

9 Steps

to Start a Recycling Program

1

LEARN a Little About Recycling

There are several categories of recyclable materials: containers, paper, electronics, food waste, and building materials are just a few. Your program should especially consider recycling aluminum cans and plastic bottles, as they are banned from all North Carolina landfills. Explore the sites below to learn more about recycling in general.

- **Division of Environmental Assistance and Customer Service:** www.ncenvironmentalassistance.org
- **Recycle More NC**, a statewide recycling campaign geared for adults 35 and older: www.recyclemorenc.org
- **RE3.org**, a statewide recycling campaign geared toward young adults: www.re3.org
- **Recycle Guys**, a statewide recycling campaign for children: www.recycleguys.org



GAIN Support for Recycling

Do a little research to gauge support for recycling. No matter your type of facility—office building, school, hospital, church, sport field, recreation building or entertainment venue—building/event management and/or property owners should be involved in determining the best recycling options. You might consider coordinating a recycling or green team to implement the program. In seeking support for a program, remember to mention the landfill bans on plastic bottles, aluminum cans and other items.

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IDENTIFY an Outlet for Collected Materials

There are many ways to recycle plastic bottles. You may be able to use the drop-off or collection services of your city or county recycling program. You can also work with your current trash hauler or recycling service provider to start a program.

- **Local Government Contacts:** <http://p2pays.org/localgov/ncwaste.html>
- **Recycling Markets Directory:** www.p2pays.org/dmrm

To search for recycling services, use the Recycling Markets Directory and choose "Landfill Ban Materials Recycling" in Step 1 and then look for the materials you want to recycle in Step 2. Recycling service listings can also be found in the local Yellow Pages or www.Earth911.org. If you need additional help or guidance, call the Division of Environmental Assistance and Customer Service toll-free at 877-623-6748.



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PLAN to Implement Materials Collection

Once you've determined the best outlet for the recyclable materials, you can work on the details of putting a program together. Draft a preliminary budget and plan for material collection. Building/event management and/or property owners should participate in organizing the budget plan. Consider the roles of facility staff, vendors, and volunteers at venues and events and key upper management should also be involved when making decisions at institutions. Participation of the person who signs off on collection contracts is critical in all cases since you may need to hire a collection vendor or change your hauling contract. Remember that recycling should reduce the waste stream, so you may be able to reduce frequency of trash pick-ups or the size of your disposal containers and then allocate the savings toward recyclables collection.



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CONSIDER Logistics

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Your recycling outlet or service provider will tell you how materials should be separated from the trash and what recyclables can be mixed together. "Single stream" recycling is becoming a more common practice, meaning all recyclables are mixed together. "Dual stream" is another approach, where paper fiber is collected separately from mixed containers. In some cases, you may need to separate all materials by type. Keep in mind the amount of space you have for recycling bins and make sure to keep the fire marshal happy by not blocking hallways with bins. Ideally, it is best to "twin" recycling containers with trash containers, which makes it convenient for users and helps reduce contamination of recyclables with garbage.



PURCHASE and/or Arrange for Collection Containers



Sometimes as part of a contract, your recycling service provider may supply collection containers. If that is not the case, you can find suitable containers at local office, janitorial supply, and home improvement stores. You can also find a comprehensive list of recycling and trash receptacle suppliers here:

www.ncenvironmentalassistance.org/web/deao/recycling/plastic-bottles/toolkit/purchase.

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Implement a COLLECTION Strategy

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Discuss the collection process with all parties involved in material handling and set a date for program implementation. This will likely include custodial staff. Often building occupants are required to take materials to centralized collection containers. Determine the final location of collection bins and calculate how many bins you'll need. Figure out precisely how materials will flow through your collection system, including who plays which role in the process. Work out the final details of how materials will be picked up by a service provider or delivered to a recycling center.



Implement an EDUCATION Campaign



If you want your recycling program to succeed, plan to implement a robust educational effort. Everyone should know what and how to recycle, which can be encouraged by clear directions and excellent signage. Reach out to all the potential users of your program and maintain a consistent commitment to education and promotion. Help users easily identify receptacle locations. Define what is recyclable and what is not, and explain how to separate the materials, if needed. Purchase or create signs, stickers or posters to label the containers to keep the bins free from contaminants and designated for recycling.

- For **stickers, signs and posters** to label bins: <http://www.re3.org/graphics.htm>.
- For more **formal education techniques**, check out DEAC's PowerPoint presentations available for use, including recycling myths: www.slideshare.net/NCDENR.

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MAINTAIN Support

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Stay in close contact with your recycling service provider to regularly check in on how collections are going and obtain weight tracking data. Maintain program visibility to keep your recycling program strong and healthy. Update users on a continuous basis regarding the success of the project by highlighting recycling and waste reduction figures. Reward those that participate by letting them know how their part helps the environment.

- **Recycling statistics** can be found here: www.re3.org/facts.htm.

