

STARTING A SUCCESSFUL RECYCLING PROGRAM

Fact Sheet for Property/Apartment Owners, Businesses & Green Teams

1. Coordinate Recycling Collection with Current Garbage Hauler

Your existing garbage hauler can often add this additional service. Not sure who that is? Look for the name on the dumpster or talk to the person who pays the bills for garbage collection.



You might be able to switch to a smaller dumpster or reduce how frequently your garbage is collected (lowering the cost) when adding a recycling dumpster.



2. Determine How Much is Recyclable

As you consider adding recycling, you should determine what type of materials are being thrown away and how much of it is recyclable. Plan to assess your dumpsters or interior bins prior to when the cleaning staff is scheduled to empty them.

Look for these types of materials below. They are recyclable at the two sorting facilities in Des Moines. *NOTE: If you recycle at home, the same rules apply at work.*

Plastics w/
Twist-off Tops



Paper



Glass



Metals



Considerations

You may have some recycling programs in place and not realize it. Here are possible ones that may not go into the new process:

Paper/Cardboard: If you are already recycling paper or cardboard, you may be able to throw other recyclable materials in that dumpster. Check with your hauler; it might affect cost.

Document Destruction Services: You might already have a vendor that shreds and recycles confidential documents. This material wouldn't go into the recycling dumpster.

Redemption Programs: Many vending services also take the redemption cans and bottles. These may not be a factor in your waste stream.

3. Streamline Recycling Process with Tenants & Cleaning Staff

Tenants

Coordinate all recycling and waste collection contracts with your tenants to guarantee one on-site recycling provider, which can save money and reduce recycling confusion.



Cleaning Staff

If you contract cleaning services or have in-house staff, make sure they are aware of the second dumpster and where to empty the recyclable items.



TIP: Did you know putting recyclables in a plastic bag ultimately sends them to the landfill? The sorting facility doesn't break the bags open. Keep your recyclables loose in the bin and have tenants and cleaning staff empty the bins into the dumpster or main collection point.



4. Provide Consistent Signage & Containers to Make Recycling Convenient

Color code all exterior and interior containers. This color scheme is common in business recycling:

- Recycling = Blue or Green
- Garbage = Black or Gray

Provide clear, large signage near all interior and exterior containers. Include:

- Illustrations or photos of accepted items & not accepted items
- Consider labels in English and Spanish



Download sample educational posters and graphics at WhereItShouldGo.com/businessrecycling

5. Regularly Educate Tenants, Employees & Cleaning Staff

Optimize your recycling program by instructing employees and tenants on the best practices for recycling on the property.

- Communicate regularly via email and newsletters.
- Set up a system for educating new tenants and employees.
- Notify tenants of any changes to recycling.



Download communication templates and graphics at WhereItShouldGo.com/businessrecycling

6. Conduct a Waste Audit

Understanding the materials being generated on your property is a key step towards reducing waste and costs. Conducting a waste assessment will allow you to:

1. Determine if employees and tenants understand what to recycle and what to put in the trash.
 2. Review the other types of materials being generated on your property.
 3. Formulate a plan to generate fewer materials and increase recycling:
- Ask your recycling provider if they conduct waste measurements or audits
 - Request a free onsite waste assessment from Iowa Waste Exchange (iowadnr.gov/FABA) or Iowa Waste Reduction Center (iwrc.org)
 - Develop a Green Team to conduct your own waste assessment



7. Expand Your Recycling Program

After you conduct a waste audit, ask your recycling hauler about additional or alternative recycling options for regularly generated materials such as scrap metal, computer-related items, electronics and more.



TIP: We offer safe, smart recycling and disposal options in our online Recycling Guide. Search it by item.

Not sure what's happening with your hazardous waste? Metro Waste Authority may be able to assist you with recycling and disposal options. Visit WhereItShouldGo.com and select Business > Hazardous Waste.



Are you ready to tackle food waste?

We offer solutions for reduction, rescue, energy conversion and composting in our Recycling Guide. Businesses struggling to recycle food waste can use our Food-to-Energy Calculator. Simply estimate your annual tons of food waste and it calculates the energy created when food waste breaks down at Metro Park East Landfill.



Find the Food-to-Energy Calculator, as well as resources for food reduction and local food rescue options at WhereItShouldGo.com/food

8. Ask Questions & Use Existing Resources

One thing is for certain, recycling changes and evolves. Continue to check back with existing resources to learn if more recycling options are available. The Iowa Waste Exchange and the Iowa Waste Reduction Center can assist if you have large quantities of similar material that your business might generate.

Check with us or the organizations below to determine if you have a waste stream to divert from the landfill.

- Metro Waste Authority | WhereItShouldGo.com
- Iowa Waste Exchange | iowadnr.gov/FABA
- Iowa Waste Reduction Center | iwrc.org
- Iowa DNR Recycling Guide | GreenList.com
- [Contact your recycling or garbage hauler](#)