



# How to Improve Your Recycling Program: A Waste Reduction Guide for Businesses

## Make the Pledge

- A successful recycling program needs the support and commitment of senior management staff. Managers need to understand the financial savings, marketing opportunities, and environmental importance of recycling in order to assist staff with implementing new waste reduction strategies.
- Create a Green Team, a designated group of employees to assist management in rolling out the new recycling plan. The size of the Green Team should be relative to the size of the business. For large businesses, designate one employee from each department. Make sure janitorial staff are included in the Green Team!

## Conduct a Waste Audit

- It's helpful to have some data about your current garbage habits. Information gathered in a waste audit can help in measuring the success of your program. You can print the Waste Audit Toolkit for help.
- Take note of where garbage and recycling is currently located and how it is displayed, if at all. Make a visual assessment of what types of wastes and recyclables are being thrown away in each location.
- Assess the current contract terms and fees for garbage disposal and determine if a lower fee is available and realistically attainable (downsizing a dumpster to a toter for example).

## Identify Goals

- Use information gathered in the waste audit to identify goals and waste streams that can be targeted for reduction, recycling, and composting. Is most of your garbage plastic? Paper? Food? Packaging? Where are the "high traffic" areas and are there appropriate bins for the types of wastes usually created there? Are your customers recycling? Is it easy for them to recycle? Are there non-recyclable materials that your business could donate or downsize? Could your ordering practices be changed to create less waste?
- Come up with a strategy to improve the system based on your findings. It may help to set a measurable goal such as "reduce total garbage by 20%" or "reduce garbage removal costs by 10%"

## Develop a Recycling Strategy

- Delegate responsibilities among the Green Team members. Make sure everyone understands their role in the recycling program.
- Identify budgetary considerations for any new purchases of bins, materials, etc and how those costs can be met?
- If food-scrap composting is one of your goals, how will the compost be managed and where?

## Implement Changes

- Make new purchases if necessary.
- Move and/or add garbage and recycling bins according to your plan.
- Clearly label all bins and be sure to print our signs and hang them strategically to remind staff and customers about recycling.
- Educate the participants of the recycling program. Hold a staff meeting, send emails, or print and hang our signs to inform staff about what the program.
- If food scrap composting is one of your goals, consider having Green Team members be present for lunch periods while the new changes are implemented.

## Monitor Success

- Ask for feedback from employees about what is and isn't working.
- Have the Green Team continue to meet to discuss any obstacles with the roll-out of the new recycling program.
- Have the Green Team conduct another waste audit and report their findings.
- Assess garbage removal expenses, new inventory tracking, and/or new recycling revenues to quantify the program's success.