Focus:

Recycling is important to our company as it is a part of our commitment to our local environment. We are looking to improve our current practices and below are some of the areas we are focusing on.

<INSERT AREA OF FOCUS HERE>:

▶ Time Period:

<example- When conducting our most recent waste audit we identified a large amount of coffee cups are being improperly disposed of in our recycling containers. Working with custodians we were able to identify the primary generations of the contamination is coming from our break room areas and our café. To lower our contamination of these item, we have created additional targeted signage in these areas to help staff remember not to put coffee cups into our recycling and keep that waste stream as clean as possible.>

<INSERT AREA OF FOCUS HERE>:

▶ Time Period:

<Insert description of focus here.>

APPENDIX B- WASTE AUDIT GUIDE

Recycling and waste diversion are integral to business success, especially as waste is becoming more expensive. In the past 15 years, food costs have increased 66%, paper 16%, metals and minerals 90%. Many companies have already identified waste as an issue and are increasing their profits by changing production processes to reduce waste, educating their workforce, and engaging with consumers to recover or refurbish items.

The purpose of auditing your waste stream is to identify the materials in your waste stream and the amount of materials produced. The resulting data will then inform actions to increase waste reduction, improve or expand recycling practices, and focus education with staff.

In order to conduct a Waste Audit, you'll want to adhere to the following framework:

1. Plan

- ▶ Identify locations of your business where you want to audit waste from
 - ▷ Cafeteria, copy room, employee work area, shipping/receiving employee work area, etc.
- ▶ Determine the number of samples (bags of trash)
 - ▷ It is recommend trying to get 10% of your weekly trash (if possible)
- ▶ Identify the location for the audit
- ▶ Identify the types of categories you will break these materials out to
 - ▷ This can be a simple or as detailed as you desire
- ▶ Recyclable vs. Trash vs. Compost
- ▶ Paper vs. Plastic vs. Metal vs. Food Scraps vs. Cardboard
- ▶ Organize staff (unless using a 3rd party group to conduct audit)

2. Collect

- ▶ Collect waste at its source
 - ▷ If using a custodial service coordinate with them on properly collecting material
 - ▷ You will minimally want to collect a few days' worth of waste to get a good idea of average disposal habits
- ▶ Identify central location for storing waste
 - ▷ You can work with your waste hauler on providing a container to store material



3. Sort

- ▶ Provide employees with appropriate personal protective equipment, including at least puncture-proof gloves, eye protection, aprons, and hand sanitizer.
- ▶ Weigh each bag/container of waste
- ▶ Open bag and sort materials into designated categories
- ▶ Weigh the sorted material
- ▶ Record the weight of each material type

4. Analyze

- ▶ If you plan on analyzing your results yourself, you'll want to calculate the sorted waste versus the total waste collected to give you an understanding of how much of each material is in your waste stream. For instance, of the sorted waste, 31% was office paper, 22% was cardboard, 18% food waste, etc.

5. If you kept track of the departments the material came from you can organize and identify the material generated in each area

- ▶ Organize results to be presented to your group to help strategize on how to implement recycling in other areas of work.
- ▶ This information can make for great baseline information for
 - ▷ Total weight or volume being generated
 - ▷ Contamination rates (amount of trash in the recycling containers)
 - ▷ Composition



Waste Audit Tool

SWACO has created a tool that should allow you and your team to input information related to your operation and show the opportunities for recycling, composting, or even for reducing waste. There is also a place to write observations from your audit and a place to write down some overall goals for your recycling program which you can save and use a reference point.

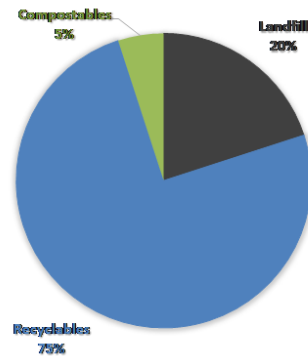
Current Service Levels

	Bin Size	Compacted?	# Bins	Pickups per week	Monthly cost
Landfill	30 cubic yd	Y	1	2	\$6,000
Mixed Recycling	35 cubic yd	Y	1	0.5	\$400
Glass	8 (select)	N	2	2	\$200
Food Scraps	10 (select)	N	5	2	\$100
Yard Trimmings	(select)	N	0	0	\$0
Total Monthly Cost					\$6,700

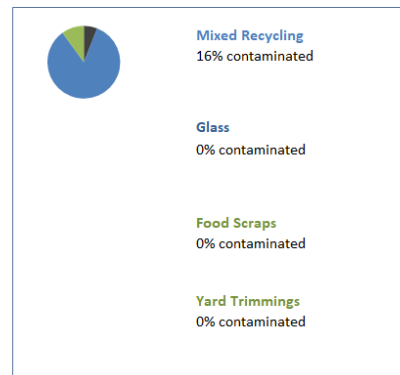
Current Recycling Rate:
58%

Landfill Bin Contents

These graphs shows the composition of the each waste stream by broad material categories (landfill, recyclables, compostables).



Other Bin Contents



Recycling Potential

If you diverted all recyclables in your landfill waste stream, you could:		
reduce landfill service by	68	cubic yards per week
divert	323	tons of recyclable material from the landfill annually
reduce greenhouse gas emissions by	686	mtCO2e per year
reduce your waste service costs by	\$6,374	per year

Potential Recycling Rate:
83%

If you diverted all compostables in your landfill waste stream, you could:		
reduce landfill service by	5	cubic yards per week
divert	57	tons of compostable material from the landfill annually
reduce greenhouse gas emissions by	41	mtCO2e per year
increase your waste service costs by	\$1,443	per year

Potential Cost Savings:
\$4,931

APPENDIX C- SAMPLE LAUNCH ANNOUNCEMENT

ACME INC. RECYCLES!

Recycle Right and Make a Difference

We are excited to announce that we have launched a new recycling program!

Thanks to the hard work of our Sustainability Committee, starting January 1st all workspaces will be upgraded with recycling containers to collect the recyclable materials that we produce in our office. However, it's not enough to just recycle, we must **Recycle Right**. What we can recycle in our offices may be different than what you can recycle at home because accepted materials are determined by recycling service providers.

In our office recycling program, we can recycle:

- ▶ Paper
- ▶ Cardboard
- ▶ Plastic bottles and jugs
- ▶ Aluminum cans

Everything else should be thrown away in the trash container. Putting incorrect items in the recycling containers can lead to contamination charges, and the material won't be recycled when it's received at the recycling facility.

By committing to recycling correctly, we are all helping to reduce pollution and energy consumption, contribute to clean water, conserve limited natural resources and reduce Central Ohio's reliance on landfills. If done correctly, we can also help our bottom line by reducing the cost for our trash collection service.

Stay tuned for more training events on our new recycling program and fun facts about recycling!

- ▶ Questions? Contact: janed@acme.com