

Property Manager's Guide to

# Recycling & Solid Waste Management



East Valley Recycling Alliance:

Casa Grande, Chandler, Gilbert, Mesa, Queen Creek, Scottsdale, Tempe

## RECYCLING MADE EASY

Together we can do the right thing

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The East Valley Recycling Alliance has an ambitious goal of diverting recyclables from the landfill to sustainable levels. Property owners and managers play an important role toward increasing the volume of recyclables recovered in their communities. Working together through an integrated solid waste approach of reduction, reuse and recovery we can address these challenges. Listed below are the benefits of recycling:

- **SAVE MONEY.** The equation is simple; the more trash, the higher the bill. Bring recycling to your building, and if managed effectively it may reduce your trash collection service and take advantage of the lower (sometimes free) recycling service rates.
- **HELP YOUR COMMUNITY AND THE ENVIRONMENT.** Recycling conserves landfill space and saves natural resources. It can also bring new jobs and revenue to the community.
- **MAKE YOUR BUILDING MORE ATTRACTIVE TO TENANTS.** Most multihousing residents want to help the environment by recycling. A recycling program can be a selling point for your facility.
- **BE AHEAD OF THE CURVE.** Cities are promoting recycling in multihousing as a way to increase their diversion rates. A robust recycling program saves money when compared to the costs of trash disposal. Be proactive and you will be ready for the future.

Special credits to  
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Property Manager's Guide to  
Recycling & Solid Waste Management

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# RECYCLING IN MULTI-FAMILY BUILDINGS



## Containers & Accepted Materials

When you request recycling service for your building, you'll receive dumpsters and/or barrels, depending on your community needs and available space. Container colors may vary by municipality.



Paper & Flattened Cardboard

Plastics (NO plastic bags, Styrofoam)

Junk Mail

Aluminum and Metal Cans

Glass bottles & jars



These items do not belong in the recycling container:

- Styrofoam
- Paper towels, napkins, and plates
- Plastic bags
- Glassware & ceramics
- Yard waste
- Food-contaminated paper & cardboard
- Window glass, mirrors

# SERVICE FEES AND SAVINGS

## Recycle more and save

Bring recycling to your building it's the right thing to do. Service rates for recycling collection are lower when compared to the cost of trash disposal, or at no charge (check with your municipality). Recycling service are provided on a weekly basis.

### Example\*

#### Before: Without Recycling

One 4yd. trash dumpster  
2 pick-ups per week  
\$530/month



garbage only

**\$530/month**

#### After: With Recycling

One 4yd. trash dumpster  
1 pick-up per week  
\$265/month



garbage + recycling

**\$265/month**

One 4yd. recycling dumpster  
1 pick-up per week  
\$0/month

Total: \$265/month

**Savings:**

**\$265/month=**

**\$3,180/year**

# STEP-BY-STEP SETUP

## Getting started is easy

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### Step 1: Contact your local municipal government

Reach out to your municipal government and make it known that you are looking to implement a multihousing recycling program. Most recycling coordinators will personally assist you in the start-up and monitoring process.



### Step 2: Schedule a field assessment

Contact your local solid waste office and request an assessment of your location. Solid Waste staff will evaluate where to place the recycling containers. The location will need to accommodate the safe collection of recyclables.

### Step 3: Determine the best location for recycling containers

A centralized and visible location that is convenient for residents will ensure the success of the program. Place recycling area signs near the containers. Solid Waste may be able to assist you with proper signage.

### Step 4: Obtain Interior Recycling Containers

Provide your tenants with interior recycling containers to collect and transport recyclables. Each recycling container should be labeled with a list of acceptable recyclables. Your solid waste office may be able to provide you with a limited supply of free interior recycling containers with labels.



## Step 5: Plan the Program Rollout

Work with your office, custodial and maintenance staff to familiarize them with the recycling program. List the on-site recycling container areas on your apartment site map. Next, choose a date to introduce the new recycling program to your residents and distribute the interior recycling containers, educational materials and site map. Depending on the building size and available resources, consider a kick-off party, distribute information through door-to-door interactions, or incorporate the rollout into an already-scheduled community meeting. See Program Setup FAQs for more planning tips.



## Step 6: Inform & Invite Your Residents

Use a variety of methods to reach out to residents about the program rollout. For example, you can place posters on bulletin boards or near the mailboxes, distribute letters and/or door hangers to each apartment, and announce the event through emails, Facebook or resident newsletters.

## Step 7: Kick-off Event

During the kick-off party, community meeting, or door-to-door rollout, distribute a copy of your municipal recycling brochure and interior recycling containers. Keep track of the residents who have received the information. Engage residents in conversations about recycling and tell them whom to contact with questions. Be sure to follow up later with residents who missed the event.



## Step 8: Continue Outreach

Have your maintenance staff inspect the recycling containers for contamination. Address problems and keep your residents informed by posting reminder notices. Contact your solid waste office for assistance.

# PROGRAM SETUP

## Frequently Asked Questions

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### 1. Will recycling services increase my billing?

Not necessarily. If managed effectively it can reduce your monthly trash collection billing. Recycling saves money when compared to the costs of trash disposal. Contact your solid waste office for information on recycling collection service fees. Your residents will generate the same amount of materials and by providing them with recycling services you will be able to reduce the amount of trash they generate.

### 2. What if there isn't enough room for the recycling containers?

It is recommended that you place a recycling and trash containers side-by-side. If you do need to expand your trash area to accommodate recycling, consider converting currently unused space, like a rarely used parking spot. Your solid waste office can help you optimize available space and recommend alternatives.



### 3. How can I minimize costs for the interior recycling containers?

Most plastic containers with a 6-7 gallon capacity can be used as interior recycling containers. Plastic tote bags can be used to collect and transport recyclables. Local governments may be able to provide a limited quantity of interior recycling containers for free.

\*To avoid having to re-purchase containers every time a resident moves out, consider including language in the lease agreement that requires a deposit on the container at the time of move-in. For sample lease agreement language, see *Resources*.

### 4. Where can I get recycling lists?

Recycling lists may be provided by your solid waste office or can be downloaded from the website.

# PROGRAM SETUP

## Frequently Asked Questions

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### 5. How do I plan the program rollout?

There are many ways to introduce a new recycling program; kick-off parties seem to work the best. If you're unsure, call your solid waste office for suggestions. Contact property managers who have implemented recycling programs in their community.

**Kick-off Party:** A recycling themed event for residents. Activities may include demonstrations on how to recycle properly, what items can be recycled and where to take the recyclables. Distribute recycling lists, interior recycling containers and site maps.



*Positives:* Suitable for larger buildings. More fun = higher turnout. Highly visible party locations will draw residents. A party setting promotes interactions and community-building. Residents will associate the new program with a positive experience.

*Issues:* Requires a suitable space (like a courtyard). Preparation is more time-consuming. Works best with sufficient resources and staff.

**Resident Appreciation Meeting or Open House:** A resident meeting in a common area or open house. An "open house" format allows tenants to drop in and leave after they have picked up their information.

*Positive:* Preparation and costs are minimal. Drop-in format requires less time commitments. If added to an existing meeting, fewer resources are needed.

*Issues:* Lower visibility = fewer residents will participate and less awareness of the recycling program.

# PROGRAM SETUP

## Frequently Asked Questions

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*Door-to-Door Outreach:* Door to door distribution of recycling program information.

*Positives:* Good choice in smaller apartment units. Little preparation is required. Information conveniently delivered to residents. All residents will receive recycling program information.

*Issues:* Time consuming for larger size apartments.

### 6. How can I get help with the rollout?

Recruit resident volunteers to help with the rollout and include them in the planning process. Use social and print media to advertise the recycling program. Contact the solid waste office for assistance.

### 7. How do I follow up with residents who missed the rollout?

During your rollout event, it's important to keep track of which residents have received recycling program information. Communicate the information through email or newsletters.

### 8. What if residents don't want to participate in the program?

Some residents may be hesitant about recycling because there is not suitable space to store interior trash and recycling containers. Suggest that they use alternative collection systems such as plastic tote bags. Emphasize the program's benefits: recycling is an environmentally preferred method to managing waste.

# TIPS FOR SUCCESS

## Maintaining your program

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If you have implemented your building's new recycling program, Congratulations! The hardest part of the work is done, but don't stop there! Sustaining the program is key to ensuring long-term success.

### Keep the recycling area clean

A clean and well-kept recycling area will help make recycling a pleasant experience for your residents. Replace faded recycling posters and container labels. Monitor the area and address problems such as overflowing containers or graffiti.

### Get help from volunteers

Consider enlisting the active support of motivated residents. Recruit resident volunteers to assist with the program. Volunteers can monitor the recycling containers and alert you to problems, and act as points of contact for other residents. This is particularly important if your volunteers can communicate with non-English speaking residents.

### Solicit feedback and listen

Invite comments and suggestions about the recycling program at meetings, through newsletters, or face to face interactions. Check in frequently with the recycling volunteers, custodial and maintenance staff. Respond positively to suggestions.

### Keep your tenants motivated

Occasional reminders of the importance of recycling help keep your residents engaged. Boost their enthusiasm by posting the amount of materials recycled on a regular basis, along with a list of recycling benefits for the environment and community. If your building has a bulletin board, create a designated "green news section" for this information.

### Celebrate success!

Acknowledge your residents and volunteers for their efforts. This could be an acknowledgment in a resident newsletter or posting on a bulletin board.

# TIPS FOR SUCCESS

## Getting new residents on board

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Some multihousing buildings have high resident turnover. It's important that you introduce the recycling program to new residents during their move-in orientation.

### Include recycling in the lease agreement

You can emphasize the importance of the recycling program in the resident/tenant lease agreement. Include information requiring a deposit for the interior recycling containers, which are returned when the residents moves out. See *Resources* for sample lease agreement language.

### Provide recycling lists and interior containers

If you have a move-in packet for new residents, include recycling program information. Briefly go over acceptable and non-recyclable items and provide a point of contact for recycling questions.



### Point out the building's recycling area

During the move-in orientation, identify the trash and recycling locations on the site map.

### Address move-in generated waste

Your resident may have cardboard moving boxes left over after the move-in. To prevent all of this from ending up in the trash, suggest that they break down the cardboard boxes and recycle them.

### Follow up

Check in with new residents.

# TIPS FOR SUCCESS

## Troubleshooting

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You may encounter challenges with the recycling program. Be proactive and address the issues and contact your solid waste office for assistance.

### Trash placed in the recycling containers

Make sure trash and recycling collection containers are placed next to each other or in close proximity to make it convenient for residents to use them properly. Provide do's and don'ts reminders in a resident newsletter, at meetings, or post a notice prominently in common areas.

### Non-recyclable items placed in or next to the recycling containers

These materials may include furniture and other bulky items, electronic waste such as computer monitors, or even household hazardous waste like chemicals and used motor oil. These items are unacceptable, provide disposal options listed in the section *Beyond Recycling*.

Advise residents that proper disposal is *their* personal responsibility. If this is a recurring problem, place a sign in the recycling area, listing the prohibited items along with appropriate disposal options.

### Property management is off-site

Long-term success of your recycling program depends on regular monitoring and maintenance. If property management is off-site consider posting "want ads" in common area to recruit volunteers. Provide acknowledgements for their green actions.

# TIPS FOR SUCCESS

## Troubleshooting

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### Scavenging

Scavenging creates noise and usually leaves litter in the recycling container area. It may also discourage residents from fully participating in the program. To deter scavengers, post warning signs. Encourage volunteer residents to keep an eye on the area and to report scavengers.



### Insects, pests and odor

This may occur if recyclables have food or liquid residue. Recyclables materials should be emptied of all contents and rinsed out. Communicate the importance of properly preparing recyclables before tossing them into the containers.

### Resident turnover

Include recycling information in the move-in orientation. Provide residents with all the tools to ensure the success of the program.

### New custodial/maintenance/landscape staff or property management

Review recycling guidelines in employee meetings. Include the information in new employee orientation. Provide them with an overview of the program. Include your recycling coordinator contact information.

# BEYOND RECYCLING

## Waste prevention and reuse

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Listed below are source reduction strategies that address waste prevention. Share these suggestions with your residents.

**Tip:** If you have a resident newsletter, include waste prevention suggestions in each issue. Invite your residents to contribute their own ideas and include them! Print your newsletter double-sided on recycled content paper, or distribute through email.

### Encourage residents to reduce "junk mail."

In the U.S. alone, nearly 100 million trees are cut down each year for unwanted mail. Residents can remove their names from mailing lists by taking a few simple steps. Direct them to visit [www.stopjunkmail.org](http://www.stopjunkmail.org).



### Help residents find homes for unwanted items.

Furniture, home entertainment equipment, books, clothing and other household items in good condition can be sold or donated for reuse. Encourage your tenants to drop off their reusables at a local reuse organization or post items online.



**Tip:** Suggest to your tenants that they donate items or post them on: craigslist (<http://phoenix.craigslist.org/>) or freecycle (<http://www.freecycle.org/>), Check Earth911.com website for additional options.

# BEYOND RECYCLING

## Bulky items

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### Facilitate reuse at your building

Consider sponsoring a building-wide yard sale. If your facility cannot accommodate such an event, try making arrangements with a local charity for a special pick-up day at your location.



### Bulky items

Occasionally (especially during move-outs) your residents may need to dispose of large items that are not in reusable condition, such as broken furniture, old mattresses, and non-working appliances. Make your residents aware that proper disposal is their responsibility, and let them know what their options are. In most areas, these include:



**On-call pickup:** Contact your solid waste office for disposal options.

**Collection events:** Some municipalities offer “free” bulky item collection events at a central location. Contact your solid waste office for information on these events.

**Self-haul:** Most landfills accept bulky items. Contact your solid waste office for information on landfill locations and hours of operation.

### Additional disposal options for appliances



**Refrigerators and freezers in working condition only:** Some utility companies offer rebates.

**Refrigerators, freezers, stoves, washing machines and other large home appliances, working or non-working:** Drop off at scrap metal recycling businesses. Contact your solid waste office for disposal options.

# BEYOND RECYCLING

## Hazardous materials

Many common waste materials contain harmful chemicals. They are not safe to place in a landfill and may be illegal in the trash.

Suggest that your residents dispose materials in an environmentally safe manner.

Residents may drop off these materials for “free” at the

local Household Products Collection Center. Proof of residency is required.

Contact your solid waste office for the location and hours of operation or check the website.



**Tip:** Post a list of items that should not be placed in the trash—along with environmentally friendly disposal alternatives.

Automotive products and batteries

Electronics

Household cleaning products

Paints and solvents

Pesticides, herbicides, insecticides  
and rodenticides

Other Household products

- Lighter fluid
- Perfume
- Adhesives
- Waxes
- Aerosol cans
- Fluorescent light bulbs, tubes, CFLs
- Photo developers
- Mercury
- Medical waste
- Pharmaceuticals
- Propane tanks
- Construction materials



**Tip:** Consider organizing an E-Waste collection event at your community. Some municipalities have annual recycling collection events. Check with your solid waste office for information.

# BEYOND RECYCLING

## Move-in, move-out

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Use the tips below to promote reuse and recycling. This may prevent residents from dumping items improperly on the premises.

Provide the information to new residents during the move-in orientation. Also provide the information in advance to residents before move-out.



### Packing Materials:

- Moving boxes:

**Reuse:** Post online or donate. If moving out, this is a great way to get free boxes.

**Recycle:** Breakdown boxes and take to the recycling area.



- Styrofoam - peanuts:

**Reuse:** Contact FedEx or UPS for recycling options.



- Newspaper and packing paper:

**Recycle:** Place in the building's recycling containers.

- Bubble wrap:

**Reuse:** Contact FedEx or UPS for recycling options.

### Household items in GOOD condition:

Furniture, books, electronics, appliances and clothing.

**Reuse:** Donate to a reuse organizations.

### LARGE household items in POOR condition:

Broken furniture, mattresses and box springs, etc. See section *Bulky Items*.

### Household waste and non-working electronics:

See section *Hazardous Materials*.

# RESOURCES

## Sample Lease Agreement

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Below is sample language addressing the building's recycling program, interior recycling container deposit, and move in/out requirements to include in your lease agreements. The City of Tempe assumes no liability for the written content listed below.

Note: Before including this sample language in your building's lease agreement, customize the items in **BOLD**.

### ADDITIONAL TERMS OF LEASE

Trash & Recycling disposal service:

1. **(Building name)** has a recycling program and all residents are encouraged to participate. Recycling conserves landfill space and save natural resources.
2. Recycling containers are located next to or near the trash containers. Only recyclable materials may be placed into the recycling container. A list of recyclable materials is made available to each tenant upon move-in and can also be found on each recycling container. Additional lists are available from the manager.
3. SECURITY DEPOSIT: As part of **(Building name)'s** recycling program, one interior recycling container will be provided to tenants upon move-in. A deposit of \$(10.00) will be charged for use of the container and will be credited back to the tenant's security deposit if the containers are returned upon move out.
4. MOVE-IN AND MOVE-OUT: When moving in or out, the tenant must:
  - a. Place all recyclable materials in the recycling containers. Large cardboard boxes must be broken down, flattened and placed inside of the recycling containers.
  - b. Take bulky items (mattresses, couches, TV's, etc.) to a local reuse store or the landfill. Information about proper disposal locations is available from the building manager. If these items are left in the trash or recycling enclosure area, a penalty may be assessed.
  - c. Properly dispose of unwanted electronics and household hazardous waste (chemicals, batteries, cleaning supplies, fluorescent lights, etc.) at the Household Products Collection Center. Hours of operation are available from the building manager. These items should not be placed into or next to the trash or recycling containers.

NEW RESIDENT: Please initial and sign where indicated:

I have been given educational materials that explain what materials must be sorted from my trash and recycled: \_\_\_\_ (initial)

I have been shown the building's trash and recycling areas: \_\_\_\_ (initial)

# RESOURCES

## Sample Program Announcement Letter

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This is a customizable sample letter for distribution to each resident to announce the introduction of a community-wide recycling program.

*Note:* Before using this sample letter, customize the items in **BOLD**.

**(Customize with property manager's letterhead)**

Dear Resident:

As part of our commitment to environmental sustainability **(Name of facility)** is implementing a recycling program. Recycling is an important part of our community. It helps the environment, creates new jobs and saves money when compared to trash disposal costs. Recycling is easy, place acceptable materials listed on the recycling list. Please do not bag recyclables and do not place trash, food waste, plastic bags, or Styrofoam, in the recycling container. All acceptable recyclables must be clean, dry and empty.

Please join us **(Date of event)** in the **(Location)** from **(Start time)** and **(End time)** to learn about the benefits of recycling and how the new program works. If you are not able to attend this event, stop by the office to obtain your recycling information.

If you have questions about acceptable recyclable materials refer to the enclosed list, visit the website **(URL address)** or call **(Solid Waste phone number)**.

Sincerely,

**(MANAGER NAME), (TITLE)**