



NATIONAL
RECYCLING
COALITION
INC.
Rural Recycling
Council

FACT Sheet

Trash/Recycling Collection

Selecting a trash and recycling program is one of the most important decisions a community will make. When considering which program to use, it is important to ensure the system selected closely matches the needs of your community and your residents. Listed below are the more popular collection programs used throughout the country.

Contract Collection:

The idea behind contract collection is relatively simple - by bidding the entire municipality to one hauler, lower collection costs will be passed on to residents. Haulers are generally able to offer lower collection costs in contract communities because they are able to be more efficient in their routes - instead of only collecting from one or two houses on a block, they are collecting from everyone. Contract collection also gives municipalities the ability to pick and choose what services they include in their contract, such as bulky waste cleanups, curbside recycling and/or leaf collection. Provisions for year-round, on-demand bulky waste collection can also be written into the contract.



Licensed Haulers:

In this type of program, a municipality licenses several hauling firms to meet the obligations of local recycling and solid waste ordinances. Haulers that operate within a municipality are required to pay an annual fee and to obtain a permit or decal before collecting trash or recyclables in a community. Residents are then permitted to choose from a list of licensed haulers for their trash and recycling needs.



There are numerous disadvantages to a licensed hauler program. First, costs are generally higher than in a contract program because routes are generally more inefficient for a hauler. Instead of having every house on a street as a customer, the hauler may now collect from just one or two homes, resulting in higher transportation costs. These costs are generally passed on to residents in the form of higher rates.

Secondly, there is less municipal control with this type of system. It is important that a municipality communicate with each of their licensed haulers to ensure they are complying with the local ordinance. Haulers should be required to submit monthly reports listing the amount of material collected and where this material was disposed of or recycled. Verification in the form of weight slips or other official documentation should always be sought from haulers.

Municipal Collection:

In lieu of contracting with a private firm to provide collection services, some municipalities opt to use their own crews. While this type of system allows the tightest control over what items are being collected and what services are being offered, it can also be very costly for a municipality. Among other things, municipal collection can result in higher capital equipment, maintenance, labor and insurance costs.

Pay As You Throw:

A Pay As You Throw (PAYT) system operates like a utility - residents only pay for the trash they are generating. In lieu of paying a quarterly trash bill, residents pay for each bag of trash they are disposing of. The cost of recycling and other auxiliary programs are usually built into the per bag cost. Because of the direct financial incentive, recycling rates are typically higher in PAYT communities. This type of program can take several different forms:



Per Bag: Residents are required to purchase special trash bags to dispose of their waste.

Per Tag: Similar to a bag system, but residents are required to purchase tags to affix to their trash bags.

Weight-based: Residents are charged based on the amount of waste they generate. This type of program requires specially-designed trucks.

PAYT programs can be administratively intense, as they require separate contracts for hauling and bags or tags, depending on the program selected. This type of program can also lend itself to slightly higher instances of illegal dumping, open burning and waste accumulation. Strong enforcement ordinances and auxiliary programs, such as bulky waste collections, can help deter these problems.

Untraditional Collection Programs:

If your municipality is interested in not limiting your residents' right to choose a trash hauler, there are two untraditional collection systems that may fit your needs. Under the first system, a municipality bids a trash and recycling contract for their community, then allows each household to choose whether or not to join the contract program or continue to use a private, licensed hauler. Licensed haulers are not bound by the terms of the contract and may charge any rate they deem appropriate.

In a franchise system, waste haulers meeting requirements written by the municipality are assigned specific areas to service. The municipality may or may not dictate the rates that are charged by each hauler. The City of Portland, Oregon is just one example of a franchise community.

This fact sheet was developed by the Professional Recyclers of Pennsylvania, P.O. Box 25, Bellwood, PA 16617. For more information, visit our website, www.proprecycles.org, or contact us by email at prop@proprecycles.org. Funding for this fact sheet was provided through a grant from the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources' Forest Lands Beautification Program. We do our part to close the recycling loop and print all our publications on recycled paper.