

Regional Cooperation to Harmonize Recycling Programs - Tools and Tips

1



THE RECYCLING
PARTNERSHIP

U.S. EPA Sustainable Materials
Management (SMM) Web
Academy Webinar

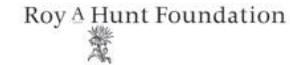
October 18, 2018

TOGETHER

Transforming Recycling For Good



We're all in this bin together





Only half of Americans can recycle at home as easily as they can throw something away.*

Those that can recycle easily are only recycling half of what they could.**

* 2015-16 Centralized Study on Availability of Recycling.

<https://recycle.com/spc-recycling-access-study/>

** 2016 State of Curbside Report



How?

- Increase access to recycling
- Increase capture of recyclables
- Improve quality of recyclables

OUR WORKING MODEL

INFRASTRUCTURE

Cart grants deliver year over year results and measurable incremental tonnage.



EXPERT ASSISTANCE

Aligning operations and education helps cities deliver better recycling.



TOOLS AND DATA

More than 20K local programs lack resources but determine success.



SYSTEM SOLUTIONS

The system is loosely connected but highly dependent.



Why Does Recycling Matter?

Recycling Creates Jobs, Helps Protect the Environment and Builds Strong Communities

500K+ jobs
direct, indirect
across the US

=

\$34B
annual wages,
benefits

10% increase in capture
of recyclables in homes that
are **already** recycling

=

10% More Materials
10% More Jobs

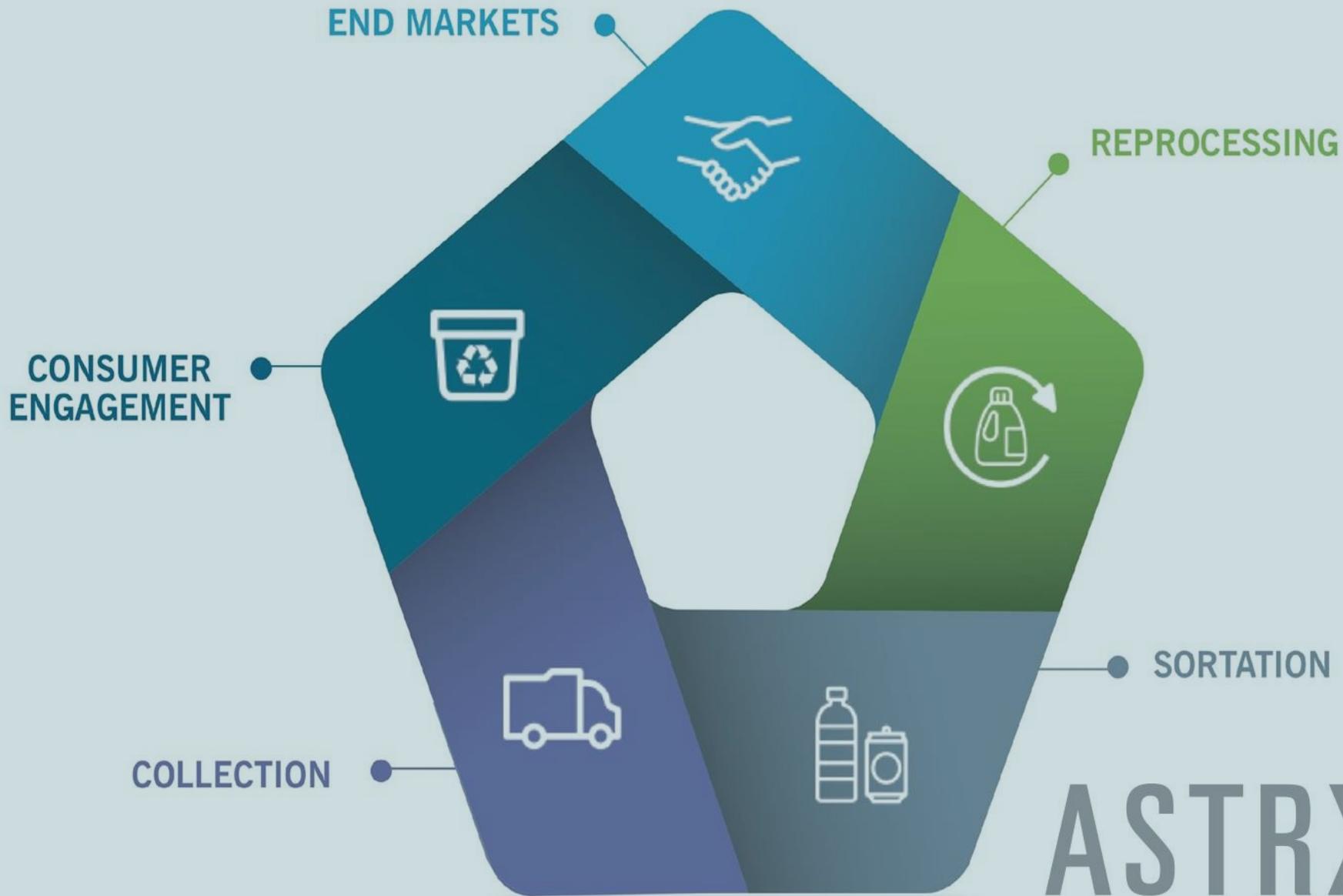
Special Thanks for Grant Support



- EPA – Region 4
- Roy A Hunt Foundation



Roy A Hunt Foundation



ASTRX

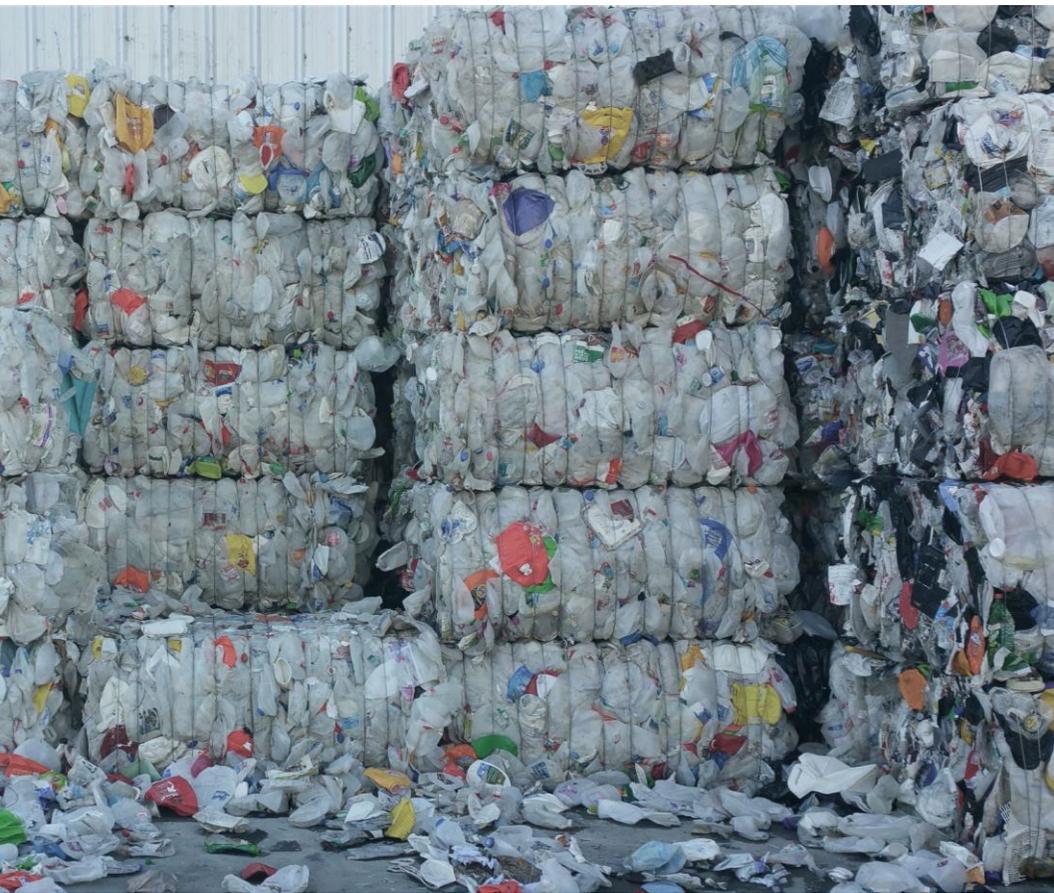
Applying Systems
Thinking to Recycling



**SUSTAINABLE PACKAGING
COALITION®**



**THE RECYCLING
PARTNERSHIP**



MANUFACTURER DEMAND DRIVES ENVIRONMENTAL GAINS.

The system needs
**reliable quantity, quality,
and cost** in supply.

ASTRX



RAW MATERIALS



How Can We Improve Recycling Quality Across a Region?



What's a MRF-Shed?

MRF-shed Report

MRF-shed = a group of communities that funnel material into the same MRF

- Supported by EPA Region 5 Grant
- Two MRF-sheds
(Chicago; Columbus, Ohio)
representing 1.6M SF HH
- 68 community websites studied



MRF-shed Report

MRFshed REPORT | THE RECYCLING PARTNERSHIP

RECYCLING INFORMATION IN A MRFshed

MRFshed: a geographic grouping of communities that feed recyclables to the same MRF.

Residents should hear the same recycling message no matter where they live, work or play.

Communities that provide information online and their accepted materials list is the same as what their MRF accepts.



As shown in this research, there is a disconnect amongst communities and MRFs regarding what is and is not recyclable and there is little consistency amongst communities within the same MRFshed to educate residents in a similar fashion.



Communities that provide information online and their accepted materials list is the same as what their MRF accepts.

Communities that don't provide recycling information online

Communities that provide information online but their accepted materials list is different from what their MRF accepts.

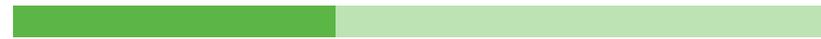


What are we telling residents to recycle?
Do our lists match what we could be recycling?



59%
provided recycling
Information online

41%
provided no
Information online



Of those with information, **only 40%**
matched their MRF's acceptable material list



Welcome Ben!

Rumpke Waste & Recycling Overview

- Founded in 1932
- Grown to become one of nation's largest privately owned waste and recycling companies
- Currently services portions of Ohio, Kentucky, Indiana and West Virginia
- More than 3,000 employees
- Goal to be total waste and recycling service provider



Rumpke's Cincinnati Recycling Facility

- Opened in Fall 2015
- Machinex single-stream technology, including six optical scanners
- Processes 700 tons daily
- Serves several regions



RUMPKE

Importance of MRF-Shed Concept

- Newer, regional MRFs can service thousands of households in urban and rural areas in multiple states
- The Recycling Partnership introduced Rumpke to concept of understanding and managing communications within the parameters of the region

The logo for Rumpke, featuring the word "RUMPKE" in a bold, red, stylized font with a black outline, set against a white background.

Importance of MRF-Shed Concept

- The MRF-Shed clearly identifies the population group serviced by the MRF
- Communication on acceptable materials and issues with contamination is focused
- A cohesive message can be developed for municipalities, third party haulers and solid waste districts on acceptable materials
- Participants receive the same recycling message from the service provider, solid waste district, municipality and MRF processor

RUMPKE

RUMPKE'S LIST OF ACCEPTABLE SINGLE STREAM ITEMS



Plastic Bottles & Jugs



Cartons



Glass Bottles



Cans



Paper

- Magazines, catalogs, phone books
- Office paper, mail, folders
- Newspaper & inserts
- Clean pizza boxes
- Paperboard
- Cardboard





**Welcome
Analiese and
Rick!**

MRF-Shed Harmonization



Waukesha County

WaukeshaCounty.gov/recycling



City of Milwaukee

MilwaukeeRecycles.com

MRF-Shed Overview

Waukesha County

- 27 member municipalities
- 110,000 Households
- 2 Private Haulers

Waukesha County

WaukeshaCounty.gov/recycling

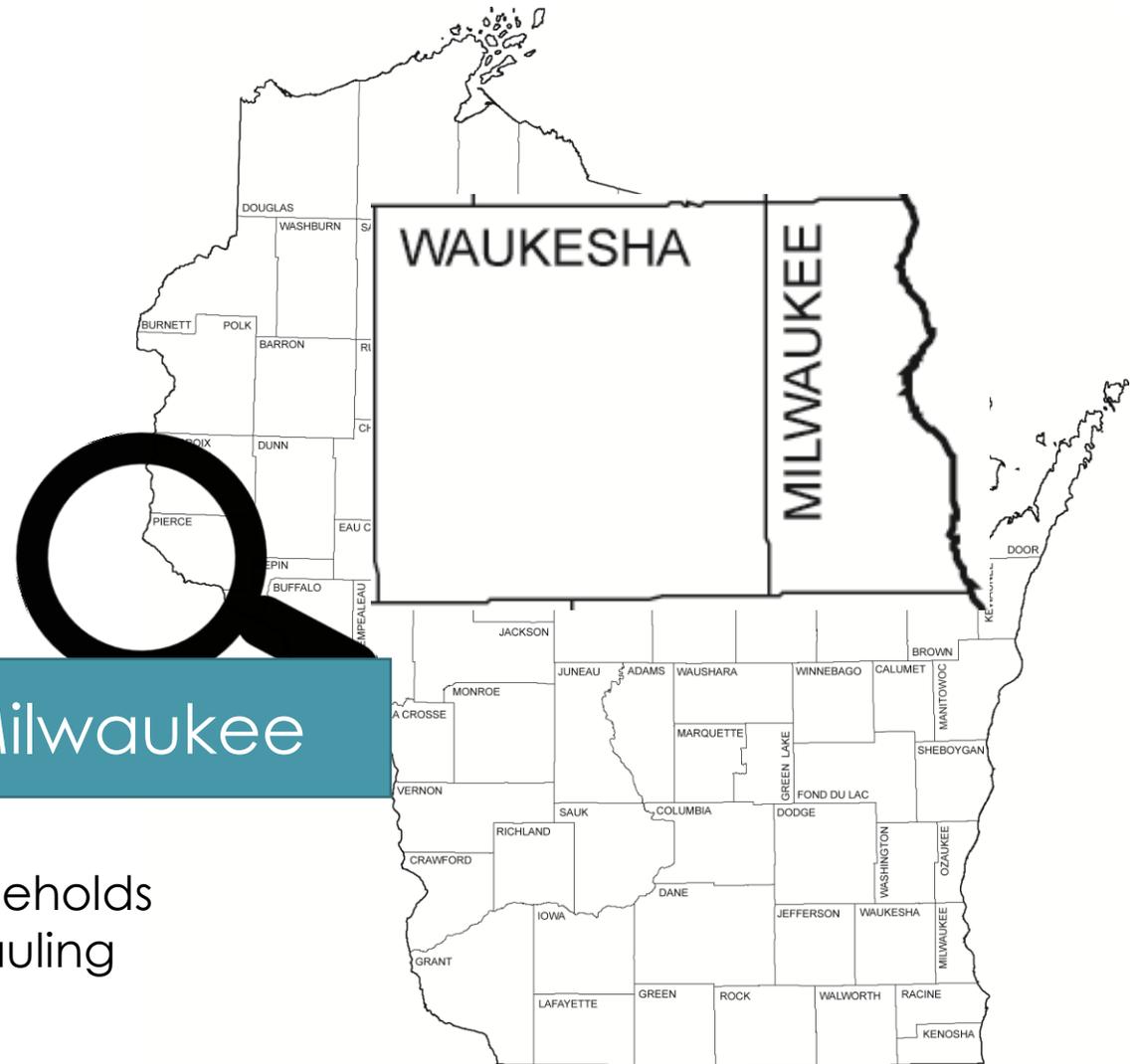


City of Milwaukee

- Urban
- 180,000 Households
- Municipal hauling

City of Milwaukee

MilwaukeeRecycles.com



MRF Overview

- Joint MRF opened in 2015
- 35 tph single residential stream-system
- 70,000 tons/year
- 2 municipal partners plus 3rd party tonnage



Waukesha County
WaukeshaCounty.gov/recycling



City of Milwaukee
MilwaukeeRecycles.com

Separate Educational Materials



- Separate lists that were **similar** but **not exactly the same**
- Additional items included cart tags, annual mailers, websites and social media
- 3rd Party lists varied more



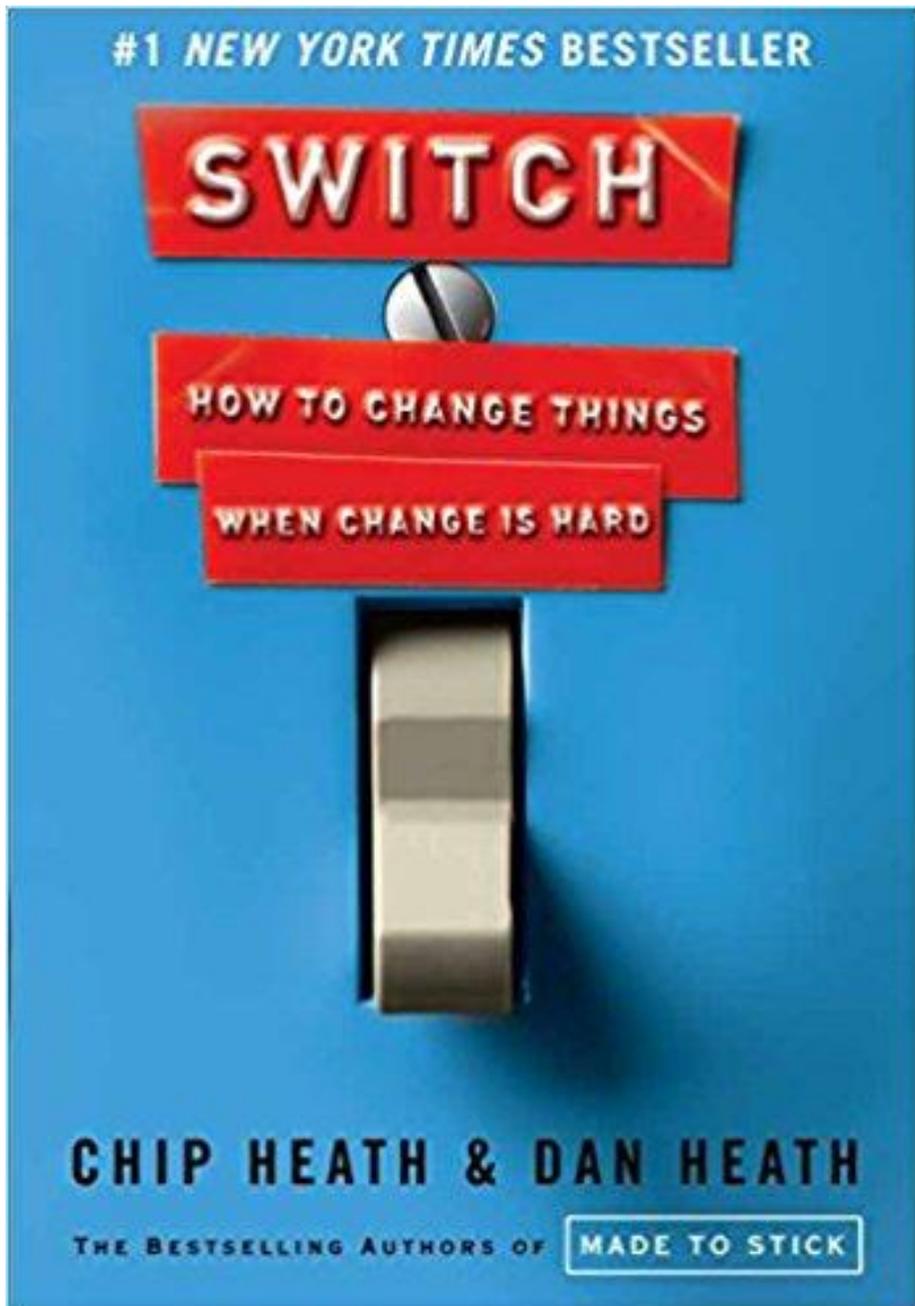
Waukesha County
WaukeshaCounty.gov/recycling



City of Milwaukee
MilwaukeeRecycles.com



Questions?



Create an emotional case for change, not just an analytical one.

Scale up successes.

Smooth the path to change.

Act healthier?



Purchase 1% Milk



Recycle right

Don't contaminate

Keep it green

A Hierarchy of Information

FIRST	1	One simple message Reach the most people.
NEXT	5	Some want more Consider the listening. Help support memory and action.
WHERE APPROPRIATE	50	A few want it all Easy to find, easy to reference, searchable, user-friendly.

PROVIDE A CRYSTAL CLEAR MESSAGE

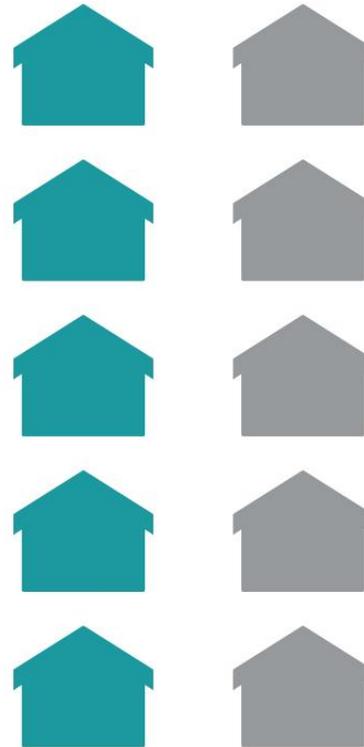
Don't bag your recyclables

Recycle your cans

PROVIDE A CRYSTAL CLEAR MESSAGE



BEFORE

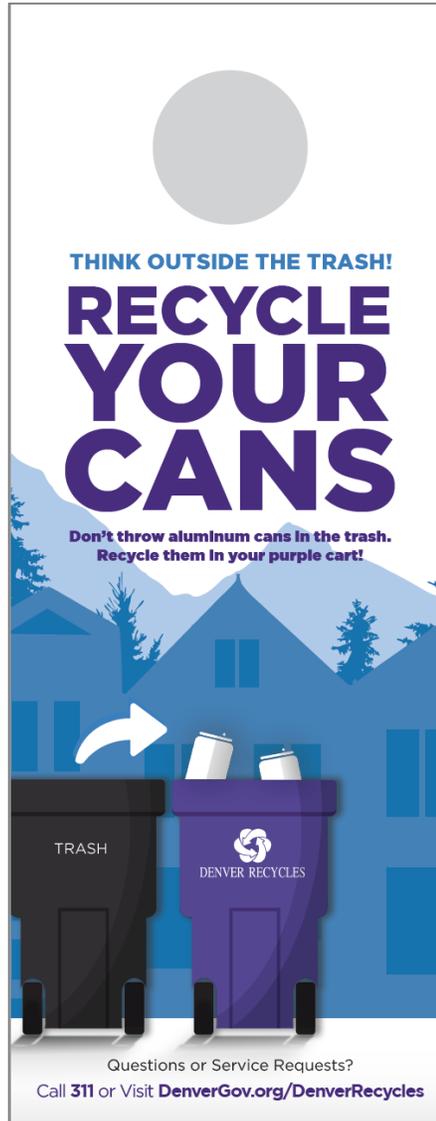


AFTER



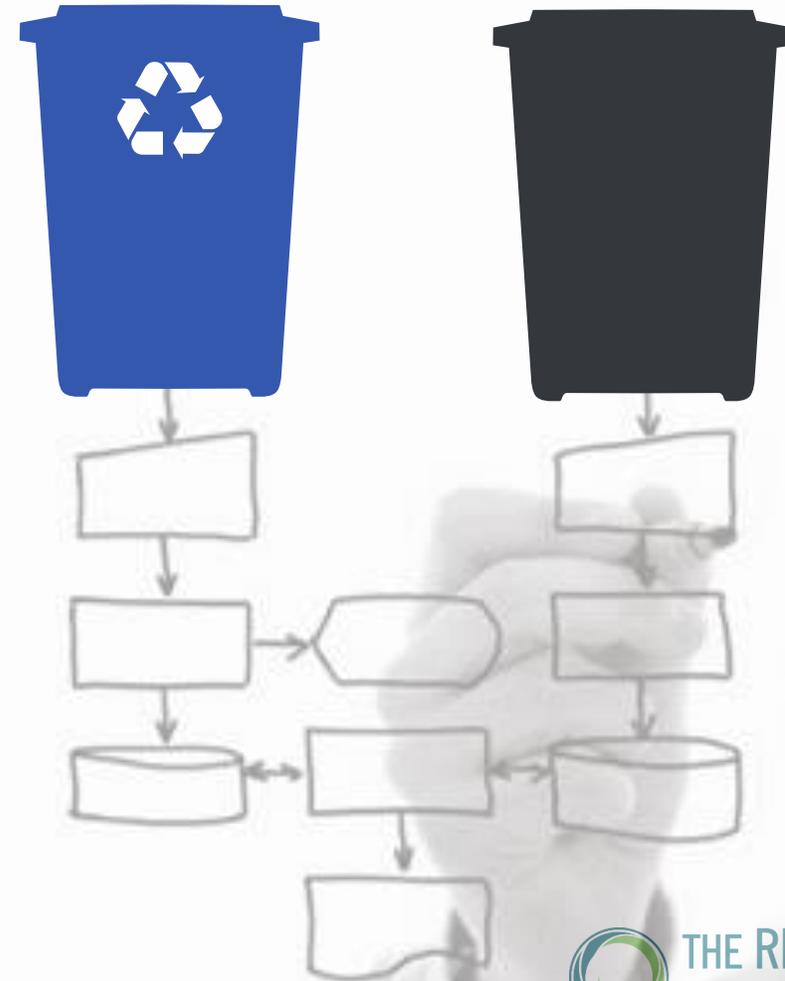
PROVIDE A CRYSTAL CLEAR MESSAGE

↑ 25%



RECYCLING AS SECOND NATURE

WASTE shape
RE-USE VALUE
GOOD OPPORTUNITY
condition material
convenience



*“What looks like resistance is
often lack of clarity.”*

-Chip and Dan Heath, *Switch*



Questions?



Harmonizing Recycling Messaging:

A Play in One Act



The Actors:

- The City
- The County
- The MRF
- The Recycling Partnership



Let's customize your campaign materials

Answer five questions to customize your FREE campaign materials to help tackle your top recycling issues. It's like magic, but more practical and effective.

LET'S GO



We'll be customizing the following three pieces.

TOP ISSUE MAILER



OOPS TAG



ANNUAL INFO CARD



Before we begin, make sure your accepted materials and top contaminants match your MRF's. Our [MRF Survey](#) will help you get on the same page as your hauler, which will lead to a more effective campaign.

[CONTINUE](#)

First: Review Acceptable Materials with MRF

MRF SURVEY: Acceptable Materials Worksheet

MRF/REP _____ DATE _____

CITY/REP _____

Use this document to identify and address acceptable and problematic materials, inform front line staff, and create materials to educate residents to clean-up the inbound recycling stream. It is recommended that the **local program representative and MRF operator/plant manager** complete this worksheet together every 6 months and during the creation or renewal of processing contracts. We encourage the use of this document in the RFP process as well.

Mark whether each item is: **Yes: Acceptable**, **No: Detrimental** or **No: Non-detrimental** or **No: But recycled**

Non-detrimental items may or may not go to market but do not cause any major problems.
Detrimental items can shut down or damage equipment, harm employees, and/or substantially degrade the value of material.
But recycled items are not wanted in the stream but will be pulled off the sorting line to be recycled if markets exist.

				PAPER PRODUCT				
				YES: Accept	NO: Detrimental	NO: Non-detrimental	NO: But recycled	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>					Cartons (gable top e.g. milk and orange juice, and aseptic e.g. juice boxes and soup)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>					Cold Cups (e.g. paper fountain drink cup)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>					Hard Cover Books
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>					Hot Cups (e.g. coffee cup)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>					Ice Cream Container
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>					Mail
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>					Kraft Bags
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>					Magazines
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>					Newspaper
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>					OCC (old corrugated cardboard)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>					Office Paper
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>					Paperback Books
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>					Paperboard Boxes (e.g. cereal boxes)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>					Pizza Boxes
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>					Shredded Paper
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>					Directions on how to properly recycle
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>					Take-out Containers
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>					Tissue Paper
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>					Other:

RECYCLINGPARTNERSHIP.ORG

MRF SURVEY: Acceptable Materials Worksheet

MRF/REP _____ DATE _____

CITY/REP _____

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But recycled items are not wanted in the stream but will be pulled off the sorting line to be recycled if markets exist.

				PAPER PRODUCT				
				YES: Accept	NO: Detrimental	NO: Non-detrimental	NO: But recycled	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>					Cartons (gable top e.g. milk and orange juice, and aseptic e.g. juice boxes and soup)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>					Cold Cups (e.g. paper fountain drink cup)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>					Hard Cover Books
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>					Hot Cups (e.g. coffee cup)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>					Ice Cream Container
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>					Mail



Enter Program Information

Provide contact information that should appear on your campaign materials.

Department Name (as it should appear on your campaign material)

DEPARTMENT NAME

Phone Number (as it should appear on your campaign material)

PHONE

Website URL (as it should appear on your campaign material)

WEBSITE

Return Address (as it should appear on your campaign material) *

RETURN ADDRESS

Upload Your Department's Logo

UPLOAD LOGO

Allowed file types: jpg, gif, png.

For best results, upload a high-resolution file.

[Save and Continue Later](#)

NEXT

Select Biggest Contaminant

SELECT YOUR TOP ISSUE

Your answer here will determine the focus of your Top Issue Postcard and will be featured on the back of your Oops Tag.



NO FOOD OR LIQUID IN THE CART

EMPTY ALL CONTAINERS BEFORE RECYCLING.

Food and liquid can ruin other recyclables.

NO PLASTIC BAGS IN THE RECYCLING CART



DO NOT BAG Recyclables

Collecting recyclables in a bag? Empty the contents into the cart.

Return plastic bags to retailers.



NO CLOTHES (OR LINENS) IN THE CART

Getting rid of clothing and linens?

USE DONATION PROGRAMS

Fabrics are recycled through special programs.

NO TANGLERS IN THE RECYCLING CART



NO HOSES, WIRES, CHAINS OR ELECTRONICS

Tanglers catch in machinery which is dangerous for workers.

Check locally for how to dispose of tanglers safely.



**Why? Let's Ask Our
MRF!**

Select Biggest Contaminant

SELECT YOUR TOP ISSUE

Your answer here will determine the focus of your Top Issue Postcard and will be featured on the back of your Oops Tag.

NO FOOD OR LIQUID IN THE CART

EMPTY ALL CONTAINERS BEFORE RECYCLING.

Food and liquid can ruin other recyclables.

YUCK

This postcard features a white recycling bin with a blue recycling symbol and a green splatter with a red diagonal line through it. The word "YUCK" is written in green on the splatter.

NO PLASTIC BAGS IN THE RECYCLING CART

DO NOT BAG

Recyclables

Collecting recyclables in a bag? Empty the contents into the cart.

Return plastic bags to retailers.

This postcard features a white recycling bin with a blue recycling symbol and a green plastic bag with a red diagonal line through it.

NOT IN YOUR CART

NO CLOTHES (OR LINENS) IN THE CART

Getting rid of clothing and linens?

USE DONATION PROGRAMS

Fabrics are recycled through special programs.

This postcard features a white t-shirt with a blue recycling bin and a red diagonal line through it.

NO TANGLERS IN THE RECYCLING CART

NO HOSES, WIRES CHAINS OR ELECTRONICS

Tanglers catch in machinery which is dangerous for workers.

Check locally for how to dispose of tangles safely.

This postcard features a white recycling bin with a blue recycling symbol and a green tangled hose with a red diagonal line through it.



Select 4 additional contaminants

SELECT FOUR ADDITIONAL ISSUES

- Do Not Bag Recyclables
- No Plastic Bags or Plastic Wrap
- No Needles
- No Tangles, Cords, Hoses, or Chains
- No Flammables, Fuel, or Batteries
- No Bulky Items
- No Glass
- No Yard Waste
- No Food or Liquid
- No Foam
- No Clothing or Linens

Selections will display as "NO" icons on the Oops Tag and Annual Info Card.



BACK

[Save and Continue Later](#)

NEXT

A few additional key pieces of info

YES or NO to key material mix differences (ie glass)

Do you accept cartons?

Yes

No

Do you accept glass?

Yes

No

Do you accept pizza boxes?

Yes

No


BACK

[Save and Continue Later](#)

NEXT

One last bit of information to graphically represent plastics

Select plastics collection

- We accept plastic bottles.
- We accept plastic bottles and tubs.
- We accept plastic bottles, tubs, and bulky rigids.
- We accept plastic bottles, tubs, bulky rigid, and thermoforms.

BACK

[Save and Continue Later](#)

NEXT

One last bit of information to graphically represent metals

Select metals collection

- We accept aluminum and steel cans.
- We accept aluminum, steel and aerosol cans, and foil.

BACK

NEXT

One last bit of information to graphically represent paper

Select paper collection

- We accept cereal boxes, newspaper, magazines and mail, flattened cardboard and paper tubes.
- We accept cereal boxes, newspaper, magazines and mail, flattened cardboard, paper tubes, and empty pizza boxes.

BACK

[Save and Continue Later](#)

NEXT

Select your
Print-ready
files!

Click below to download your customized files.

1-Top Issue Mailer 2- Oops Tag 3- Info Card

Saved if you created an account

**Work with printer/mailer to verify POSTAGE INFO*

DOWNLOAD TOP ISSUE MAILER

DOWNLOAD OOPS TAG

DOWNLOAD INFO CARD

NO PLASTIC BAGS IN THE RECYCLING CART



**DO NOT BAG
Recyclables**

Collecting recyclables in a bag? Empty the contents into the cart.

 Return plastic bags to retailers.

Example City, Example City Public Works
555-555-555 www.examplecityrecycling.com

Top
Issue
Mailer



OOPS!

PLEASE LEAVE THESE ITEMS OUT!

-  Do not Bag Recyclables (no garbage)
-  No Plastic Bags or Plastic Wrap
-  No Tanglers, Cords, Hoses or Chains
-  **YUCK**
No Food or Liquid (empty all containers)
-  No Clothing or Linens (drop-off only)
-  No Scrap Metal, Wood, or Furniture

CORRECT THIS AND WE WILL COLLECT NEXT TIME.

Collecting recyclables in a bag? Empty the contents into the cart.

Return plastic bags to retailers.

www.examplecityrecycling.com
Questions about your curbside recycling service?
555-555-5555

Oops
Tag

Example City Public Works
123 Main St.
Example City, MO 24533



RECYCLE
THANK YOU FOR RECYCLING THESE:

 Cans	 Cartons	 Glass	 Paper	 Plastic
 Aluminum and Steel Cans empty and rinse	 Food and Beverage Cartons empty and replace cap	 Bottles and Jars empty and rinse	 Mixed Paper, Newspaper, Magazines and Flattened Cardboard	 Kitchen, Laundry, Bath: Bottles and Containers empty and replace cap

NO!

-  Do not Bag Recyclables (no garbage)
-  No Tanglers, Cords, Hoses or Chains
-  **YUCK**
No Food or Liquid (empty all containers)
-  No Clothing or Linens (drop-off only)

555-555-555
Example City, Example City Public Works www.examplecityrecycling.com

Info Card

STEP-BY-STEP KIT

1. Gather Facts
2. Prep Communications
3. Train Staff
4. Deploy
5. Track

TIPS LINKS TO FILES

Anti-Contamination Recycling Kit

.....
Improving Quality in Your Recycling Program

If you are looking to clean up your residential recycling stream, this kit might be for you. As you will see, the approach is well tested and the results are both immediate and noteworthy.

This kit has been designed to provide steps, tools, and resources to help you improve the quality of your recycling program. It will require resources, planning, and time on your end, as well as a partnership with your MRF and hauler, but the benefits are many. Increasing the quality of the recycling stream can save on disposal fees, improve resident satisfaction with your program, and ensures the success and sustainability of the recycling system.

To get started, use this [ASSESSMENT TOOL](#) to make sure your community is ready to take on this challenge. Before starting this project you'll need to assess your budget, present your case to decision makers, and get buy-in from your city/town officials, your hauler and your MRF. Lastly, take advantage of what others have learned by reviewing this [PRO TIPS PAGE](#).

CURBSIDE



This toolkit includes:

- Guidance to help you broach this subject with your MRF and hauler
- Visual instructions and tools for targeted messages
- Tips to help you get the best results
- Tools to help you track and report results



This Kit was developed in collaboration with
Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection

Step 1 Aligning the Lists

PAPER PRODUCT	ACCEPT	DO NOT ACCEPT		DO NOT WANT ON LIST BUT ACCEPT
		NON-DETRIMENTAL	DETRIMENTAL	
Cartons (gable top containers like milk and orange juice, and aseptic containers like juice boxes and soup)	✓			
Cold Cups (e.g. paper fountain drink cup)		✓		
Hard Cover Books		✓		
Hot Cups (e.g. coffee cup)		✓		
Ice Cream Container		✓		
Junk Mail	✓			
Kraft Bags	✓			
Magazines	✓			
Newspaper	✓			
OCC	✓			
Office Paper	✓			
Paperback Books including phone books	✓			
Paperboard Boxes	✓			
Pizza Boxes food and grease free	✓			
Shredded Paper				✓
<i>Directions on how to prepare</i>	Promote community events and more efficient avenues for recycling			
Take-out Containers		✓		
Tissue Paper		✓		
Other:				

- Used in-depth conversations with staff representing the **municipalities, MRF operations, and material marketing** to ensure everyone was on the same page
- Identified what messages would be clear to those paying attention for
 - 3 seconds
 - 30 seconds
 - 3 minutes



Waukesha County
WaukeshaCounty.gov/recycling



City of Milwaukee
MilwaukeeRecycles.com

Step 2 Educating the Educators

- Drivers
- Call Center staff
- Outreach staff
- Municipal partners



Waukesha County
WaukeshaCounty.gov/recycling



City of Milwaukee
MilwaukeeRecycles.com

Step 3 Expanding the Audience

MRF-shed Workshop Outcomes:

- Spirit of collaboration
- DNR statewide similar event
- Agreement on the biggest contaminant issues



Waukesha County
WaukeshaCounty.gov/recycling



City of Milwaukee
MilwaukeeRecycles.com

What is Next?

- Implementation for the County and City
 - Overcoming barriers
- Work with partners to incorporate new materials
- Continue the conversation regionally, state-wide, and throughout the industry



Waukesha County
WaukeshaCounty.gov/recycling



City of Milwaukee
MilwaukeeRecycles.com



Fight Contamination
Recycle With Carts
Engage Your Residents
Campaign Builder



FIGHT CONTAMINATION →



RECYCLE WITH CARTS →



ENGAGE YOUR RESIDENTS →

Visit [RecyclingPartnership.org](https://www.RecyclingPartnership.org) for FREE TOOLS!

TRY THESE TOOLS. JOIN OUR NETWORK

Let's make recycling more & better!



TOOLS

Online
Library
Starters
BMPs



IDEAS

Webinars
Newsletters
E-Books
Forums



RESOURCES

Grants
Campaigns
Tech
Assistance

TOGETHER

Transforming Recycling For Good

We're all in this bin together

