



Montgomery County Solid Waste Transfer Station, Moraine, Ohio

Solid Waste

Solid waste services are a major responsibility of local governments. Are there ways to reduce the amount of waste and reduce the cost of services?

The Issues

“Garbage collection” is a central responsibility of local governments in the United States. Local regulation of Municipal

Solid Waste (MSW), or the sum of residential and commercial waste streams in the U.S., dates back [at least to the 1650's](#). It is a critical service for communities of any size. It protects public health, preserves community appearance, and supports a desirable quality of life. Municipal waste management and recycling services are likely among the most frequent and visible forms of interaction between local governments and their residents.

Ohioans, like all Americans, produce a considerable amount of solid waste. Approximately 4.7 pounds of waste was

generated per person per day in 2017 [according to the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency](#). The amount of MSW disposed by Ohioans in 2017 totaled over 10 million tons.

As we know, simply disposing of solid waste is not considered an adequate or sustainable solid waste management strategy. Therefore, residents, businesses, and even construction sites must focus on reducing the amount of waste sent to the landfill by reusing or recycling as many materials as possible. Recycling programs, however, are becoming increasingly complicated. In a solid waste market with relatively low landfill tipping fees, there may be little incentive for a government to participate in a recycling program. Recycling rates for in Ohio seem to have [reached a plateau](#). The market for these materials is also changing. International pressures for lower “contamination” rates have changed the economics of mixed recycling, which is forcing changes in how recycling programs are managed and how they are communicated to the public. While some communities are [moving back to source-separated recycling](#) (dual stream) to combat contamination issues, others are [cancelling recycling programs](#) altogether.

What Communities can do

Community Education & Outreach

- Provide educational information to residents and businesses about waste reduction and recycling. County Solid Waste Management Districts have comprehensive resources and some offer grants for community education programs.

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Miami Valley Solid Waste Districts

- [Darke County Solid Waste Management District](#), Krista Fourman, kfourman@co.darke.oh.us, 937.547.0827
- [Greene County Solid Waste Management District](#), Dana Storts, dstorts@co.greene.oh.us, 937.562.5929
- [Miami County Solid Waste Management District](#), Lauren Karch, lkarch@miamicountyohio.gov, 937.440.3488 x8700
- [Montgomery County Solid Waste Management District](#), Robert Downing downingb@mcoho.org, 937.496.3108
- [Preble County Solid Waste Management District](#), Beth Wright, beth.wright@prebswmd.org, 937.456.6880

Resources

- [Miami Valley Data Commons](#)
- [Association of Ohio Recyclers](#) (AOR)
- [Institute for Local Self-Reliance](#) (ISLR)
- [National Recycling Coalition](#) (NRC)
- [Ohio Association of Litter Prevention and Recycling Professionals](#) (OALPRP)
- [Organics Recycling Association](#) of Ohio (ORAO)
- [Reuse International](#)
- [Solid Waste Association of North America](#) (SWANA)
- [Zero Waste International Alliance](#) (ZWIA)
- [Ohio EPA Division of Materials and Waste Management](#)
- [Ohio EPA Division of Environmental and Financial Assistance](#)
- [Social marketing campaigns for recycling](#)

- Host a Recycling or Zero Waste town hall meeting for residents and invite the local Solid Waste Management District to answer questions.
- Host a visit to the Montgomery County Solid Waste District’s [Environmental Learning Center](#), featuring hands-on exhibits and a green parking lot.

- Keep your community's website updated with the latest information about municipal recycling, community reuse opportunities, and waste disposal programs. Think about how to use the web and social media to change attitudes about waste and recycling, such as Cleveland's "[One Simple Act](#)" campaign concerning what can or cannot be recycled.
- Partner with your community's recycling hauler to conduct a [Contamination Curbside Audit](#) to determine if residents are recycling properly, Share the results with your residents.
- Help recruit volunteers for projects and programs sponsored by your county Solid Waste District. Many community efforts to combat litter and illegal dumping are dependent on community volunteers. A "[Trash Bash](#)" is an example of a roadside clean-up/recycling event that requires many volunteers and will also protect water quality.
- Participate in county level efforts to address scrap tire dumping. Contact your county Solid Waste District for more information.
- Encourage ideas that treat waste as an opportunity to create new business and employment. The [Zero Waste NEO](#) group is working toward that goal.
- Partner with your local school district on a [Zero Waste class project](#).
- Plan a zero waste event using the [Zero Waste Event Planning Guide](#). **BYG**
- Benchmark residential recycling services against top performing communities in the Miami Valley and learn best practices for waste reduction, including automated collection using carts, seasonal yard waste collection, and consistent education programs.
- Review current waste collection contracts for cost-saving opportunities, such as automated collection and separate disposal pricing. Increase emphasis on recycling. Contact your Solid Waste District for a bid template. **BYG**
- Establish a program to donate edible but unwanted food (food rescue) and manage organic discards (wasted food), which is a large portion of the waste stream. Work with your county's foodbank to establish a pickup schedule. Set up a community compost site at a community garden or other demonstration site. Likewise, the Dayton Foodbank is setting up an anaerobic organic waste digester; this may be a model for your community.
- Offer year-round resident drop-off for household hazardous wastes, computers, pharmaceuticals, fats, oils and grease. Participate in your Solid Waste District's annual scrap tire event. **BYG**
- Follow best practices for managing hazardous wastes and training city staff.
- Cultivate city staff leaders by encouraging them to participate in the [Master Recycler Program](#). Join a state or national solid waste organization (see resources section) for additional guidance and training.
- Implement a recycling program at city hall and other municipal buildings, and then conduct a waste audit to identify the remaining sources of waste, along with the best ways to reduce them.
- Apply for a grant for the development of a recycling program in public spaces.

Internal operations

- Set specific goals for waste reduction, reuse, and recycling within the community's own buildings. Also make and implement a plan to reach those goals. **BYG**

- Provide access to recycling infrastructure and services at public places such as parks, community centers, schools, and libraries. **BYG**
- Apply for a [Recycling Incentive Grant](#) from the Montgomery County Solid Waste District, which helps district members enhance, increase, or promote recycling, waste reduction, litter prevention, composting, and end use markets for recycled materials.
- Establish Zero Waste guidelines for city events. Invite Master Recycling volunteers to community events to educate the public about better waste management practices. Five Rivers MetroParks has [a guide](#) to their zero-waste event practices.
- Purchase event recycling containers and make them available for events such as block parties.
- Host a Reuse Fair, a Repair Café or a “FreeCycle” style swap meet event, as South Euclid, OH has done. **BYG**
- Develop cooperative marketing with local thrift stores to encourage reuse of clothing and household goods from the waste stream. Or consider a contract with [Simple Recycling](#) for free collection of textiles and small household goods.
- Deconstruction – Develop a [deconstruction and salvage policy](#) that keeps reusable building materials out of the landfill.
- Establish a construction & demolition recycling policy for municipal buildings. **BYG**
- Recycling - Provide curbside recycling for residents with rollout containers no smaller than 50 gallons. **BYG**
- Composting — Review ordinances to support home composting. Invite the Solid Waste District to do a composting workshop for residents.
- Establish a community-wide composting program to manage food and organic waste. **BYG** Private sector composting companies operating at a [community scale](#) or [regional scale](#) exist in the Miami Valley.
- Ohio EPA has a [model zoning code](#) to encourage organic waste composting and urban agriculture.
- Establish incentives to encourage waste reduction programs for businesses in your community. **BYG**
- Adopt the “[Pay-as-You-Throw](#)” approach for solid waste services. **BYG**
- Require commercial & multi-family recycling. **BYG**
- Buy Recycled – establish a policy to consider buying goods with recycled content. Use the [Sustainable Procurement Playbook for Cities](#) for reference to assist you in your planning efforts. The Montgomery County Solid Waste District has a [Buy Recycled Grant](#) program to help member jurisdictions get started. **BYG**
- Ban [use of plastic bags](#). **BYG**
- Review the enforcement practices for illegal dumping ordinances to ensure adequate deterrence.
- For other rules, policies, and programs that could be implemented at the local level to increase recycling and recovery rates while

Ordinances and policies

- Set a waste reduction goal for the community as a whole. Make and implement a plan to reach that goal. **BYG**
- Zero waste — Set a zero-waste goal and create an implementation plan, as the [City of Oberlin has done](#).
- Reuse - Review existing ordinances and make sure they allow all opportunities for waste reduction, such as composting, garage sales, separate pick-up days, and even scavenging. **BYG**

reducing solid waste management costs, see the resources of [The Institute for Local Self Reliance](#).

Broader collaboration

- Explore cooperative contracting opportunities to save money and improve services for waste collection and recycling. The Cuyahoga County Solid Waste District offers guidance and a free consulting service.
- Work with the County Solid Waste District, other communities, and local businesses to develop the local market for recycling and materials reuse, thus strengthening the economy.
- Explore the sharing of, or joint bidding for, recycling equipment, such as carts and trucks.
- Join and support efforts to establish food waste composting on a regional scale.