Together, transforming recycling for good.
Recycling Partnership Support
Snapshot of Year-Over-Year Metrics

- **Communities Supported**: 1508
- **Households Reached (M)**: 77
- **Carts Placed**: 712k
- **Investment in Recycling Infrastructure**: $53M
- **Recyclables Diverted (M/lbs)**: 233M
- **Metric Tons of CO2 Avoided**: 251k
Two Paths Forward

Linear Economy

- Take
- Make
- Use
- Waste

Circular Economy

- Make
- Use
- Recover
- Repeat

The Recycling Partnership
More than 20 million tons of curbside recyclable materials are disposed annually. Curbside recycling in the U.S. currently recovers only 32% of available recyclables in single-family homes, leaving enormous and immediate opportunity for growth to support the economy, address climate change, and keep recyclable commodities out of landfills.

Only half of Americans have automatic access to curbside recycling, some who have access do not participate, and not all who participate do so fully. True access must be increased and the public can and should be engaged in improving participation and recycling behavior. All of these challenges can be successfully addressed through best management practices listed in this report.

Many communities are increasingly paying more to send materials to a MRF than the landfill and many programs lack critical operating funds. Helping community recycling programs improve will require addressing challenging market conditions, providing substantial funding support, and addressing inexpensive landfill tipping fees that make disposal options significantly cheaper than recycling.

Investing to clean up the stream benefits all sectors of the system. Contamination remains a critical issue, but it can be substantially reduced through the implementation of proven techniques across the country.

The ultimate fate of recyclable materials rests in the hands of a broad set of stakeholders who must all do something new and different to support a transition to a circular economy. Strong, coordinated action is needed in areas ranging from package design, capital investments, scaled adoption of best management practices, policy interventions, and consumer engagement.

Top 5 Perspectives on U.S. Curbside Recycling

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Healthy Recycling Needs a Systems Approach
Global Commitments to Recycled Content

Reaction to marine plastics and climate crises

World’s largest brands

Enormous demand for material by 2025
FINDING 1

THE SPEED OF PACKAGING INNOVATION HAS OUTPACED THE CAPABILITIES OF RECYCLING INFRASTRUCTURE
What is the Pathway to Circularity?
If all building blocks requirements are not met, the material is not circular; there is an opportunity to form a coalition.
Milestones to Achieve Success

OVERALL COALITION GOAL
To increase curbside access for PP, ensure recyclers can sort PP successfully in their facilities, and maintain vibrant and robust end markets to supply high quality recycled PP for use in packaging

Phase 1
✓ Investment in polypropylene advancement signaling restored confidence in Polypropylene
✓ Regain Widely Recycled Status
✓ Data Gathering

Phase 2
✓ Achieve Same Access as PET/HDPE Bottles

Phase 3
✓ Achieve 30% Recycle Rate to align with EMF Definition of Recyclable
FINDING 2

IN ITS CURRENT FORM, THE U.S. RECYCLING SYSTEM CANNOT DELIVER THE SUPPLY OF RECYCLED MATERIALS DEMANDED BY THE NEW PLASTICS ECONOMY GLOBAL COMMITMENT

Initiative 2: “Unlocking Supply”

The Recycling Partnership is targeting $250 million in investment over 5 years which will:

- Keep 2 billion pounds of recyclables out of the landfill
- Improve recycling for 18M households
- Capture 204 million pounds of PET
- Collect 495 million pounds of cardboard
- Collect 49.5 million pounds of aluminum
FINDING 3

INTRACTABLE UNDERLYING CHALLENGES NECESSITATE A PARALLEL EXPLORATION OF HOW TO BUILD A SUSTAINABLY FUNDED AND RESPONSIVE FUTURE SYSTEM

We face system-wide challenges in recycling. Extensive investment in innovation is needed to build the future system.

Policy is needed in the form of a uniquely American approach.

Creating a future Circular Economy for the U.S. requires both a focus across material types and a system that does not stop at recycling.
Strategies to Get the U.S. to Recycling 2.0

Substantially greater support of community recycling programs with capital funding, technical assistance, and efforts to strengthen and grow local political commitment to recycling services.

Development of new and enhanced state and federal recycling policies.

Continued and expanded investment in domestic material processing and end markets.

Citizen and consumer engagement to create and sustain robust and appropriate recycling behavior.

Continued innovation in the collection, sorting and general recyclability of materials, including the building of flexibility and resiliency to add new materials into the system.

Broader stakeholder engagement in achieving all elements of true circularity, in which the fate of all materials is not just intended to be recycled, but that they are designed, collected, and actually turned into something new.
Keep in touch

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kharrison@recyclingpartnership.org
More Data from The Partnership
Find out more about our work:

https://impactreport2020.recyclingpartnership.org/
What does a Single-Family Home Generate?
768 lbs. of recyclables/year
### Estimate of Annual Tonnage of Curbside Recyclable Material Generation by all U.S. Single-Family Households

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Material</th>
<th>Tonnage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cardboard</td>
<td>5,195,756</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed Paper</td>
<td>14,722,469</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aseptics &amp; Cartons</td>
<td>295,586</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PET Bottles</td>
<td>2,478,193</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-bottle PET</td>
<td>524,009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HDPE Natural Bottles &amp; Jars</td>
<td>512,905</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HDPE Colored Bottles &amp; Jars</td>
<td>786,644</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>37,363,622</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Glass Containers: 7,613,441 ton
- Steel Cans: 1,126,674 ton
- Aluminum Cans: 1,002,515 ton
- Aluminum Foil & Trays: 273,814 ton
- Other Plastic Packaging (~3-7): 1,670,402 ton
- Bulky Rigid Plastics: 1,161,215 ton

Total Tonnage: 37,363,622 tons
If all of the 37.4 million tons of single-family recyclables were put back to productive use instead of lost to disposal, what would that do?

- It would generate **370,000** full-time equivalent (FTE) jobs
- Reduce U.S. greenhouse gas emissions by **96 million** metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent
- Conserve an annual energy equivalent of **154 million** barrels of oil
- Achieve the equivalent of taking more than **20 million** cars off U.S. highways
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Average Pounds per Household Collected on an Annual Basis</th>
<th>Median Pounds per Household Collected on an Annual Basis</th>
<th>Number of Community Data Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All Programs</td>
<td>440.16</td>
<td>430.38</td>
<td>436</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programs with Automatically Provided Service</td>
<td>459.06</td>
<td>449.90</td>
<td>365</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programs Requiring Subscription or Opt-In Option</td>
<td>331.09</td>
<td>278.97</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Programs - Mix of Automatic and Opt-In Options</td>
<td>392.77</td>
<td>337.50</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Pounds per Household Curbside Program Performance by Container

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Average Pounds per Household Collected on an Annual Basis</th>
<th>Median Pounds per Household Collected on an Annual Basis</th>
<th>Number of Community Data Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bin</td>
<td>360.38</td>
<td>363.33</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bag</td>
<td>324.79</td>
<td>353.68</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cart</td>
<td>458.81</td>
<td>452.60</td>
<td>242</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programs Using a Combination of Bins &amp; Carts</td>
<td>451.54</td>
<td>448.77</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
FREE state of the art tool for tracking:
• Curbside recycling
• Drop-off recycling
• Multifamily Recycling
• Organics

Customized recommendations and solutions for your program

Build powerful year over year data

Quickly calculate and report key metrics

GET STARTED: https://recyclesearch.com/profile/mmp
Public Support for Recycling

Percentage of Americans Saying Recycling is as Valuable a Public Service as Waste and Water

- Agree: 84%
- Neutral: 14%
- Disagree: 2%

Americans are Willing to Pay More Taxes for Better Recycling

- None: 25.5%
- $40-$50 a Year: 35%
- $500/Year: 11.5%
- $100/Year: 24.5%
- $1000/Year: 3.5%
Figure 5: Total Market Value of all Single-Family Curbside Materials
More Resources from The Partnership
Cart Grant Opportunities

• Grants for general implementation
• Funding up to $15/cart
• Technical assistance and design of education/outreach materials
• RFP available on an on-going basis
• https://recyclingpartnership.org/recycling-cart-grant/
The Recycling Partnership’s website offers free online resources to communities that outline the best management practices for tackling contamination both at the curb and at community drop-off recycling centers. Find our Anti-Contamination Toolkit and Campaign Builder online which has been designed to provide steps, tools, and resources to help improve the quality of your recycling program.
Online Campaign Builder

Customizable Resources
Ready To Go
To Work In Your Community
THREE COMMUNICATIONS TO DRIVE PARTICIPATION AND IMPROVE QUALITY

1. **INFORM AND TRIGGER**
   - Annual Info Card Mailer
   - Curbside Feedback

2. **PERSONALIZED FEEDBACK**
   - Top Issue Mailer

3. **ISSUE SPECIFIC COMMUNICATIONS**
   - Top Issue Signage
Anti-Contamination Resources

- Anti-Contamination Kits
  - Curbside
  - Drop-off
- MRF Survey
- MRF Tracking Form
- Cart-Tagging Training Video

- https://recyclingpartnership.org/fight-contamination/
DIYSigns for Recycling

Free Open-Sourced Templates You Can Personalize and Download
Drop Off Signage

Key Points: Combine Words and Images, Simple and Direct, Consider the Need for Wayfinding
Social Media Kits

• Newly released COVID-19 and Recycling Social Media Kit

• Pre-written post text for each image, or, design your own message

• For use with Facebook and Twitter
Municipal Recycling Coordinators Group

- Peer network for local waste diversion and recycling professionals (city and county government employees)
- share resources/jobs/creative solutions
- ask and answer questions
- support one another throughout your community work

TO JOIN:
www.recyclingpartnership.org/facebook/