Guide to Multifamily Recycling Strategies in Saint Louis County

Apartments

Condominiums

High-Rises

Town Homes

REDUCE • REUSE • RECYCLE
GO GREEN!
A SAINT LOUIS COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT INITIATIVE
Introduction

By ordinance, the Saint Louis County Department of Health Solid Waste Management Program is tasked with regulating the proper management of solid waste and implementing programs to reduce the amount of waste sent to landfills.

In 2005, a study was published that found Saint Louis County only had a 30% waste diversion rate and that without significant changes, that rate would not improve. Continuing to landfill 70% of our waste was not good for the environment, nor would it help to control waste disposal costs. After input from residents, recyclers, trash haulers, and disposal facilities, a solid waste management plan was developed that set a goal of reaching a 50% waste diversion rate by 2010.

In 2008, an ordinance change required trash haulers in Saint Louis County to include weekly recycling as part of the minimum level of trash service for one- and two-family residences. As a result, recycling in the unincorporated areas of the County has increased by more than 800%.

A large reason for the success of residential recycling has been the availability of single stream collection. With single stream recycling, materials are collected in one container with no sorting and the program accepts an expanded list of materials. In fact, up to 70% of waste generated can now be recycled and haulers no longer need special trucks or multiple-compartment containers to pick up recyclables.

Multifamily Recycling—The Next Target

The ease of single stream recycling is now widely available for commercial accounts and that is changing old ideas about multifamily recycling. Single stream not only makes recycling easier, but managers now have the potential to actually save money by replacing some trash pulls with recycling pulls (see pages 8 and 9 for examples).

This guide is just a starting point. Please consult with one of the many service providers listed on page 10 who can help you design a recycling program that fits your individual needs.
Startup Tips to Implement Recycling

1. Contact your current trash hauler to see what kind of recycling services they offer. If they don’t provide recycling pickups, find a different local provider and discuss your options. See page 10 for a list of service providers in the area.

2. Decide which type of recycling program will work best for you and how you will implement it. Get information from multiple sources to maximize your options on prices and pickups.

3. Develop an education plan with the key messages being, “Here’s how to recycle,” and “It’s easy!” Flyers, door hangers, and commitment cards are useful tools to consider.

5. Launch the recycling program by hosting a cook-out or some type of community event. This helps notify people of the new service and allows them to ask questions and talk to other residents in a celebratory atmosphere.

6. Let the recycling begin! You might also want to track numbers. Your hauler should be able to provide you with the tonnage of materials being diverted from landfills. Share this information with your residents and don’t forget to “toot your horn” in promotional pieces.

Hint

The most successful programs make recycling and garbage services equally easy to use.

Troubleshooting Tips

New Move-Ins

High turnover rate is often given as an excuse as to why a building can’t recycle, but clear communication can overcome this issue. Education should start before a tenant even moves in!

- Include the recycling program in new tenant orientation including how, what, and where.
- Ask for a commitment card from the tenant pledging that he or she will recycle.
- Consider including recycling as part of the lease agreement. Have the tenant initial a paragraph acknowledging that recycling is available and that they have been given information on how the program works.
- Consider a box collection program that saves boxes for move-outs. If you have room, this is a great first message for the new tenant to receive—that waste reduction is a priority on your properties.

Moving Out

For move-outs, prevent contamination of recycling dumpsters and overflowing trash dumpsters by giving the tenant information on how to handle materials, such as:

- Electronics (refer to www.ecyclestlouis.org for recycling options)
- Furniture and household items (list neighboring thrift stores and/or charitable organizations that will pick items up)
- Clothing (list dropoff locations that accept textiles)

Property Managers Not Here!?!?

Oftentimes, property managers oversee several complexes and are not always available on site. Enlist volunteers to help monitor the recycling program and to be the point person for questions from residents. Reward volunteers with a rent reduction, prize, or gift card.
Cleaning and Maintenance Staff

Make sure to pass on information and training to staff regarding the recycling program. Provide an overview of the program with key components. Make sure to educate all new staff about the program when they are hired.

Scavengers

Scavenging for aluminum cans can become a problem. Post signs and reminders that scavenging is against the law and you can be fined for it. Other options include locked dumpster doors and surveillance cameras.

Trash in the Recycling!?!?

To help cut down on contamination, make sure to keep collection containers next to each other or within a close distance. Tenants will participate more willingly if the bins are located near each other and are convenient. Provide frequent reminders on accepted and non-accepted items.

Contamination has been considered one of the biggest problems with multifamily recycling. It is difficult to determine who is responsible for the contamination and once a container is contaminated, it inevitably encourages and receives more contaminated items. Nothing can derail a recycling program quicker than excessive contamination.

Hint

At every available opportunity, educate and reinforce the idea that recycling is not trash. A clean stream of recyclables (no trash) is important!

Guide for What Can and Cannot Be Recycled

Here’s What You Can Now Recycle!

1. Cardboard
   - Kraft bags (brown paper bags)
   - Notebook and gift wrap paper
   - No foil gift wrap

2. Residential Paper Products
   - Newspapers including inserts (remove plastic sleeves)
   - Chipboard (corn, case and food rice boxes, gift boxes, etc.)
   - Paperback books (no hardcover books)
   - Magazine, catalogs, and telephone books

3. Residential Containers
   - Plastic resin:
     - Soda, water, mouthwash, ketchup and salad dressing bottles
     - Narrow-neck containers
     - Clear plastic:
       - Milk and juice jugs
     - Narrow-neck containers, health and beauty aid products, household cleaners
     - Plastic buckets (5-gallon size maximum)
     - Steel and tin cans
     - Glass bottles and jars of any color
     - No window glass, mirrors, dinnerware or ceramics
     - Plastic resin:
       - Narrow-neck containers, health and beauty products
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Some Frequently Asked Questions

1. Is recycling expensive to implement?
   It doesn’t have to be. By replacing a trash pickup with one for recycling, you can save noticeable amounts of money. Though the fuel, insurance, and salaries to collect recycling are the same as for trash, recycling is less expensive because when it is dropped off at the processor, the hauler is often paid a rebate and there is no tipping fee.

2. What if I don’t have room for additional containers?
   Talk to multiple providers to determine your options. You may be able to use two smaller dumpsters or use totes. Valet pickup from individual residents may be the best choice.

3. Where can I get educational materials for tenants?
   Usually, the hauler you select will have items like posters, handouts, brochures, and other materials to help inform residents. For additional materials and possible grant opportunities, please check www.RecycleSaintLouis.com. This booklet is also available as a PDF on that site.

4. What if some of my tenants don’t want to participate in the program?
   Although many tenants support and want recycling on the premises, there are some that simply won’t recycle. The key to maximizing participation is to make recycling as easy as trash disposal with frequent education reminders.

Examples of Multifamily Recycling in the Saint Louis County Metropolitan Area
(The following statements were submitted to the department by the haulers and do not necessarily reflect the views or opinions of the health department.)

Allied Waste (Republic Services) has had success in reducing waste volumes and tonnages at several locations throughout Saint Louis including Park Forest Apartments, Woodsmill Village, Whispering Hills, Charter Place Apartments, and S.F. Shannon Real Estate Management, just to name a few.
Success has been attributed to providing complete single stream recycling. The program is easy to implement and provides the most tonnage diversion possible with the acceptance of glass as a recyclable material. For contact information on Allied Waste services, see page 10.

Always Green Recycling, Inc. provides specialized recycling services for customers. In one multiple apartment community, Always Green provides single stream recycling pickup of twelve 96 gallon totes twice a week, servicing approximately 152 units.
Before the implementation of recycling, trash pickup consisted of three 4-yard dumpsters per week. After recycling started, two of those pickups were eliminated resulting in a savings of $1,400 a year. Overall, four tons of material per month have been diverted from the landfill as a result of single stream recycling at this unit. For contact information on Always Green Recycling, Inc., see page 10.

Arm Strong Environmental The Arm Strong Environmental (ASE) Full Service Green Program provides a truly sustainable GREEN solution for multifamily communities that benefits the owners, the management team, the residents, and the Earth.
Before implementing the ASE Full Service Green Program at Park Forest Apartments and Townhomes, waste services consisted of sixteen 4-yard dumpsters located throughout the property. ASE began twice a week valet service for recycling and trash and reduced the sixteen dumpsters down to six 8-yard dumpsters in three locations. (Continued on page 9.)
As the program progressed, two of the 8-yard dumpsters were decreased to 6-yard containers and eventually an 8-yard trash dumpster was replaced with an 8-yard single-stream recycling dumpster. The leasing and maintenance offices also participate in the ASE program. From sixteen trash dumpsters, the property is now down to five trash dumpsters and one 8-yard single-stream container with no overflow problems. The ASE full Service Green Program is a win-win. For contact information on Arm Strong Environmental, see page 10.

Aspen Waste offers many facets of recycling, including organics. They believe that every multifamily property has its own circumstances that may require its own unique recycling arrangements.

Success can be attributed to the dedication of the property manager and a strong education plan. Aspen works with property owners to assess recycling needs and helps put together an education plan for property owners, managers, etc.

In one loft building with 213 units, Aspen Waste was responsible for reducing trash pickup from five times a week for four containers to five times a week for two containers with a cost savings of $429.00 per month. For contact information on Aspen Waste, see page 10.

Environmental Trash Company services a community with condos and townhomes. In this community there are approximately 302 units that initially had twice a week trash collection. With the implementation of recycling, the trash collection was reduced to once a week.

Residents are recycling an average of 1.73 tons of trash per week! For contact information on Environmental Trash Company, see page 10.

Note: Haulers who indicated on their 2010 Saint Louis County hauling license application that they provide recycling service to multifamily units or provide commercial recycling were contacted via e-mail about this publication. At that time, they were asked if they wished to be included in this guide and if they wished to provide a case study. Updates to this guide will be posted at www.RecycleSaintLouis.com.

If you are a hauler and wish to be included in future versions of this guide as a provider of recycling services to multifamily complexes, please call (314) 615-8958.

### Contact Information for Haulers that Provide Recycling Services in the Saint Louis Area

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Phone</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Allied Waste (Republic Services)</td>
<td>12976 St. Charles Rock Rd. Bridgeton, MO 63044</td>
<td>(314) 592-9920</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Always Green Recycling</td>
<td>1939 Wentzville Pkwy. Suite 180 Wentzville, MO 63385</td>
<td>(314) 229-2827</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arm Strong Environmental</td>
<td>240 Old Sulphur Spring Manchester, MO 63021</td>
<td>(314) 878-3840</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aspen Waste Systems of Missouri</td>
<td>13710 Green Ash Ct. Earth City, MO 63045</td>
<td>(314) 890-9100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian Environmental Services</td>
<td>103 Pine Street P.O. Box 9 Winfield, MO 65559</td>
<td>(636) 566-8367</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DCS Waste Systems Inc.</td>
<td>P.O. Box 510139 St. Louis, MO 63151</td>
<td>(314) 722-2277</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Earth Circle Recycling</td>
<td>1660 South Kingshighway St. Louis, MO 63110</td>
<td>(314) 664-1450</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmental Trash Company (ETC)</td>
<td>P.O. Box 555 St. Ann, MO 63074</td>
<td>(314) 524-5555</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IESI</td>
<td>2629 Chouteau Ave St. Louis, MO 63103</td>
<td>(636) 321-2100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Junk Doctors, LLC</td>
<td>6185 Olive Blvd. St. Louis, MO 63132</td>
<td>(314) 231-5865</td>
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<tr>
<td>Meridian Waste Services</td>
<td>12864 Pennridge Dr. Bridgeton, MO 63044</td>
<td>(314) 291-3131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QRS Recycling</td>
<td>4076 Bayless Ave. St. Louis, MO 63125</td>
<td>(314) 731-7663</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skips Hauling</td>
<td>1990 Old State Rd. Wildwood, MO 63038</td>
<td>(314) 644-1948</td>
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<tr>
<td>Waste Management</td>
<td>7320 Hall Street St. Louis, MO 63147</td>
<td>(800) 989-2783</td>
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For additional information on recycling providers and trash haulers, refer to the yellow pages or an alternate search engine.
Why Recycle?

There is no better time to offer recycling as part of waste management at multifamily units. Here’s why:

- Residents want to recycle and it is becoming routine to do so. In a few years, it will be an expected service and those without recycling may find themselves at a disadvantage in attracting desirable tenants.

- Single stream recycling makes recycling easy and it is now widely available for commercial accounts. All materials can be collected in one container without sorting.

- A multitude of service providers exist in the Saint Louis area that can help a manager set up a recycling program that best fits the complex and the budget.

- Reducing trash collection through recycling can save money. The collection of trash is more expensive than recycling.

- Recycling saves resources and energy, and it creates jobs. It is a simple first step to “green” your properties.

Please visit our website for additional recycling and waste reduction resources at www.RecycleSaintLouis.com.

Saint Louis County Department of Health
Solid Waste Management Program
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Funding for recycling and waste diversion comes from a 5% voter-approved landfill surcharge fee.