



BLUEPRINT FOR WASTE DIVERSION

AN LRS GUIDE TO
IMPLEMENTING
SUCCESSFUL
RECYCLING PROGRAMS



QUESTIONS? CONTACT

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AWARDS & ACCOLADES



National Waste and Recycling Association's Recycling Facility of the Year



Environmental Leader Top Product of the Year



Top 100 Waste and Recycling Haulers in America



BBB Torch Award for Business Ethics



Best and Brightest Companies in the Nation



Fastest Growing Private Companies in America

Driven By Service. Dedicated To Sustainability.

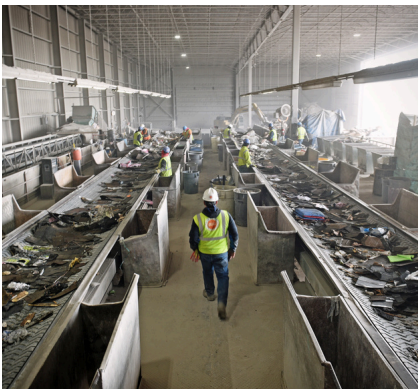


LRS BLUEPRINT FOR WASTE DIVERSION

The Blueprint for Waste Diversion can be used to implement the foundational aspects of a successful recycling and waste diversion program. This customizable blueprint can be utilized as a guide for businesses, non-profits, schools, communities, and municipalities looking to divert waste.

The blueprint acts as a guide to incorporate waste diversion into operational norms and culture. In the blueprint, you will find linked resources in each of the three phases. Please note that these resources are only meant to provide guidance and ideas, feel free to alter for the unique needs of your community.

If you would like additional information, visit our educational website at LRSrecycles.com/Recycling101.



This blueprint was modified using the NYC Public Schools, Office of Energy and Sustainability's 'Roadmap to Zero Waste.' The original tool was created in 2018 to support The NYC Zero Waste Pledge School program. Thank you to NYC Public Schools, Office of Energy and Sustainability for providing a guiding tool for this blueprint.

PHASE ONE



**SUPPLIES &
STAKEHOLDERS**

I.

Infrastructure Audit

In this section of the Blueprint for Waste Diversion, you will identify supply needs, plan with key stakeholders, and set up waste collection systems.

COMPLETE INFRASTRUCTURE AUDIT

How can you divert waste when you don't have the correct supplies?

Participating buildings need a two-bin sorting station in all spaces. One bin designated for trash (landfill) and one bin designated for recycling. These bins should be well labeled and placed together. A bin inventory should be completed to identify building needs.

For waste collection, custodial staff need a way to keep clean recycling separate from trash. Custodial staff require a dual-bin collection set up. Outside of buildings, a waste storage area should be designated and well labeled.

An infrastructure inventory can be a simple document collecting information from inside and outside the building. Count bins, check collection systems for the custodial team, and designate waste storage.



INSIDE – SET UP

A two-bin set up for recycling and trash. Bins are well labeled and set together as a sorting station.

- No lone bins
- Clearly labeled
- *Optional: Add a third bin for organics (compost)*

INSIDE – COLLECTION

Use dual-bin dollies, zip-tie separate bins together, or tie additional bags onto in-use bins to create separate collection system



OUTSIDE – STORAGE

- Designate an outdoor waste storage space
- Containers should be stored in a secure location for easy and safe collection
- Collection schedule should be posted with waste hauler contact information

I.

Bin Inventory

COMPLETE A BIN INVENTORY

Count the number of bins in each space to identify needs for proper sorting inside the building. Remove lone bins.

Use the bin inventory from [Recycling Works Massachusetts](#) or create your own using the example below.

ROOM NUMBER OR NAME	RECYCLING CONTAINER	WASTE CONTAINER	TOGETHER AS A SORTING STATION	IN A PLACE FOR EASY, SAFE COLLECTION	NOTES
Main Office	✓	✓	✗	✗	Spread out and under desks
Room 118	✗	✓	✓	✓	Need recycling bin and better signage

Example of a bin inventory document.

Sorting stations can look different depending on the needs and limitations of the space. Below are examples of sorting stations for trash, recycling, and organics (compost).



II.

Identify Stakeholders

It is essential that all key stakeholders are a part of the waste diversion program design and implementation. Ensure relevant participants are involved in the planning, timeline, and execution.

KEY STAKEHOLDERS



**BUILDING/FACILITY
MANAGERS**



CUSTODIAL TEAM



**PROCUREMENT
DEPARTMENT**



BUILDING OCCUPANTS



**COMMUNITY
MEMBERS**



**KITCHEN & FOOD SERVICE
STAFF**



WASTE HAULER



**MATERIAL RECOVERY
FACILITY (MRF)
MANAGER & TEAM**



STUDENTS

III.

Operational Check-In with the Facility & Custodial Team

The facility manager and custodial crew are instrumental to successful recycling. Host a training and candid conversation to answer questions and listen to concerns.

MAKE EXPECTATIONS CLEAR



RESPONSIBLE



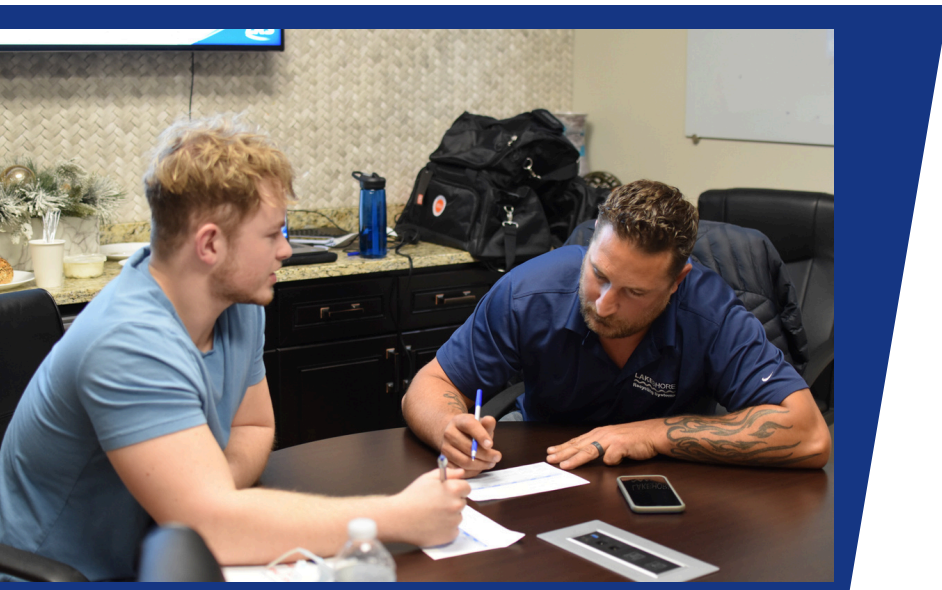
NOT RESPONSIBLE

ITEMS TO DISCUSS

- **COLLECTION SYSTEM**
 - Frequency
 - Timing
 - Tools
 - Communication channels
 - Process for reporting issues
- **WASTE STORAGE**
 - Location
- **WASTE COLLECTION SCHEDULE**
 - Posted Internally
 - Waste Hauler contact information available

HELPFUL TIP

- Custodial staff **are** responsible for keeping waste separate so it can be disposed of correctly.
- Custodial staff are **not** responsible for waste sorting or removal of contaminated materials.



Operational check-in between LRS' Mike and Riley. September 2021.

IV.

Program Launch Meeting with Designated Stakeholders

Stakeholders need to communicate expectations and roles before a program launch. During the program launch meeting you should create action steps for each stakeholder as well as a work back timeline for program implementation.

At the launch meeting, be sure to emphasize why recycling is important. From combating climate change, to protecting natural resources, to the economic benefits of the circular economy, there are many reasons to prioritize recycling.

RESOURCES ON RECYCLING

U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY (EPA)

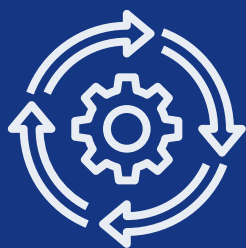
- [EPA, U.S. Recycling System and Benefits](#)
- [EPA, Recycling Economic Information Report](#)

EXAMPLE PROGRAM LAUNCH CHECKLIST

- ☐ Introduce and share contact information for key stakeholders.
- ☐ Train stakeholders on what and how to recycle.
- ☐ Identify stakeholder roles for setting up and maintaining recycling systems.
- ☐ Identify collection team and methods for proper waste separation.
- ☐ Identify proper storage and set-out procedures for waste hauler.
- ☐ Integrate sustainability and waste diversion education into already established communication channels.
- ☐ List next steps and create a work back timeline for infrastructure set up, program implementation, and educational outreach.

An initial meeting is a great step, but we encourage ongoing communication and meetings to troubleshoot the program. What cadence works for you and your team?

PHASE TWO



IMPLEMENTATION & METRICS

I.

Waste Assessment

In this section of the Blueprint for Waste Diversion, you will begin collecting data and working with stakeholders to monitor the program.

CONDUCT A WASTE ASSESSMENT

Metrics are key for measuring progress. A waste assessment will highlight recycling behaviors and gauge which items are consistently misplaced. Make this work for you, it can be an in-depth audit, a waste observation, or a container weighing exercise.

EXAMPLE WASTE ASSESSMENT GUIDES

SIMPLE	MODERATE	CHALLENGING
<u>GrowNYC Waste Audit Guide</u>	<u>Seven Generation's Ahead - Lunchroom Waste Audit Guide</u>	<u>Zero Waste Cities - Waste Assessment Guide</u>
<u>Portland Bureau of Planning and Sustainability - Waste Sort Instructions</u>	<u>Recycle Coach - How to Do a Waste Audit</u>	<u>EPA Instructions on Conducting Waste Assessments</u>

It's amazing how much stakeholders will learn from a waste exploration. It can also be fun!



Waste audit conducted for the CompostAble Chicago study. May 2022.

II.

Monitoring System & Sustainability Committee

IMPLEMENT MONITORING & START A SUSTAINABILITY COMMITTEE

Don't stop after a waste assessment! Continue your efforts by monitoring waste diversion and sharing accolades, data, and progress over time. A yearly audit, a monthly bin weighing exercise, or a quarterly visual audit can be excellent ways to track progress.

HELPFUL TIP

By regularly weighing the trash and recycling bins, you can track progress. Did the trash bins become lighter due to behavior change? Track these metrics on a bulletin board or a website dashboard, and continue to audit and share results.

One of the best ways to strengthen a waste diversion program is by starting a Sustainability Committee or Green Team. This could be a club of students, a group of passionate stakeholders, an Employee Resource Group (ERG), a community organization or an elected body. Perhaps an organization already exists that you could tap into?

Don't feel rushed to make big changes right away and remember to celebrate small victories along the way!



The Green Team at Frederick Von Steuben Metropolitan Science Center sorting in the cafeteria. February 2022.

III.

Partnerships Waste Haulers & Material Recovery Facilities (MRFs)

WORK WITH THE WASTE HAULER & MATERIAL RECOVERY FACILITY

Contact your waste and recycling hauler. Are they a company or a public works fleet connected to a municipality? Either way, they may be able to provide additional data to support your efforts. Drivers may report overflowing bins, truck weights, or collect photos – all of which are important evidence for waste diversion efforts. Having a good relationship with the waste hauler will allow you to know if material is set out improperly or if they have any concerns with the waste and recycling streams.

Next, find out where your recyclables are going by connecting with the Material Recovery Facility, or MRF. Recyclables are sorted at MRFs (pronounced merf) and you can gain valuable insight by knowing what your MRF accepts and does not want at the facility. Ask the MRF manager about how they sort materials, what kind of technology is utilized, and what items they want to see in their facility. They may even be able to host you for a tour! Each MRF is different, and recycling rules may vary based on the MRF where your materials end up.

To see the behind the scenes of a MRF, check out [LRS' Virtual MRF Tour](#), of the National Waste and Recycling Association's (NWRA) 2024 Recycling Facility of the Year: The Exchange.



Check out LRS at LRSrecycles.com to see if we can provide your recycling and waste collection needs.



Tour of LRS' Exchange Material Recovery Facility. April 2024.

PHASE THREE



**BUY-IN &
EDUCATION**

I.

Educate & Engage

Waste diversion systems are nothing without excitement and buy-in. This requires education, enthusiasm and consistent outreach. Look for ways to build education into pre-existing systems to make the changes sustainable.

EDUCATE AND ENGAGE COMMUNITY

Use this time to establish clear recycling rules. Remember, education should both inform and excite participants. There are many ways to educate stakeholders. Incorporate sustainability into a newsletter, create educational videos, host lunch-and-learns, post on social media, design contests or competitions, create community announcements or bulletin boards. Get creative! Don't forget to use the information you learned in your waste investigation or tap into your sustainability committee. Your goal should be to educate as many people as possible—we need everyone committed to proper recycling!

RECYCLING 101 RESOURCES

EPA WHAT CAN I RECYCLE?

Check with your local municipality, waste hauler, or MRF, but this EPA document covers the basics of what's recyclable in most communities.

LRS RECYCLING 101

Educational resources, coloring book template, recycling 101 flyers, virtual Material Recovery Facility tour and more are located at the LRS Recycling 101 website.

LRS RECYCLING EDUCATION EXTENSIONS

Use this Education Extension guide to go beyond waste diversion and incorporate sustainability into your classroom, community group, sustainability committee or business.



Belding Elementary School. May 2023.

II.

Beyond the Bin



CREATE A REUSE PROJECT

Milk carton sculptures, water bottle planters, bottle cap art—creating art from a commonly used item can help keep the material out of the landfill. This encourages the community to rethink the usefulness of these materials, shifting focus from disposability to sustainability. Plus, creating art can be a team building activity that raises awareness about waste.

HOLD A SWAP EVENT

Invite the community and host a swap event! This is a great opportunity to focus on reducing and reusing, while also providing your community with free resources. Clothing, kitchen supplies, school supplies, furniture, tools and plants are just a few of the items that can be swapped at an event.

PLAN AN EARTH MONTH EVENT

Earth Month is the perfect opportunity to show off the hard work of the sustainability committee and even recruit new members. Some ideas for Earth Month include an environmental documentary viewing party, a clean-up day, an educational panel or event. Visit [EarthDay.org](https://www.earthday.org) to see what the theme for this year's Earth Day is.

BUILD AN AWARENESS CAMPAIGN

Send out a survey to determine what your community cares most about—maybe it's ending plastic pollution, cleaning up our lakes, or reducing environmental injustices— and develop a campaign. Recycling is most successful when it is a byproduct of caring for the environment and not just a rule to follow! Utilize The [United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals](#) to connect recycling to global priorities.

DESIGN A ZERO WASTE CHALLENGE

Challenge employees, community members, or students to complete a 'Zero Waste Day.' This can be a one-time event or a monthly expectation. Send out communication beforehand with tips and resources to create excitement. [The United Nations International Day of Zero Waste](#) takes place on March 30th every year. Utilize videos and resources on the UN's website.

CERTIFY YOUR BUILDING(S) AS ZERO WASTE

Certify a space with TRUE certification. TRUE certified spaces are environmentally responsible, resource-efficient and help turn waste into savings and additional income streams. Certifications are available for any physical facility and their operations. Learn more at [TRUE Zero Waste Certification](#).

ENGAGE IN POLITICAL ADVOCACY

Use your collective voice to create change at the local, state and federal level. Determine as a group what action you wish to lobby for, get out there and make your voice heard. Letter-writing campaigns, community presentations and conversations with elected officials are great places to start.

HOST A PANEL OR PODCAST

Host a town hall, start a podcast or coordinate a read-aloud for students. There are many ways to share this information with your community! Be creative and engage new stakeholders to host, speak or plan. Check out National Public Radio's, ["How to Start a Podcast at NPR" guide](#).

IMPLEMENT A FOOD WASTE REDUCTION PROGRAM

Reducing food waste is one of the best ways to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Collect food for donations, eat leftovers, feed animals, or compost. Check out the [EPA's Food: Too Good to Waste Implementation Guide and Toolkit](#) for resources and strategies to prevent food waste from ending up in landfills.

III.

Update, Modify, & Repeat

Celebrate accomplishments as the waste diversion program evolves, while continuing to utilize the resources in this blueprint. Recycling success requires repetition, re-engagement, and continued education. Don't forget to keep your community informed of recycling rules, reuse opportunities, and other ways they can engage!

