

# RECYCLING STARTS HERE



How do we begin a recycling program? The answer may be different for each community, school, or business. But there are a few things that are common to all successful programs—support, education, communication, and a constant willingness to improve the process.

*Special thanks to Southeast Recycling Development Council and US-EPA for the rich resources included in this guide.*

# EVALUATE YOUR WASTE STREAM

Evaluating your waste stream is a crucial step in beginning a waste reduction program. This starts with researching your community demographics. Consider these factors:

- Manufacturing operations and business parks
- Agricultural activity
- Rural or urban community
- Waste services currently offered
- Transportation

## DEFINING A PROGRAM

**UT-CTAS HAS A  
HANDY TOOL FOR  
FINDING NON-  
HAZARDOUS  
SOLID WASTE FA-  
CILITIES IN TEN-  
NESSEE AT [HTTP://  
CTAS-  
GIS02.PSUR.UTK.E  
DU/  
ENVIRONMENT/  
SWF/](http://ctas-gis02.psur.utk.edu/environment/swf/)**

The Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation developed waste reduction tiers defining different types of programs in Tennessee. The tiers are simply a guide; a program may not possess all of the criteria in a given tier, or may have items from multiple tiers. The following descriptions are based upon these tiers with added components.



# LEVEL 1

## Small Rural Population

- **Provide collection bins at convenience centers for public drop-off**
- **Minimum processing**
- **One or two materials collected**

A strong recycling drop-off center should be staffed to prevent contamination and illegal dumping. Clear signage must be present.

Convenience centers can be easily expanded to include recycling collection; additional recycling locations may be added to accommodate the population.



School campuses are excellent spots for recycling as they also provide education opportunities. Easy access is key. In 2006-2007, Oxford, MS saw a 308,750 pound increase in recycling by simply adding a second drop-off site. (SERDC)

# MARKETING YOUR MATERIAL

A healthy recycling program should start with materials that you can collect and move the easiest. For Tennessee, this means paper, metal, and plastic. The object is to match what your community collects with the available market, *not to provide collection for every possible commodity*. If you don't have a market, don't collect it.



## FINDING A RECYCLER FOR YOUR MATERIAL

- **RMCT**—a non-profit organization in Tennessee dedicated to assisting communities with recycling efforts. RMCT acts as a broker dealing with several recyclers and provides the community with the best price.
- **UT-CIS Recycling Markets Directory**—the Recycling Markets Directory contains information about companies that purchase recyclables. It may be found at <http://www.cis.utk.edu/RMD/>
- **TRC Events**

# **LEVEL 2**

**More Developed Rural  
Moderate Population  
Includes elements of level 1 plus:**

- **Offering additional commodity collection**
- **Mulching on a small scale**
- **Occasional HHW event**
- **Small education program—signs, web info**
- **Government Recycling**
- **Processing material—baling/storing**

At this level, most programs do not offer door to door waste collection. Private waste haulers may contract with citizens for waste collection and may offer a recycling subscription service.

## **What is HHW?**

Household hazardous waste is an unwanted household product that is flammable, corrosive, reactive or toxic. These products should not be disposed in a landfill. For more information about Tennessee's HHW program visit <http://www.tn.gov/environment/swm/hhw/>.

# GOVERNMENT RECYCLING

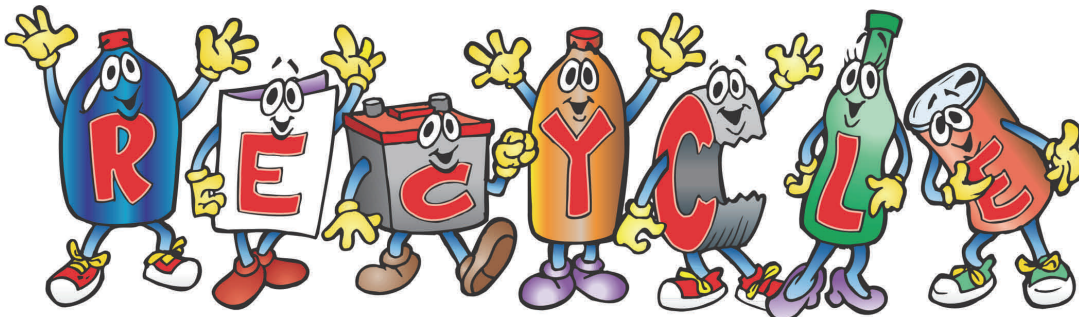
Public building recycling is a great way to lead by example. A good program provides:

- Convenient collection containers
- Desk to floor aggregation center
- Agreement with janitorial services to transport the material to a staging area for pick-up

Often, the paper is high quality office paper which brings a nice price at market. Keeping track of the amount of material recycled is important so that you can report to your community how much of their tax revenue was saved through these efforts.

## Education Ideas:

- Clear signage
- Web information
- School presentations
- Recycle Guys
- Participation in conservation events such as ARD or Earth Day
- Exhibiting at fairs, school and public events
- Organizing waste free events
- TV /Radio Ads



# FUNDING YOUR PROGRAM

Perhaps the most crucial aspect of your recycling program is funding. How will you acquire funding to start or expand? Some key points to remember are:

- Cost avoidance—the amount of money saved per ton by diverting material from the landfill
- Sale of recyclables—focusing on the material that is most easily moved and has a higher monetary value
- Apply for recycling equipment and waste reduction grants. The Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation offers annual grants to assist solid waste regions with recycling efforts. More information may be found at <http://www.tn.gov/environment/swm/grants/>
- Grant writing assistance may be found through TN Development Districts, CTAS, and MTAS
- Bin grants offered through TRC and the recycling industry
- Full Cost Accounting—identifying and assessing the cost of solid waste operations which aids decision makers with short and long term planning



# **LEVEL 3 /4**

## **MODERATE TO LARGE POPULATION GREATER URBAN INFLUENCE**

- Full spectrum of recyclables
- Aggressive industry and government recycling
- Providing or contracting curbside recycling
- Collects, processes, stores, and markets recyclables
- HHW facility
- Promoting backyard composting
- Food waste program
- Industrial composting
- Public event recycling or waste free events

## **CURBSIDE RECYCLING**

Curbside collection programs most often use single stream or co-mingled collection systems. Co-mingled recycling is most convenient for participants. Residents generally receive bins or a roll-cart. Programs that utilize roll carts, large bins, or multiple bins usually see a strong return.



# **WRITING AN EFFECTIVE CONTRACT: TIPS FOR A STRONG PARTNERSHIP**

EPA WasteWise Resource Management encourages communities who contract for solid waste and/or recycling services to think of their contract not just as a way to move trash but instead to manage resources. What’s the difference? Here’s how they explain it: “Unlike traditional solid waste service contracts, resource management (RM) compensates waste contractors based on performance in achieving your organization's waste reduction goals rather than the volume of waste disposed. As a result, RM aligns waste contractor incentives with your own goals as you both explore innovative approaches that foster cost-effective resource efficiency through prevention, recycling, and recovery.” The following table is an adaptation of the table found on at:

**<http://www.epa.gov/waste/conserve/rrr/>**

<b>FEATURE</b>	<b>TRADITIONAL HAULING CONTRACT</b>	<b>RM CONTRACT</b>
<b>CONTRACTOR COMPENSATION</b>	Unit price based on volume or # of pickups	Capped fee for waste hauling
<b>INCENTIVE STRUCTURE</b>	Contractor has financial incentive to maximize waste volume	Waste generator and contractor work together to derive value from resource efficiency
<b>WASTE GENERATOR-CONTRACTOR RELATIONSHIP</b>	Minimum generator-contractor interface	Generator-contractor work together for maximum efficiency

## **MAINTAINING THE PROGRAM**

- Keep up enthusiasm and education for the program
- Promote your success with press releases, applying for state and national awards such as the **TRC Recycler of the Year Award**
- Plan a special event or join in celebrating national events such as America Recycles Day or Earth Day

## **SPECIAL EVENT RECYCLING**

Special event recycling is a great way to promote your program. It can be as simple as providing an empty trailer and picking it up full after the event. More ideas and free promotional material may be found at the EPA website:<http://www.epa.gov/waste/consERVE/rrr/rogo>

## **EPA WARM MODEL**

Need another reason to promote recycling? The EPA Waste Reduction Model helps solid waste planners and organizations track and voluntarily report greenhouse gas emissions reductions from several different waste management practices. You may find the online calculator at [http://www.epa.gov/climatechange/wycd/waste/calculators/Warm\\_home.html](http://www.epa.gov/climatechange/wycd/waste/calculators/Warm_home.html)

## **EPA REGION 4 MUNICIPAL RECYCLING TOOLKIT**

The Municipal Government Toolkit (MGTK) was designed to provide the information and resources necessary for state and local governments to make successful recycling programs a reality. More information at <http://www.epa.gov/region4/recycle/>

## **UT-CIS MATERIALS EXCHANGE**

The Tennessee Materials Exchange lists potentially useful materials both available and wanted and serves as a matchmaker between those who have materials and those who want them.

<http://www.cis.tennessee.edu/environmental/recycle/TME>

## **THE TENNESSEE RECYCLING COALITION**

The Tennessee Recycling Coalition is a network of recyclers, communities, government, and citizens that promote resource conservation and waste reduction. TRC hosts annual conferences and workshops to provide forums for interested parties to share information and ideas. For more information visit [www.trc-online.org](http://www.trc-online.org).