

FOR OUR COMMUNITY RECYCLE RIGHT NC



BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES FOR MULTIFAMILY RECYCLING

Approximately 18% of North Carolina residents live in multifamily housing such as apartments and condos. However, multifamily units are not always served by local government recycling programs that may only collect from single family homes. This discrepancy impacts the equity of government services for the 1.8 million NC residents who may not have access to the same level of recycling services as residents living in single family homes.

Widespread recycling access demonstrates commitment to resource conservation and equity in availability to local government services for all residents. Multifamily residences can provide a substantial source of valuable household recyclables, and collection programs for these properties increase landfill diversion rates. Typically, per household recovery rates are lower among multifamily residences. However, the concentration of materials from multiple residences at each multifamily recycling station allows haulers to collect more material and serve more households per stop.

PROGRAM PLANNING

- Design programs with flexibility and scalability in mind.
- Define “multifamily” for local government programs (unit minimum, public housing, mobile homes, etc.).
- Secure financial support for staff and develop contingency plans for labor shortages.
- Delineate program responsibilities and ownership in MOUs or contracts between involved parties (property manager, hauler, local government, etc.).
- Build relationships to support buy-in from various stakeholders (properties, municipalities, communities, etc.) regardless of ordinances or mandates.
- Apply feedback from stakeholders to develop plans for communication, education, and operations.
- Establish points of contact for program aspects and make readily available.
- Become familiar with the needs of each property to better understand the proper approach for messaging.
- Use semi-tailored approaches to communications for individual multifamily properties.
- Initiate communications early and often.

IMPLEMENTATION

- Maintain engagement with community voices to better understand needs, accessibility, and impacts.
- Establish a baseline ratio for containers and units and adjust as needed.
- Clearly mark or label recycling containers to distinguish them from trash containers.
- Provide clear signage on or near all recycling containers about accepted materials.

- Make use of various education resources (stickers, flyers, cart tags, digital media, etc.) and ensure information is consistent, accurate, and accessible.
- Distribute educational materials to every unit at program launch and at least once per year thereafter.
- Provide in-unit containers (bins, totes, recyclable bags, etc.) with educational information.*

* Particularly for properties with valet collection.

PROGRAM MAINTENANCE

- Encourage local champions or volunteers to garner support and educate their peers.
- Maintain database of contacts — particularly for property management and local government contacts.
- Make use of available anti-contamination resources, including [DEACS Education Resources](#) and [The Recycling Partnership's Anti-Contamination Kits](#).

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Routinely monitor and evaluate the following to assess program success and identify issues:

- Tonnage (participation)
- Contamination
- Program finances

TRACKING AND REPORTING Step by Step (based on SCDHEC Guide)

- STEP 1:** Identify the recycling container type and volume
- STEP 2:** Identify material collected and conversion factor
- STEP 3:** Note how full each container is when emptied
- STEP 4:** Note how often the container is emptied
- STEP 5:** Closely track recycling data
- STEP 6:** Report data as appropriate (or required)

Sample Monitoring Worksheet (based on SCDHEC Guide)

Month	Material	Container Size	Conversion Factor	Container Fullness	No. Containers	No. Pick-ups per Month	Total Weight
Jan	Cans, bottles, steel cans, glass and mixed paper	8 yards ³	262 lbs/yd ³	.05 (half full)	3	2	6,288 lbs
...							
Yearly Total							

[SCDHEC Guide to Tracking & Reporting Recycling Data](#)



The N.C. Division of Environmental Assistance and Customer Service (DEACS) is a non-regulatory division of N.C. DEQ offering technical and financial assistance to businesses, manufacturers, local governments, institutions, economic developers and citizens in environmental management. For questions, call 1-877-623-6748.

