

US EPA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT

After you have developed a recycling measurement system and calculated a recycling rate, you may want to think about ways to improve and enhance your program for subsequent data collection efforts. Some options for enhancing your recycling measurement program include:

- Expanding or changing your program.
- Modifying the survey forms.
- Measuring source reduction.
- Using electronic reporting.

You might consider implementing one or more of these kinds of enhancements as your measurement system evolves.

Option One

Expand or Change Data Collection Efforts.

Consider expanding data collection efforts by adding more types of MSW materials to the rate calculation. (See Table A, page 11.) You can expand a basic program over the course of 1 or 2 years to include more of these materials not currently being tracked. Data on categories of waste not considered to be MSW (see Table A, page 11) also can be obtained, but remember that these do not count when calculating the standard recycling rate. A separate recycling rate could be

computed, however, for these other types of solid waste.

Another potential enhancement is to alter who is surveyed, using some of the techniques presented earlier in this guide as a way to streamline, reduce double counting, increase response rates, or improve data accuracy.

Option Two

Refine and Modify the Survey Forms.

You can choose to modify the forms included with this guide to assist with special data collection

needs, meet legislative requirements, or simply gather information about the way waste and recyclables are generated and managed in an area. Some states and localities might wish to modify the forms to request qualitative information from respondents. Even though such information is not necessary to calculate a recycling rate, it can be very useful to a state or local agency. This information might help you consider implementing changes in the way you collect MSW or recyclables, provide the momentum for adding services or materials to a recycling program, or help you assess and possibly modify resource allocations for various waste

management system components. Examples of questions you may want to ask on survey forms are:

- Is curbside collection of recyclables offered to single-family homes? If so, estimate how many homes are serviced.
- Is there a program for collecting recyclables from multifamily dwelling units? If so, estimate how many homes are serviced.
- Can you provide or estimate the population served by your recycling program?
- Is there a program to promote source reduction?
- Is a pay-as-you-throw system used for collecting solid waste disposal fees from residents?
- How much money was spent last year on educating the public about recycling?
- Have recyclable materials been banned from landfills or the solid waste collection system? If so, which materials?

- Is yard trimmings collection for leaves, grass, and brush offered? If so, estimate the population served by the yard trimmings collection program.
- Are drop-off opportunities for household hazardous waste offered?

Option Three

Consider Measuring Source Reduction.

Some states and localities are attempting to measure source reduction activities to help assess overall waste reduction progress. The survey forms can be modified to request information on such activities, as long as these data are kept separate from the recycling figures. EPA developed the *Source Reduction Program Potential Manual* in 1997 to assist communities in determining the impacts of various source reduction activities on the waste stream. The manual examines the diversion potential of six

source reduction programs, including grasscycling, home composting, textiles reuse, office paper reduction, wooden pallet reuse, and paper towel reduction.

While you might not have the desire or resources to attempt to measure source reduction, some data on source reduction is readily available and could be useful to your planning efforts. Examples of source reduction activities that you might consider measuring, along with sources of data, are provided in Table 12.

Option Four

Take Advantage of Electronic Reporting.

To speed survey response time and ease the burden of compiling data, consider offering respondents an electronic reporting format. Information can be provided and transferred electronically through computer disks or the Internet.

TABLE 12. EXAMPLES OF SOURCE REDUCTION ACTIVITIES

Category	Material	Application	Sources of Data
Paper Products	Office paper.	Duplexing.	Government agencies and private businesses.
Rubber	Tires.	Retread tires.	Tire dealers. National Tire Dealers & Retreaders Association.
Textiles	Clothing.	Used clothing.	Local thrift stores. Salvation Army and Goodwill Industries. Council for Textile Recycling.
Wood	Pallets.	Refurbished pallets.	International Association of Pallet Recyclers.
Yard Trimmings	Grass clippings, leaves.	Backyard compost. Grasscycling.	Local government recycling programs. The Composting Council.

Electronic Reporting

Many states and localities are experimenting with or are now using electronic reporting. In **Maryland**, the state sends computer disks to counties who report in a WordPerfect file. State officials read the county reports and then compile the information using a dBase IV database program.

In May 1996, **Pennsylvania** began Internet training sessions. The goal of these sessions is to allow counties to report via e-mail. Several training sessions were held around the state and were open to all counties and cities. In addition, the state pro-

vided free modems to training session participants. The training covered basic Internet facts and how to set up a homepage. Once local governments become accustomed to the Internet, the state will develop a reporting procedure.

Washington considered developing a version of its database to be distributed on disk, but is opting instead to design something for the Internet in time to collect 1997 data. One possibility is to include a form on the state's homepage. Local officials would be able to download the form, enter the data, and send the information back electronically

Many state and local governments are finding that the benefits of recycling measurement are worth the time and effort required to plan and design an effective system. By following the suggestions in

to be downloaded into a database.

Florida is also jumping on the Internet, but only after spending several years getting counties accustomed to submitting data on computer disks. As of September 1, 1996, Florida counties are required to gain Internet access and an e-mail address as a condition for receiving grant monies. The state is considering developing a form for their Web site, similar to what the state of Washington is proposing, so that counties can download the file, fill in their data, and return the information via computer disk, hard copy, or e-mail.

this guide, you can devise and implement a successful recycling measurement program that is right for you. Not only can such a program advance the status of recycling in your area, but it also can reflect well on your organization overall!