

The Education and Outreach subcommittee conducted several well-attended virtual meetings to analyze strategies on educating the public about reducing waste, recycling, composting, and proper disposing of items comprising the waste stream. The subcommittee researched waste diversion programs in multiple states and met with the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) to learn about its *Rethink. Reset. Recycle.* Program (Attachment A). The subcommittee also met with professionals from the U.S. EPA Region 5 to discuss local, regional, and national strategies. In addition, representatives from the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE) gave a presentation to the subcommittee on its highly regarded *Know It Before You Throw It* statewide campaign.

Based on these events, the Education and Outreach subcommittee offers the following recommendations for inclusion in the Materials Management Advisory Committee final report.

1. The Illinois General Assembly should appropriate one million dollars annually from the Solid Waste Management Fund to the Illinois EPA to finance education and outreach activities for a statewide waste reduction campaign. These activities include engaging with a marketing firm, updating and maintaining content on a website, and providing resources and support to local communities. A group of impacted stakeholders, including the Illinois EPA, representatives of local government, the environmental community, and the regulated community, should identify and evaluate additional future funding sources by 2026. These sources can include user-pay programs, grants, and contributions from haulers, materials recovery facilities, and local governments.

2. The Illinois EPA should engage with a marketing firm to develop a statewide waste reduction campaign. A marketing firm should create a slogan, a logo, and an overall design for a website, flyers, and other materials that will deliver a simple and consistent message to all areas and sectors of the state. After rolling out the campaign, the Illinois EPA should utilize the marketing materials to introduce specific waste reduction strategies in phases (i.e. reuse, repair, reduce food waste, compost, recycle).

To maximize engagement and consistency throughout the phases, the campaign should:

- Emphasize the environmental, health, and economic benefits of reducing waste
- Address waste from residences, businesses, schools, organizations, institutions, and municipalities
- Build on the work of the Illinois Task Force on Reducing Recycling Contamination and Increasing Diversion Rates to increase proper recycling and decrease contaminants in the recycling stream
- Use language that encourages consumers to analyze their discarded items and consider the value of these “resources”
- Provide actions individuals and organizations can take to reduce consumption, engage in green consumerism, reuse, repair, reduce food waste, compost, recycle, and locate proper disposal outlets for additional unwanted materials

3. The Illinois EPA should convey updated messaging and resources related to the statewide waste reduction campaign either on its existing website or on a separate, newly created website. This is a cost-efficient action that will provide a central location for residents, businesses, municipalities, and community organizations to find information easily. Several states have successfully utilized separate websites to increase the accessibility of information and reduce confusion with other state agency objectives (Attachment B).

Incorporating suggestions from the marketing firm, the website should, at a minimum, include:

- The slogan, logo, and overall purpose of the waste reduction campaign
- General information on waste reduction, recycling, and composting, including FAQs
- A list of solid waste coordinators for each county
- Information on how to host one-day waste diversion events (Attachment C)
- Resources for organizations seeking to reduce waste (Attachment D)
- Descriptions of proper waste management practices to discourage illegal dumping, burning of trash, and other environmentally harmful activities
- Map(s) of statewide recyclers/drop-offs so consumers know where they can take electronics, bulbs, scrap metal, etc.

4. The Illinois EPA should provide graphic design support and toolkits that allow county-level waste coordinators to tailor messages for their communities. There is variation across the state regarding the proper end of life handling of specific materials. Working with haulers, materials recovery facilities, compost facilities, and county waste coordinators, the Illinois EPA should develop customizable flyers and social media kits branded with the statewide campaign logo. An example of a customizable document is the recycling flyer created by the Illinois Task Force on Reducing Recycling Contamination (Attachment E). It allows governments to specify items acceptable in local recycling programs while retaining the format developed for use across the state.

5. The Illinois EPA should conduct a yearly survey of materials recovery facilities (MRFs) and compost facilities to obtain updated information about materials accepted in different parts of the state. The Illinois EPA should provide the information to all county solid waste coordinators and use data collected to update the website, flyers, and toolkits on an annual basis. The survey data from the MRFs and compost sites should be linked to the geographic area that utilizes the MRF and/or compost site.

6. The Illinois EPA and county solid waste coordinators should communicate regularly about evolving technologies, laws, and waste diversion practices. The Illinois EPA should maintain a contact list of county solid waste coordinators and send them quarterly electronic newsletters that include information on programmatic updates and other relevant information. In addition to disseminating important information, a newsletter may encourage county coordinators to report back valuable information. This ongoing dialogue will be an important component of creating a uniform waste diversion effort.

7. The Illinois EPA should employ multiple strategies and forms of communication to convey waste reduction messaging to diverse populations across the state.

These strategies should include:

- Utilize best management practices related to education and outreach, e.g. mix of printed and online communications tools, clear instructions using visual cues and multiple languages (Attachment F)
- Address needs of variety of audiences, including diverse and underserved populations, and certain commercial and institutional establishments
- Leverage free resources available to recycling coordinators
- Show examples of what other communities and states are doing (Attachment G)

8. The Illinois EPA should pursue partnerships with organizations that can further the goals of the state's waste reduction campaign. Partnerships will help sustain the state's waste reduction efforts into the future. For example, in Florida, a coalition of businesses and associations hosts the state's recycling website. To reduce food waste, Florida DEP is evaluating partnerships with nonprofit organizations, which would allow for sharing of educational resources and expanding the reach of the campaign.

Attachment A

MMAC Education and Outreach Subcommittee Notes from 11-6-20 video call with Florida DEP

Florida DEP staff

- Karen Moore - Waste Reduction for over 20 years, mostly in recycling
- Chris Perry - Education and Outreach, 4 years at FL DEP; previously worked in marketing and communications in the private section
- Suzanne Boroff - Been at FL DEP just under 20 years; recycling activist; manages data for recycling rates; knowledge of recycling markets

FL recycling goal

- FL legislature had set a statewide recycling goal of 75% by 2020. FL DEP had to report to the legislature on how the goal was to be reached.
- Counties have reporting requirements on recovered materials (SW, combustion)
- In 2019, the state had a diversion rate of approximately 51% (42% recycling and 9% combustion); 2020 data won't be complete until April 2021, reported in summer 2021
- Contamination of single stream recycling was identified as an impediment
- Waste haulers had reached out to FL DEP
- Formed the Florida Recycling Partnership, a coalition of businesses and associations dedicated to improving Florida's recycling rates
- First phase - Back to basics, focus on core recyclables - Get recycling rate of aluminum cans from 18% to 75%; improve the rates on glass, plastic, paper, and items that have a market

Marketing campaign

- Put out RFP to design firms and conducted a review process
- Rewarded marketing contract to a Tallahassee firm
- Created logo that was distinctly identifiable, kept message simple, developed style guide
- Used WordPress; Mailchimp plug-ins
- Allow for customization to address differences across the state (i.e. glass, plastic bags).
- Partnered with MRFs and industry
- Funding (\$50,000-\$60,000) came from MRFs throughout the state (26 of them)

Next steps

- Phase 2 - Address core contaminants -- tangles, plastic bags, toys, etc.
- Phase 3 - Focus on preparation of recyclables - empty containers, no grease, etc.
- Phase 4 - Target food waste; partner with NRDC on Save the Food campaign

Ongoing education and outreach

- Applying his expertise as a graphic design professional, Chris customizes web banners, posters, information for social media, etc
- Chris provides ready-made materials to support local efforts

- Chris communicates regularly with county recycling coordinators
- Chris spends about 10-15% of his time on routine implementation of waste reduction initiatives, but it can be closer to 50% of his time when there is a new program/phase being developed.
- Conduct workshops, webinars, statewide campaigns (i.e. Food Waste week)
- Florida Recycling Partnership hosts the WordPress website and pays associated fees
- Partnerships are the key to sustaining the programs
- MRF feedback has been anecdotal, positive
- Residential curbside collection was the focus of this initiative
- There was no funding for pilot programs (new phases), so partnerships are important

Examples shown by Chris

- Back to Basics – branded poster explaining the statewide campaign (see below)
- Let's Break it Down – branded flyer telling local community that cardboard should be flattened
- Keep them Clean and Dry – branded flyer to address bottles that weren't being emptied
- Don't Try This at Home – branded flyer urging people to keep plastic bags out of recycling bins/carts and to take them to appropriate local retail stores
- Don't Try This at Home – branded flyer reminding people that greasy pizza boxes are not allowed in bins – recycle only the top
- Photos showed bottles and cans without labels to avoid favoring brands
- Participates in Wrap Recycling Action Plan (W.R.A.P.) - plasticfilmrecycling.org - American Chemistry Council website for films
- Smaller and mid-sized communities (75,000-200,000 people) might need more assistance than larger communities that already have sophisticated programs

Other

- Placing the spreadsheet of county coordinator contacts on the website is very useful
- Having a separate website makes implementation easier: floridarecycles.org
- With additional funding, can do more advertising -- at the movies, on billboards, etc
- Campaign helped increase recycling, establish infrastructure
- No Precycling messages yet
- Next phase? Recycled content, procurement of sustainable materials/life cycle analysis
- New Florida workgroup started through Florida Recycling Partnership (not a legal mandate)
- Continue with a weight-based goal? There is some dissatisfaction with weight-based goals, so considering options. White paper to be submitted to the DEP.
- FL does not have a lot of curbside compost programs; has not been a lot of interest

Branded poster for statewide use during the first phase of the campaign, which was to focus on core recyclables



Florida has a curbside recycling problem.



Floridians are contaminating curbside recycling bins with materials that are not meant to be there — mainly plastic bags; tangles, like cords and hoses; and clothing.

Let's **RETHINK** what we recycle and **RESET** our behavior to focus on recycling the basics at curbside.

Back To The Basics

Focus on recycling these items in your home curbside bin:

- Aluminum & Steel Cans**
- Plastic Bottles & Jugs**
- Cardboard & Paper**

**When in doubt
— throw it out!**

rethink.reset.
recycle.
FloridaRecycles.org

Branded flyers created by the Florida DEP staff during later phases of the campaign.

They allow local governments to address issues specific to their communities.



Attachment B

Websites for state campaigns

California created CalRecycle, a department within the California Environmental Protection Agency that maintains the website calrecycle.ca.gov. It offers a wealth of resources for diverting materials from landfills. U.S. EPA Region 5 professionals suggested using California's toolkits as a model. CalRecycle's stated mission is to "inspire and challenge Californians to achieve the highest waste reduction, recycling and reuse goals in the nation."

Michigan created a website called recyclingraccoons.org as part of its *Know It Before You Throw It* campaign, which playfully utilized raccoons as recycling mascots.

Florida initiated an educational campaign called *Rethink. Reset. Recycle.* to reduce recycling contamination. It includes a separate website, floridarecycles.org, designed to educate residents about the basics of curbside recycling. The website contains a description of the problem, instructions on proper recycling, a video, and FAQs. It also invites recycling coordinators to sign up for resources, including digital and printable web banners and fact sheets and a social media kit. In addition, the website directs residents to contact their county recycling coordinators and links to a spreadsheet with contacts for each county.

Attachment C

Resources for hosting one-day waste diversion events



Toolkit for planning community recycling events



[Guide on how to collect pumpkins for composting](http://www.scarce.org/pumpkins)

Attachment D

Waste Reduction Resources for Businesses and Organizations



Illinois Sustainable Technology Center
[Services \(includes waste audits\)](#)
[Case studies](#)



Healthy Schools Campaign
[Toolkit for Reducing Food Waste in Illinois Schools](#)

**RECYCLING WORKS:
A Toolkit for Reducing Waste in
the Workplace**



[Illinois Toolkit for Reducing Waste in the Workplace](#)



US EPA
[Preventing waste small business guide](#)

Attachment E

Customizable flyer that was developed by the Illinois Task Force on Reducing Recycling Contamination and Increasing Diversion Rates

Representatives from materials recovery facilities, haulers, waste and recycling associations, and governments across Illinois joined the task force to encourage proper curbside recycling.

Coles County

RECYCLING GUIDELINES YES!

METAL
Steel & Aluminum Containers and Foil

GLASS
Containers: Bottles & Jars Only
Discard Lids & Caps

PAPER
Cardboard (Flattened), Office Paper, Newspaper, Magazines

PLASTIC
Containers: Bottles, Tubs, Jugs & Jars Only
Replace Lids & Caps

Put material in bin
Loose, Clean & Empty!

NO!

Not in Bags!

- No Plastic Bags or Plastic Wrap
- No Clothing (Textiles or Shoes - Donate instead)
- No Big Items (Electronics, Wood, Propane Tanks, Scrap Metal, or Styrofoam - contact CCRPADC* for other options)
- No Tangles (Ropes, Hoses, Wire, Cords, Chains, or Hangers)
- No Shredded Paper (contact CCRPADC* for other recycling options)
- No Styrofoam (egg cartons, caps, packing peanuts, or take-out containers)
- No Cartons (Juice, Milk, Frozen Food)
- No Food, Liquid, Diapers, Batteries, or Needles
- No Glass (Containers, Bottles, or Jars)

These Guidelines represent the common items accepted in most recycling programs in Illinois. For greater detail on specific items or programmatic variations, reach out to your local authority.
*For more detail, including recycling and reuse programs beyond the bin, visit www.co.coles.il.us/CCRPDC/index.html or contact CCRPADC at 217-348-0521 or summel@co.coles.il.us

Coles County Regional Planning & Development Commission

RECYCLING GUIDELINES YES!

for Howard's Disposal

PAPER
Cardboard (Flattened), Office Paper, Newspaper, Magazines, Shredded Paper

PLASTIC
Containers: Bottles, Tubs, Jugs & Jars Only
Replace Lids & Caps

METAL
Steel & Aluminum Containers and Foil

Put material in bin
Loose, Clean & Empty!

NO!

Not in Bags!

- No Plastic Bags or Plastic Wrap
- No Clothing (Textiles or Shoes - Donate instead)
- No Big Items (Electronics, Wood, Propane Tanks, Scrap Metal, or Styrofoam - contact CCRPADC* for other options)
- No Tangles (Ropes, Hoses, Wire, Cords, Chains, or Hangers)
- No Styrofoam (egg cartons, caps, packing peanuts, or take-out containers)
- No Cartons (Juice, Milk, Frozen Food)
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Coles County Regional Planning & Development Commission

Lake County

RECYCLING GUIDELINES YES!

METAL
Steel & aluminum containers and foil

PAPER
Cardboard (Flattened), office paper, newspaper, magazines

GLASS
Bottles & jars only

PLASTIC
Bottles, tubs, & jugs only

FOOD & BEVERAGE CARTONS

Clean & Empty
LEAVE CAPS & LIDS ON

NO!

Do Not Bag Recyclables

- No Plastic Bags or Product Wrap (Return clean to retailer)
- No Tangles (Hangers, hoses, wire, cords, ropes or chains)
- No Food, Liquid, Diapers, Batteries, or Needles
- No Big Items (Electronics, wood, propane tanks, scrap metal or styrofoam - for other options, visit swalco.org for our online "Where Do I Recycle This?" guide)
- No Clothing, Textiles or Shoes (Visit swalco.org for a list of Clothing & Textile or Reuse-A-Shoe collection drop-off sites)

To find out more about recycling in Lake County, Illinois, or what you can do with items not accepted in your recycling cart (including other recycling and reuse programs), visit swalco.org or contact SWALCO at 847-377-4900.
January 2020

DIRECTRICES PARA EL RECICLAJE ¡SI!

METAL
Envases de acero/aluminio y papel de aluminio

PAPEL
Cartón (aplanado), papel de oficina, periódico, revistas

VIDRIO
Botellas y frascos solamente

PLÁSTICO
Botellas, jarras y recipientes de plástico solamente

ENVASES DE CARTÓN PARA ALIMENTOS Y BEBIDAS

Limpio y VACÍOS
DEJE LAS TAPADERAS PUESTAS

¡NO!

- No bolsas ni envolturas de plástico (Límpie y regrese estas al comerciante donde las obtuvo)
- No a los artículos que se enredan (Ganchos, mangueras, alambres, cordones, cuerdas y cadenas)
- No comida, líquidos, pañales, baterías ni agujas/jeringas
- No artículos grandes (Electrónicos, madera, tanques de propano, desecho metálico, o unteal)
- No artículos de ropa, textiles ni zapatos (Visite a swalco.org para una lista de los sitios de colección de ropa, textiles, o sitios de colección de zapatos para reutilización)

Para conocer más acerca del reciclaje en el Condado de Lake, Illinois, o informarse sobre qué hacer con los artículos que no pueden ser depositados en su contenedor de reciclaje (incluyendo otros programas de reciclaje y de reutilización), visite a swalco.org o póngase en contacto con SWALCO al número 847-377-4900.
January 2020

Attachment F

Suggested strategies to convey waste reduction messaging

- Target people of different ages, including school-aged children, adults, seniors
- Deliver messages using visual cues, such as clip art, to reach people who speak different languages or people who tend not to spend time reading text
- Provide text-based messages in different languages, where needed. State government can provide translation services.
- Offer toolkits for counties, cities, schools, businesses, and nonprofit organizations. All materials should promote a universal message but be customizable.
- Remind organizations that printed materials are more effective for some populations, such as rural communities or senior citizens
- Keep messages clear and engaging. For example, Kane County has illustrated the volume of recyclables collected at a community event by showing the number of train cars the waste would have filled.
- Exercise caution when setting diversion goals, which can lead to “wishcycling” and increased volume of single-use “recyclable” items being purchased
- Create training materials for custodial professionals
- Encourage local governments/haulers to provide stickers for lids of recycling receptacles
- Ask the producers of Kraft bags to print composting instructions on yard waste bags

Attachment G

Examples of educational videos



[Waste Management Virtual MRF tour](#)



[Cambridge, MA contamination video](#)