

MULTIFAMILY RECYCLING



Introduction

As we continue to meet the EPA's Resource Conservation Challenge to reach or exceed a national recycling rate of 35%, increased multifamily recycling remains a key component to success. The following information is intended to promote the implementation of new and to improve the effectiveness of existing multifamily recycling nationwide.

The best place to start and make a difference with respect to waste reduction and recycling is right in our own homes. There are numerous ways in which we can achieve this depending on where we live and the local recycling options available to us. One of the most common residential recycling programs is curbside recycling, a municipal program operated to pickup a specific set of recyclable materials, usually weekly. Typically, most residential recycling collection programs are designed for single family residences. With the growth in multifamily housing on the rise nationally, there is increasing demand for multifamily recycling programs.

Most often, residents in multi-family dwellings are not able to sign up for individual recycling service. Generally, the manager of the multi-family residential complex makes such arrangements for the entire facility by contacting the local solid waste management service provider. Frequently, multi-family residences are not served by the local residential curbside recycling collection program because such programs were not designed to serve multifamily complexes with respect to space, collection, routing, billing, etc. Additionally, multi-family residences can be classified as commercial properties and thus offered commercial recycling programs, which as such, are not geared to the unique characteristics of these properties.

Because multi-family residences have district program needs that are not necessarily met with traditional residential or commercial recycling programs, the following information is provided to facilitate the implementation of new programs as well as to enhance the effectiveness of existing multi-family recycling programs.

General Information

Most often, multi-family residents are not able to sign up for individual recycling service. Generally, the manager of a multi-family residential complex makes such arrangements for entire site by contacting the local solid waste management service provider. If there is no recycling at the complex, residents can also encourage the management to establish a recycling program by letting them know it is important.

- USEPA has a number of useful publications that address the general topic of multi-family recycling, including:

- Complex Recycling Issues: Strategies for Record-Setting Waste Reduction in Multifamily Dwellings -- This fact sheet packet is oriented toward recycling coordinators, building managers and owners, and highlights record setting multi-family dwelling waste reduction programs.
- Multifamily Recycling: A Golden Opportunity for Solid Waste Reduction -- This fact sheet explains the diversion rates, costs, and common elements of high performing multifamily recycling programs across the United States, based on the experience of communities like your own. This information is drawn from the results of a national study that compared single-family and multifamily recycling services.
- Multifamily Recycling: A National Study -- This report is the result of the first national study of multifamily recycling programs.
- With funding from the Minnesota Office of Environmental Assistance, Eureka Recycling created the “Exploring Multifamily Recycling” toolkit highlighting best multifamily practices in the country. This toolkit provides tools for recycling program coordinators to assess their multifamily programs and improve them using the best practices in multifamily recycling.
- The Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection developed a fact sheet regarding planning and implementing a successful recycling program in an apartment or multifamily complex.
- The USEPA offers an overview of addressing the economic incentive Pay As You Throw when implementing multi-family residential recycling.
- The California Apartment Association put together a 2007 legislative update in regarding recycling in multifamily recycling that contains general information, an overview of related California legislative history as well as local challenges to such programs.

Case Studies/Success Stories:

In addition to the case studies and success stories included in the above references, the following information also demonstrates the value of such programs...

- Wisconsin’s Waste Reduction and Recycling Law and local ordinances require the owners of **all** multi-family buildings and facilities to: provide separate containers for the materials banned from landfills and incinerators; notify residents in writing about the recycling program at the time of renting or purchasing and at least semi-annually thereafter; arrange for the collection and transportation of recyclables to a recycling or processing facility; educate residents about the three Rs (Reduce, Reuse and Recycle) and other waste reduction strategies; and obey local recycling ordinance requirements.
- In recognition that multifamily recycling programs are important for California’s continued success in waste reduction and recycling, the California Integrated Waste Management Board

assembled information to assist local jurisdictions in their efforts to develop successful multifamily diversion programs. This information includes results of pilot programs, success stories and other supporting resources.

- Multifamily Dwelling Recycling Evaluation Report -- This report serves as an overview and evaluation of multifamily dwelling recycling programs in Alameda County, California (December 10, 2008).

Additional Resources

The California Department of Conservation's Division of Recycling awarded \$15 million in grant funds in FY 2008/2009 to establish beverage container recycling collection programs placing source-separated beverage container recycling receptacles in multifamily housing communities in California. Grants were awarded on a competitive basis. Although specific program details are not provided, the list of awardees is provided and offers a peer matching opportunity