

SSRC RECO Report recommendations – Curbside 8/2019

(Full report at <https://ssrcoop.info/elementor-2389/> , MASS DEP GRANT INFO, REPORTS)

Our work suggests that efforts to improve curbside recycling by residents must be ongoing, target other non-recyclable items, reinforce good behaviors, and educate new residents.

The recommendations are divided into three categories - administrative, education/outreach and enforcement. A town need not complete all of these recommendations to get results; each should determine which methods might have the biggest effect and concentrate on them.

At this time, **Recycling Dividend Program funds may be used** for any of the following recommendations, many which also help earn **additional RDP points**.

Administrative

- It is critical to have **support from every level** involved in a recycling education and enforcement project. All must be willing to provide needed time and materials, and understand that improving curbside recycling benefits the town.
- The administrative staff must be ready to **field phone calls** from residents.
- The curbside contract administrator (DPW or Health Director) must be fully **empowered and firm in not allowing pick-up** of contaminated carts and other trash related violations. No other town official should override these decisions.
- Responsible departments would benefit greatly from applying for the [DEP Recycling IQ Kit Grant](#), and from hiring dedicated staff to oversee compliance, education and outreach..

Education and Outreach

- Display **signs** provided by the SSRC (Don't Bag Recyclables, No food and liquids), and/or put recycling messages on Town **LED boards** at the polls, town meeting, and in high **visibility areas** around town.
- **Cart-top sticker** - Place sticker on all recycling cart with graphics and text, such as those available through the Recycling IQ Kit, to illustrate what goes in the cart and what stays out. Replace when they begin to degrade or when recycling guidelines change substantially. These are useful to all residents and may be the most immediate way to inform new renters or new homeowners of recycling guidelines.
- **Webpage** – This is an increasingly important information source. Make sure it is **up to date, streamlined, and doesn't contain conflicting information**. Embed the RecycleSmart Recyclopeda widget prominently. Upload a high-resolution graphic depicting acceptable and unacceptable materials, such as the RecycleSmart Guide.
- Information Card or Flyer - **Annually, mail a graphic recycling information card** or flyer to every household that has curbside pickup. Mail additional cards to residences that have been **sold within a few weeks of the closing**. Change the appearance, or flag a change to inspire residents to actually look at them.

- **E-news and email** - Include pertinent recycling information and announcements through the Town’s “alerts, news and announcements” email system that residents may sign up for.
- **Apps** - Subscribe to and promote use of an App dedicated to providing recycling information. **Remyndr, Recycle Coach and ReCollect** are especially helpful.
- **Social Media** –Share posts from the **SSRC** or **RecycleSmartMA Facebook pages** on Town social media at least monthly. Include seasonally relevant posts, i.e. “empty flower pots go in the trash,” in spring, and “keep holiday lights and ribbons out of the recycling” in December.
- **Newspaper – Announce changes**, and post special events in the calendar section of the local paper. Write an annual press release, or **recycle an SSRC article** about recycling guidelines. (see **Appendix 7**). Consider a paid ad for certain issues or projects (such as increased enforcement). **Op-eds** by the Town’s recycling or sustainability committee or high school Green Team can be impactful in communicating specific messages.
- **Community Cable Access TV** - Post general recycling messages on the local cable Bulletin Board. Record or rerun a show or **PSA** on local issues. (See **Appendix 7**)
- Have a presence at **Town Festivals and Events**. Display a recycling cart, recyclable items and common contaminants - perhaps making a game of it. Distribute informational flyers and answer questions. This is a good project for a high school Green Team, Sustainability or Recycling Committee, Scout troop, or Town intern. The SSRC has materials.
- Order and display a **banner** addressing recycling at **Town Hall**. The message might be about keeping plastic bags out of the recycling carts along with a URL for more information on recycling. Templates are available from the **Recycling IQ Kit**.
- **Senior Citizens** – Provide recycling education at Town senior centers on a regular basis.

Enforcement

- Apply for the DEP Recycling IQ Kit Grant, and /or hire dedicated staff to focus on education and outreach.
- **Evaluate recycling carts on an ongoing basis**. Entire routes need not be done in one day - a certain number of carts might be examined each day with the goal of assessing all carts in a predetermined amount of time.
- Use **OOPS tags** for carts that contain contaminants. Tagger(s) must be fair, consistent and thorough.
- The driver must **leave tagged carts unemptied** and check to see if violations have been rectified before emptying on the next scheduled pick-up day.
- If a town decides to hire a RECO, drivers must allow enough time for evaluation and tagging to occur in a reasonable timeframe.
- **Assess fines** for repeat improper recycling.

SSRC RECO Report recommendations – Dropoff 8/2019

(Full report at <https://ssrcoop.info/elementor-2389/> , MASS DEP GRANT INFO, REPORTS)

Our work suggests that efforts to improve dropoff recycling by residents must be ongoing, target other non-recyclable items, reinforce good behaviors, and educate new residents.

At this time, **Recycling Dividend Program funds may be used** for any of the following recommendations, many which also help **earn additional RDP points**.

General

- Responsible departments would benefit greatly from applying for the [DEP Recycling IQ Kit Grant](#), and from hiring **dedicated staff** to oversee education and compliance.
- Training – **Encourage and enable staff to attend trainings and workshops**, such as sE MRC meetings. As recycling is in constant flux, this will help them have the correct information, be able to answer questions from residents and do their jobs with **confidence and pride**. The SSRC, MassRecycle and/or the MACs could coordinate such trainings.
- For PAYT facilities, **do not dispose of municipal trash which is not contained in PAYT bags in the same compactor as residential trash**, Seeing non-PAYT bags in the disposal area invites residents to cheat.
- For non-PAYT facilities, require residents to use **clear bags** for trash to discourage hiding recyclables in the trash. Nantucket does this with great success – if the staff catches residents using an opaque bag, or spots recyclables in the clear bag, it is not permitted to be dumped. A resident said, “I can get away with throwing anything away as long as it’s in a black bag”.

Education and Outreach

- Signage
 - **Remove the word “commingle”** from all signs. It is confusing to residents who often see it as permission to put anything remotely considered recyclable into the bin.
 - **Remove references to #1 - #7 plastics**. Replace with “Rigid plastic containers”.
 - Use **graphics**, such as those available in the Recycling IQ Kit, or actual items wherever possible on signs to indicate what belongs in the bin. (**Appendix 3**)
 - Use **LED sign** for relevant and timely messages. Change these messages regularly.
- **Web pages** are an increasingly important information source. Make sure it is **up to date, streamlined, and doesn’t contain conflicting information**. Embed the RecycleSmart Recyclopedia widget prominently. Upload a high-resolution graphic depicting acceptable and unacceptable materials, such as the RecycleSmart Guide.
- Distribute **Informations cards** or flyers to all residents that use the transfer station **annually**. Change the appearance or flag a change to inspire residents to actually look at them. It should have transfer station regulations on one side and simple graphics on the other.(see **Appendix 3**)

- **E-news and email** - Include pertinent recycling information and announcements through the Town's "alerts, news and announcements" email system that residents may sign up for.
- **Social Media** –Share posts from the SSRC Facebook or RecycleSmartMA page on Town social media at least monthly. Include seasonally relevant posts, such as “keep holiday lights and ribbons out of the recycling” in December.
- Newspaper – **Announce changes**, and post special events in the calendar section of the local paper. Write an **annual press release**, or **recycle an SSRC article** about recycling guidelines. (**Appendix 7**). Consider a paid ad for certain issues or projects (such as increased enforcement). **Op-eds** by the Town's recycling or sustainability committee or high school Green Team can be impactful in communicating specific messages.
- **Community Cable Access TV** - Post general recycling messages on the local cable Bulletin Board. Record or rerun a show or PSA on local issues. (**Appendix 7**)
- **Senior Citizens** – Provide recycling education at Town senior centers on a regular basis.

Enforcement

- RECO-type staff - People took more care with recycling when **under perceived observation**. At all of the locations, there was a noticeable difference in recycling contamination when the RECO or transfer station staff was present. Some people waited until they were not being observed to dump bagged trash or other contaminants into the bins. This may require using RDP funds to employ another person if present staffing cannot cover this task along with their many other responsibilities.
- Post an **attendant at a station at which all incoming vehicles are required to stop**. (i.e. Scituate). This allow people to ask questions, and it gives the perception of oversight. PAYT bags, compost and recycling bins can be sold here, as well as fees for mattresses, appliances, etc. collected. OR, have an **office that overlooks** the trash and recycling area. (i.e. Kingston)
- Pre-sorting - Require the **tying of PAYT bags** and **sorting of recycling be done prior** to coming to the transfer station. Turn away vehicles with unsorted recycling. This will speed up vehicles going through the recycling area and prevent those who wait until no one is watching to dump trash in the recycling from doing so. It will also discourage people from emptying and re-using PAYT bags.
- Place **visible video cameras and speakers** in visible locations to monitor all areas from a single console. (i.e. Cohasset) A **microphone** connected to the console, and/or to a post where staff can directly view the disposal/ recycling areas, enables staff who are out of earshot to **communicate with residents in real time**. Follow up on infractions with **violation letters**. (**Appendix 3**)
- **Require cardboard boxes to be flattened** to eliminate hidden or forgotten items inside such as Styrofoam and plastic bags.
- Provide staff with a **convenient way** (i.e. a clipboard with forms) to **record violation data** continually. **Send letters** to those in violation of recycling regulations (**Appendix 2**), **revoke transfer station privileges**, and/or **assess fines** in accordance with regulations.