

US EPA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT



## OnCampus ecoAmbassadors

OnCampus ecoAmbassadors are college students who implement projects from EPA's partnership programs to help carry out the Agency's mission to protect human health and the environment. The program is open to ANY college student, regardless of program, age, or background. All interested students are encouraged to participate.

### Did You Know?

- Paper and paperboard products, which include newspapers, office papers, magazines, cardboard boxes, and mail, constitute the largest portion of municipal solid waste.
- Recycling organic materials, such as food scraps and yard trimmings, can significantly reduce the amount of solid waste disposed of in landfills or incinerators.
- Recycling prevents pollution caused by the manufacturing of products from virgin materials, saves energy, decreases emissions of greenhouse gases, and conserves natural resources.

### Learn More

WasteWise is an U.S. EPA program that helps organizations save money, improve efficiency, and reduce their climate footprint through waste reduction. Any organization, including large and small businesses, colleges and universities, nonprofit organizations, and federal, state, local, and tribal governments, can become a WasteWise partner.

For more information, please visit:  
[www.epa.gov/wastes/partnerships/wastewise/approach.htm](http://www.epa.gov/wastes/partnerships/wastewise/approach.htm)



Preserving Resources,  
Preventing Waste

## Recycling Baseline Audit

Do you ever wonder what is recycled on your campus? Or how effective your campus' recycling program actually is? You can answer these questions by conducting a recycling baseline audit, or waste assessment, on your campus.

A waste assessment is a systematic review of your campus facilities and its operations to quantify waste generation and identify management practices. Waste assessment data will give you a much better understanding of the types and amounts of waste your school generates.

### Goals of a Recycling Baseline Audit

- Prevent waste and encourage recycling on your campus
- Raise student awareness about how to properly dispose of waste
- Train students to conduct waste assessments
- Gauge the effectiveness of current waste management practices

### If You're Interested In:

- Learning how to conduct a waste assessment
- Collecting and analyzing data
- Working with building and facility management staff
- Evaluating the effectiveness of a waste management program

**... then conducting a Recycling Baseline Audit is for you!**

See page 2 for a step-by-step checklist for conducting a Recycling Baseline Audit.



### Students Taking Action

Bard College ecoAmbassadors surveyed students and conducted waste audits at residential halls to better understand how the availability of recycling and compost receptacles affects the way students get rid of their waste. The audit found that, in areas without immediate access to recycling or composting, students were much less likely to separate their waste. The ecoAmbassadors compiled the results of their survey and audits, and made a proposal to campus administration to improve waste reduction efforts on campus.

A Recycling Baseline Audit is ideal for students pursuing degrees in education, engineering, and environmental science.

## Checklist for conducting a Recycling Baseline Audit

Follow the steps below to empower students, faculty, and others on your campus.

### ☐ 1. Find out what's being done on your campus.

Meet with campus administrators, facilities staff, sustainability directors, and environmental clubs on campus to learn more current waste management practices on campus and what is being done to educate students and faculty about proper waste disposal. Ask for suggestions of places to conduct a waste assessment.

### ☐ 2. Form a team.

Gather support for your efforts by developing relationships with facilities staff, building managers, and environmental clubs. Facilities staff and building managers will help you get a representative sample of waste from the building or dorm you would like to assess.

### ☐ 3. Conduct a waste assessment.

Go to [www.epa.gov/wastes/partnerships/wastewise/approach.htm](http://www.epa.gov/wastes/partnerships/wastewise/approach.htm) for specific instructions about organizing and conducting an assessment. Be prepared with materials ahead of time!

### ☐ 4. Evaluate your options and present your results.

Use the results of your waste assessment to choose waste reduction activities. Consider holding a brainstorming session to identify potential waste prevention and recycling activities. List your most promising options and evaluate them in terms of economic and operational feasibility. When analyzing your options, focus first on waste prevention, then on recycling options, and finally on opportunities to buy or manufacture recycled content products.

### ☐ 5. Set goals.

Use the results of your waste assessment to identify activities to help prevent waste, expand recycling, and increase the purchasing or manufacturing of recycled-content products. Set goals that can be tracked and measured. See [www.epa.gov/wastes/partnerships/wastewise/pubs/goals.pdf](http://www.epa.gov/wastes/partnerships/wastewise/pubs/goals.pdf) for a compilation of goals from WasteWise partners.

### ☐ 6. Work with WasteWise.

Make your college a WasteWise partner by registering at [www.epa.gov/wastewise](http://www.epa.gov/wastewise). Report your baseline and annual waste data to WasteWise Re-TRAC and continue to update your success. Share the WasteWise Re-TRAC reports and your results with student groups and administrators to publicize the benefits of your program.

### ☐ 7. Fill out your completion form.

Record the information that you are required to report to EPA on the event completion form, including your name, date of the event, name of your college, a description of the event or events, the number of interactions (include any interesting comments), and additional comments.

## Resources

### Supplies for Your Waste Assessment

Be prepared when conducting your waste assessment, and bring the following materials:

1. Representative trash sample
2. Plastic gloves
3. Scale to weigh your samples
4. Bins and containers to sort waste, such as small waste baskets, plastic containers, or corrugated cardboard boxes
5. Notebook to record your results and observations

### Waste Assessment Methods

WasteWise recommends the following three methods for conducting a waste assessment:

- Records examination - to analyze the financial implications of an organization's waste management practices.
- Walk-through – to allow the surveyor (you!) to conduct a tour of the organization and learn why and how waste is being generated.
- Waste Sort - to allow the surveyor to physically collect, sort, and weigh a representative sample of waste.

### EPA Contact Info

#### WasteWise

(800) EPA-WISE

[oswwastewise@epa.gov](mailto:oswwastewise@epa.gov)

Allow a few days for a return call. Contact the OnCampus team if there is no response from the WasteWise helpline.

#### EPA OnCampus Team

[EPAOnCampus@epa.gov](mailto:EPAOnCampus@epa.gov)

### EPA OnCampus Websites

Visit the EPA website at

[www.epa.gov/ecoambassadors/oncampus](http://www.epa.gov/ecoambassadors/oncampus)



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