

## RECYCLING SURVEY

State Name: Washington State

Agency Name: Washington State Department of Ecology

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**1. Please indicate whether recycling of household or residential recyclables is mandatory, voluntary or perhaps both (mandatory for some materials and voluntary for others) in your state.**

*Voluntary but highly encouraged via RCW 70.95.*

**2. Is there a State Law(s) that mandates, encourages, or otherwise facilitates the recycling system or programs in your state and what is the reference for that section of your state code?**

*The Solid Waste Management Act, Chapter 70.95 RCW, was enacted by the Washington State Legislature in 1969. This legislation placed responsibility for waste management in the hands of local government.*

*The 1971 Model Litter Control Act, Chapter 70.93 RCW, established a tax on commonly littered items in lieu of a beverage container deposit system. Later, in 1976, this act was amended to establish the Ecology Youth Corps to clean litter and to promote recycling.*

*In 1972, Ecology prepared the State's first Solid Waste Management Plan. The plan discussed local planning requirements, and the handling and disposal of residential and commercial wastes.*

*In 1976, the United States Congress passed the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA). This law directed each state to prepare a plan for managing solid waste, to be reviewed by the Environmental Protection Agency.*

*In 1980, Ecology produced its second Solid Waste Management Plan. This plan dealt with collection and disposal systems. It addressed hazardous, residential, and commercial waste, with an emphasis on planning for hazardous waste management.*

*In 1984, the Solid Waste Management Act was amended to define the State's waste management priorities as:*

- 1. Waste reduction*
- 2. Waste recycling*

3. Energy recovery/incineration
4. Landfilling

*In 1989, the legislature passed the "Waste Not Washington Act." This legislation amended the Solid Waste Management Act, and established waste reduction and source-separated recycling as the fundamental strategies for managing solid waste. It set a goal of recycling 50% of Washington State's waste by 1995 and realigned the state priorities for the collection, handling and management of solid waste. The revised priorities are as follows:*

1. Waste reduction.
2. Recycling, with source separation of recyclable materials as the preferred method.
3. Energy recovery, incineration, or landfilling of separated waste.
4. Energy recovery, incineration, or landfilling of mixed waste.

**3. Does your state law (or other directive) mandate, encourage or otherwise specify a state goal for the rate of recycling or diversion (e.g. percentage of overall waste stream, etc.) If so, what is the statutory reference?**

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*In 2002, the legislature renewed our 50% recycling goal to be reached by 2007.*

**4. Please indicate how your state measures recycling rates? (Are there reporting requirements? who reports and how frequently?) What wastes are captured in the measurement of your recycling/diversion rate? (e.g. residential garbage? yard waste? commercial and industrial wastes? Waste tires? white goods? automobiles? etc?).**

*To measure Washington's recycling rates, the Department of Ecology sends out annual surveys and reporting forms to all the recyclers in the state. We ask for tons of material collected for recycling in the past year, and "diverted" materials which are measured separately from the recycling rate. We determine a recycling rate for msw and a parallel "diversion" rate which includes materials typically considered outside of the msw stream. Certain facilities which receive an exemption from permitting as recyclers are required to report their annual tonnage, but other facilities which do not receive this exemption are not required to report. For a list of recyclables measured in the annual*

recycling rate, please see the recycling data page on our website: <http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/swfa/solidwastedata/recyclin.asp>. The list of recyclables includes automobile hulks as "ferrous metals". For diverted materials measured apart from the msw recycling rate, you can go to: <http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/swfa/solidwastedata/diversion.asp>. The denominator for the msw recycling rate is msw and commercial wastes, and the denominator for the diversion rate is msw, commercial, industrial, inert, demolition, wood, tires, medical and other waste types.

**5. What association does commercial, institutional, and industrial recycling have with the household or residential recycling in your state? Are recycling activities from these sectors factored into your overall state recycling rate?**

*Typically in Washington, the collection companies or haulers for residential recycling are separate from the collectors/haulers for commercial, institutional and/or industrial recycling, although the processing facilities may be the same for all. Some institutions such as universities will contract separately from the local community for the hauling of their recyclables. In some cases, residential recycling programs will include some commercial establishments on their routes. Industrial recycling is generally handled on a private basis. There are recyclers who specialize in handling recycling for large commercial or industrial establishments, and others who specialize in residential and/or institutional. Brokers may work with haulers for all the above mentioned sectors to transfer material to out of state or out of country facilities for processing.*

*Residential, institutional and commercial recyclables factor into the recycling rate for the state, whereas industrial recyclables factor into the diversion rate but not the recycling rate.*

**6. What is your most recently measured rate of recycling or diversion for your state? (Please indicate the time frame for this measurement. e.g. calendar year, fiscal year, etc.)**

*The most recent data available is for 2002, when the recycling rate was 35%, and the diversion rate was 45%. That is for the calendar year of 2002.*

**7. What are the most commonly employed systems in your state for collecting residential recyclables. Are different sized communities required or encouraged to meet a certain standard of recycling services?**

*There are different methods of collecting residential recyclables, varying by county, city and Rural versus Urban. The most common is curbside and drop box recycling. Within curbside we have varied approaches, some of the larger communities are moving towards 100% commingled recycling in automated collection bins, some communities still have the 3 bin system. Some have varied can rates to encourage recycling. Their standard is set in their local Solid Waste Management Plan.*

**8. Do you have rural communities in your state that have developed and are maintaining successful residential recycling programs? What type of "system" are these successful communities employing?**

*The successful rural residential recycling programs appear to be community drop off recycling centers. These centers are located in small towns and the people of the towns take pride in them. In some cases they become the social gathering place of the town. One successful program was initiated by a group of concerned citizens in the small Town of Twisp, WA. This group organized, became a 501c3 and managed to raise money to construct a building that houses a bailer and is large enough to store their commodities until they have enough to send to market. As of now, the recycling center is self sustaining. They go after grant money for capital facilities projects, but the day to day operations are covered by the money they receive from the recyclables.*

**9. What incentives (grants, loans, tax incentives, etc.) are offered in your state for recycling and to whom are these incentives available? (state government, local governments, private companies, universities and institutions, etc.) How are these grants or loans funded?**

*The Department of Ecology administers the Coordinated Prevention Grant program to help local governments develop, implement, and enforce their local solid and moderate risk waste management plans. These plans have been developed to help local government better manage and contain community wastes, and to minimize or eliminate the generation of hazardous substances and solid waste. This is funded by the Model Toxics Control Act (RCW 70.105D.070) through the "Local Toxics Control Account" which is derived from a tax on the sales of Hazardous materials.*

**10. Does your agency or state have a "recycling program," In what agency is the program housed and how many full time employees are dedicated to recycling program activities?**

*The Department of Ecology would be the regulatory and technical assistance agency for recycling. Our program is the Solid Waste and Financial Assistance program. We are divided into 4 regions of the State. Each region has one, Sustainability Specialists (formally known as the Waste reduction and recycling specialists). Each region has at least one Solid Waste planner and grant officer, between these people, we provide technical assistance to local governments. Other staff work on Sustainable building, Moderate Risk Waste, Organic issues, landfills, biosolids, rule interpretation, litter cleanup programs and even cleanup sites. Staffing levels focusing on recycling have been significantly cut back. At our Headquarters office we have 2 staff that work the 1-800-Recycle hotline where citizens can call to find out where they can recycle in their community. Our program is focusing a lot of staff time and energy in updating the State Solid and Hazardous Waste Management Plan called "Beyond Waste". It takes a more sustainable look at the future of solid waste.*

You can learn more at <http://www.ecy.wa.gov/beyondwaste/>.