

Starting an Office Recycling Program: A Guide for State of Michigan Agencies

1. Contract for recycling services.

Agency-owned buildings: Agency procurement contact(s)/facility manager(s) should reach out to contracted vendors in their prosperity regions to review needs and obtain a quote to add or improve recycling services.

Leased buildings: The Agency Liaison should work with their agency facility manager/staff to review the lease(s) to determine if recycling services are currently provided as part of the agency's waste removal and determine whether the agency or landlord is responsible for providing the waste removal services.

- If the agency is responsible for waste removal in the lease, the agency should add recycling services to their waste removal contract.
- If waste removal is the landlord's responsibility, the agency should determine if recycling services are included as a service in the lease.
- If the lease doesn't currently include recycling services in the waste removal, the agency should look at adding recycling services outside of their lease by utilizing the statewide contract. DTMB Real Estate will bid recycling services to new leases upon expiration of current lease.

The Agency's procurement office issues authorization to the contracted vendor to begin service.

2. Identify which recyclable materials to collect.

Talk to your recycling hauler or review your contract to identify which recyclable materials are accepted. All recycling bins should have a list of accepted items posted nearby, preferably with pictures or photos to illustrate. Recycling posters are available electronically at: www.michigan.gov/swra

- A best management practice is to perform a waste audit to determine what types of recyclable materials are typically generated in your building. This can be used to help target specific materials that are generated in larger quantities, such as white paper or plastic food containers. Remember to make sure any items you're collecting are on the list of acceptable materials from your recycling hauler.



3. Talk to your custodial team and recycling hauler.

It is important that custodial staff understand which recyclable materials are being collected, how to handle collected recyclable materials separately from waste materials, and where to store materials prior to collection by the recycling hauler. This may involve training for custodial staff and discussions with your recycling hauler.

- A best management practice is to involve your custodial team and recycling hauler in deciding where to place bins, store materials, post signage, and other facility logistics.

4. Determine bin placement.

Recycling bin placement will depend on a variety of factors, such as areas of waste generation (e.g., kitchens, lunch rooms, printing areas, staff desks), typical traffic flow, and storage capacity.

- A best management practice is to pair recycling bins with waste bins, making it as convenient to recycle as it is to landfill.

5. Educate office staff.

Continual communication is the key to a successful recycling program. To understand the program, staff must receive reminders about materials accepted for recycling, recyclable item cleaning procedures, and bin locations.

- A best management practice is to share the results of the recycling program (e.g., recycling volumes collected, reduction in waste volumes) with staff to show the impact of their actions. Involving agency management in communicating these results demonstrates that recycling is a high-level priority.

6. Evaluate and improve.

Talk to your custodial staff, office staff, and recycling hauler to identify areas for improvement. Be prepared to make changes to bin placement, communication strategy, signage, or other program elements, to minimize contamination and maximize participation.

- A best management practice is to form an office “green team” of staff volunteers to generate and implement creative ideas for targeting education, increasing participation, reducing waste, purchasing office materials made with recycled content, and other sustainability initiatives.

