

K-12, COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES RECYCLING



Introduction

From paper and electronics to food scraps and yard waste, our educational facilities generate tons of waste each year. This material is not only a waste in terms of natural resources, but also in terms of overall operational efficiency and expenditure. However, by incorporating recycling, composting, and waste reduction strategies into a facility's overall business process, all types of schools can benefit from:

- reduced purchasing costs for new materials,
- reduced waste hauling and disposal costs,
- potential revenue from collected recyclables, and
- increased efficiency of operations.

The following resources are provided to facilitate the waste reduction and resource conservation efforts within K-12 schools, colleges and universities. This information includes guidance documents, planning tools, case studies, models, templates and other tools to institutionalize resource conservation best management practices within campus operations. Additionally, such efforts are encouraged by the [USEPA Resource Conservation Challenge](#) within its focus on [Municipal Solid Waste Recycling](#), and [paper recycling](#) specifically.

General Information

Schools, including K-12, colleges, and universities, and offices typically generate significant volumes of recyclable paper, including white paper, mixed paper, corrugated cardboard,

magazines and journals, and newspaper. As part of its focus on increased paper recycling, the [USEPA offers paper recycling resources](#) tailored to K-12 Schools and Colleges and Universities interested in setting up paper recycling programs.

USEPA also offers [tips for a waste-less school year](#) and [paper recycling best management practices](#) for K-12 and colleges and universities.

K-12



Introduction

The USEPA hosts a number of useful resources related to developing and sustaining K-12 recycling programs.

[Tools to Reduce Waste in Schools](#) publication is designed to help schools and school districts to reduce the amount of waste they generate. It includes information on how to start a waste reduction program or expand an existing one. The guide illustrates you programs can benefit the school, community, and the environment by reducing, reusing, and recycling school waste. In addition to identifying 10 steps for becoming waste-free, *Tools to Reduce Waste in Schools* provides many easy-to-implement waste reduction activities and a variety of resources that can be accessed for additional information and support.

Did you know that every school lunch creates an average of 67 pounds of trash per school year? Learn how to reduce the number of items in your lunch that must be thrown out at the [USEPA's Waste-Free Lunch](#) web page. This resource offers a waste free lunch poster designed to help students learn how to reduce, reuse, and recycle items in their school lunches. Also learn how to get parents involved and to share your success. This site also includes a number of valuable web resources for further research.

[USEPA Waste Wise Program](#) offers industry sector resources, including those relating to [K-12 waste reduction](#).

The [Sustainable Oregon Schools Initiative](#) is a long-term, comprehensive, state-wide program to help interested districts and schools integrate sustainability into their operations and classrooms. Sustainability includes all aspects of school operations, teaching and culture. This site offers resources to help Oregon's K-12 schools and districts on their journey toward sustainability.

The [California Division of the State Architect Sustainable Schools Website](#) provides a diverse collection of sustainable building resources including the numerous benefits, guidelines, programs, case studies, relevant publications, funding options/incentives, and plenty more! The site is geared toward those interested and involved in designing, developing, and constructing high performance schools, such as school administrators and board officials, developers, architects, planners, researchers, teachers, parents, and others. Please visit our [introduction page](#) to take the first steps to learn more about sustainability or click on the surrounding images to learn to integrate sustainable design into your school!

Statewide Programs & Resources

- All [schools in Connecticut](#) are required by state law to recycle [ten mandated items](#).
- [North Carolina law](#) supports the participation of schools in recycling programs and provides many useful related resources (e.g., guidelines, success stories, waste assessment tools, frequently asked questions).
- For more examples, see the California Integrated Waste Management Board's web page with a sampling of [school waste diversion programs in other states](#).

COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES



Introduction

Many requirements for statewide recycling and other waste reduction efforts are specific to state agencies, which by definition can include colleges and universities. The following are example of just a few.

- [California's State Agency Model Integrated Waste Management Act](#) requires that State agencies develop and implement an integrated waste management plan to divert at least 50 percent of their solid waste from disposal facilities. State agency must also submit an annual report summarizing its yearly progress in implementing waste diversion programs. By definition, state agencies includes every office, department, division, board, commission, or other agency of the State of California, including the California Community Colleges and the California State University. The Regents of the University of California are encouraged to implement this division.

- The State of Nevada directs the certain public entities to recycle paper and paper products, including the University and Community College System of Nevada and School Districts.
- The South Carolina Solid Waste Policy and Management Act of 1991 calls for each county, state agency and publicly funded college and university to report annually the amount of material it recycles.
- In Connecticut, recycling is state law! This means that everyone must recycle including all public and private colleges and universities.

The goal of the GrassRoots Recycling Network Campus ZeroWaste web resources is to help students and other campus community members tap into the wealth of web-accessible information that is available on waste reduction and recycling. These pages outline recycling and waste reduction web resources for colleges and universities, opportunities to take action in waste reduction campaigns, list zero waste campuses and useful web resources for creating sustainable or "green" campuses.

Case Studies/Success Stories

WasteWise is a free EPA program through which organizations—including schools—eliminate costly municipal solid waste and select industrial wastes, benefiting their bottom line and the environment. WasteWise is a flexible program, allowing partners to design their own waste reduction programs tailored to their needs and offering partners free technical assistance and recognition opportunities.

RecycleMania is a friendly competition and benchmarking tool for college and university recycling programs to promote waste reduction activities to their campus communities. Over a 10-week period, schools report recycling and trash data which are then ranked according to who collects the largest amount of recyclables per capita, the largest amount of total recyclables, the least amount of trash per capita, or have the highest recycling rate. With each week's reports and rankings, participating schools watch how their results fluctuate against other schools and use this to rally

Additional Resources

EPA's Healthy School Environments web portal provides a vast array of information on environmental issues affecting schools. The site includes links to topics such as school design and construction, energy efficiency, environmental education and waste reduction.

Healthy Schools Network, Inc. hosts a web site with lots of links to resources related to school environmental issues ranging from health concerns to conservation.