Recycling program design and implementation

Simple steps for planning a successful program:

1. First and foremost, a **commitment** must be made to offer recycling as a service to the school community.

2. **Designate someone to be the recycling coordinator for the school.** This person will oversee the program, continue to encourage the school community to recycle and monitor pickups. The program works best if the coordinator voluntarily takes on the added responsibilities.

3. **Organize a waste reduction team for your school.** The team should consist of, but not be limited to, an administrator, custodian, cafeteria representative, the school’s recycling coordinator, students and parent(s).

4. Contact the **local solid waste coordinator** for information about recycling services in your community. In general, most programs accept paper, cardboard, aluminum, newspaper, and plastic jugs and bottles. Services vary from providing free recycling bins to drop-off stations throughout the community. To locate your solid waste coordinator visit waste.ky.gov and be sure to ask about recycling service options.

5. **Develop a plan for collecting recyclable materials from classrooms/offices.** There are various ways to remove the recyclables from the building. Often it is a group of students (it could be a fifth-grade class, the Junior Beta Club, a ‘Green Team’, etc.) who either arrives early in the morning, stays after school or meets weekly to empty the classroom/office bins. The students will need supervision by an adult member, or designee, of the waste reduction team. Some schools empty the classroom bins once a week, some empty them more often. Each school will have a different recycling plan.

6. **Publicize and communicate with all faculty and staff members about the recycling program.** Make sure to inform all faculty, staff and students about the recycling program and materials that can be recycled. Use various avenues to communicate with the school community, including newsletters, posters and school media resources. Include
information about the recycling program in back-to-school packets. Offer information and materials in additional languages as needed.

7. Provide every classroom and workspace with a recycling bin that is clearly labeled and identified. The best practice is for every trash can to have a recycling bin placed next to it. Ease of use and location of the recycling bin are the keys to a successful program.

8. **Set an example.** Recycle in the office and other areas, such as the teacher work room, kitchen and cafeteria.

9. **Evaluate and monitor** the program, considering input from staff and students. Compare waste audit results with the results from the baseline waste audit. Create a questionnaire for students and staff to find out the strengths and weaknesses of the program.

10. **Create a waste reduction plan.** After implementing a recycling program, the next step is to address waste reduction. In order to create a waste reduction plan, a school must know what is in the facility’s waste stream and the total amount of trash and recycling leaving the building daily. This can be accomplished by conducting a waste audit. Details about how to conduct a waste audit can be found in the section titled “Steps to completing a waste audit.” Be sure to include after-school programs, sporting events, etc. in the waste reduction plan. These events provide unique challenges for the school waste-reduction program.

**Websites to reference for this section:**

- www.headwatersrecycle.com
- www.cityftmyers.com
- www.storyofstuff.com
- www.epa.gov
- www.nrdc.org