



Materials Reuse

10 Points

School

A Materials Reuse Program is one way to bring together the school community, connecting those wishing to discard unnecessary or unwanted items within their school with others who are looking for used items in good condition. Materials Reuse Programs are valuable to people of all ages as well as to the environment, as they keep many materials from being disposed of in landfills and incinerators. This action requires that the school or district establish an active and comprehensive Materials Reuse program. The program must be active and operational **from within the current school year**.

Why is it important?

Between 1985 and 2003, the amount of solid waste generated in New Jersey increased by an average of about 4% annually. During that time, the tonnage of material disposed actually decreased by approximately 1.6 million tons, and the amount of municipal solid waste recycled increased (according to reported recycling activity) by approximately 2.5 million tons. In spite of these two trends, the waste stream continues to grow faster than the state's ability to recycle it. Recycling is only part of the solution; waste reduction through material reuse is also important. By increasing the flow of reusable and recyclable materials, there is the possibility to generate extra funds for school and department groups. Visible efforts such as these allow students and staff to see the results of their efforts on a daily or weekly basis. Many waste-reduction efforts can also teach students how solid waste affects their lives and environment. At the end of the year, it is common to find school supplies in student lockers: one alternative is to regularly collect these items throughout the school year for a community sale or donation drive.

Waste reduction and material reuse is important to sustainability, as it:

- reduces the need for landfilling and incineration;
- prevents pollution caused by the manufacturing of products from virgin materials;
- saves energy;
- decreases emissions of greenhouse gases that contribute to global climate change;
- conserves natural resources such as timber, water, and minerals;
- protects and expands U.S. manufacturing jobs and increases U.S. competitiveness;
- helps sustain the environment for future generations.

Who should lead and be involved with this action?

As per the suggestions in the Association of New Jersey Recyclers (ANJR), "Recycling Manual for New Jersey Schools," it is advised an implementing committee is established and includes a Central Coordinator, along with a buildings and grounds person, food service person, a teacher, and a student. It is also important to take custodians' suggestions into consideration. The Central Coordinator should also contact the municipal and/or county recycling coordinator for additional support and resources. It is advised that for large school districts, each school have a coordinator that reports to the Central Coordinator representing the broader school district.

Various school-related groups, such as classes, environmental clubs, and parent-teacher organizations, or other appropriate school staff or administrators, should be involved in the implementation of this action. Other groups that can help educate the community about the benefits to waste reduction are Girl and Boy Scouts, Boys and Girls Clubs, 4-H, or Future Farmers. To handle larger items that cannot be exchanged within the school, reach out to a municipal recycling coordinator (preferably one who is certified) or other

appropriate staff involved in waste management.

Your municipality's lead on this action will need assistance from the Department of Public Works to collect surplus waste material for disposal from the municipal depot or curb, depending on the approach taken.

You can find information about identifying your county or municipal recycling coordinator [here](#).

Timeframe

A materials reuse program will require three to six months to establish, and ongoing staff and student time to maintain over the long run, depending on the approach taken.

Project costs and resource needs

If the municipality does not have a Certified Recycling Professional, the Rutgers Office of Continuing Education offers the [New Jersey Recycling Certification Series](#). Individuals have three options for certification, depending on one's level of previous professional experience in the field and prior certification: full certification, alternate certification, or re-certification.

Schools will need staff and student time to establish and promote this program. Information on the importance of reuse and ideas on how to reuse items will need to be developed and posted on a web page or in a document. Much of this material already exists within the municipality and will only need to be re-packaged for the school.

Schools may choose one of two ways to provide students, teachers, administrators, faculty, and staff with opportunities to reuse. Schools can establish a stationary or mobile collection center or can set aside an area for reuse materials at an existing Recycling Depot; or municipalities can organize a day/week where the entire school community can set out their unwanted goods at the curb for other residents to pick up.

In both cases, collection vehicles will be needed for collection of materials that have been left at the depot for a long period of time or at the curb for disposal.

Municipalities need to account for the extra collection costs associated with a reuse day/week event. The extra costs associated with the collection, such as vehicle(s), fuel usage, staff overtime, and waste disposal need to be considered.

Municipalities can use their Municipal Tonnage Grant funds to pay for these expenses.

What to do, and how to do it ("How to")

This section provides guidance and recommendations for implementing the action. Throughout the process of completing this action, please keep the following requirements in mind:

1. The school must have operated a comprehensive, ongoing materials reuse program, creating opportunities for the school community to reuse materials, from **within the current school year** (September - June).
2. The school must have promoted the materials reuse program and its benefits to the school community (students, staff, families).
3. The school must have maintained tracking form(s) to document the types and quantities of materials dropped off at the central depot or collected in the reuse event.

A school/district does not need to follow this guidance exactly as long as it meets the requirements for earning points for this action.

1. The school should first develop a plan for how to collect materials for reuse. This can include setting overall and individual goals that are prominently displayed within the school.
2. The school will then move on to organize a comprehensive materials reuse program that provides the school community with an opportunity to reuse. Two approaches are described below. There may be other approaches that would be effective as well, but they should be similar in scope and scale to the approaches below:
 - a. Schools can set aside an area for reuse materials in an easily accessible holding area, such as a parking lot. The materials can then be picked up by a local recycling center, hauler, or volunteers, and transported to a nearby recycling center/depot. This area should be covered and inspected periodically

to make sure it is neat and organized. The school may want to start small with one specific item to reuse (e.g., books). Another option for smaller schools and rural communities is to collaborate with a neighboring school and use mobile recycling centers, so that the services can be shared (e.g., borrow trailer from recycling center). To maximize participation, make sure to widely publicize the schedule and location of the trailer in places such as the newspaper, internet, etc. Make sure to establish regular deposit schedules with the local recycling facility.

Orange County, NC, has established "[Salvage Sheds](#)" at Recycling Depots.

Another example comes from [Cambridge, Massachusetts](#).

b. Schools can organize a day or week where the school community can bring their unwanted goods to the school. This will require promotion about the day and time of the event. The information should identify the items that can be brought to the reuse event and should clearly state that NO household hazardous waste will be accepted. This event should be promoted in the municipality's garbage/recycling flyers or web page at least one month prior to the event. It is also recommended that the school create a central tracking form to record the types and quantities of materials brought to the reuse event and where they were sent.

Potential reuse materials include books, art supplies, sports equipment, and special occasion items (e.g. dance, prom clothing). For more details, see page 16 of the [EPA guide](#).

3. An important part of a successful program is to develop educational materials about the importance of reuse to sustainability for the school community. For educational materials that describe why reuse is important and provide ideas on how the school community can first reduce and reuse waste at school, see the Resources section of this document. Schools should also develop a flyer about the reuse program that students can take home every three months during the school year.
4. Ultimately, the school must create a tracking form to record the types and quantities of materials dropped off at the depot or reuse event. The tracking form (or an additional form) should also specify where materials were sent as outlets for reuse.

What to submit to earn points for this action

In order to earn points for this action, the following documentation must be submitted as part of the online certification application in order to verify that the action requirements have been met. Please note that the school must have operated a comprehensive, ongoing materials reuse program, creating opportunities for the school community to reuse materials, from **within the current school year** (September - June).

1. In the text box, please provide a short narrative (about 300 words or less) to summarize what was accomplished and the general steps taken to accomplish it. In your summary, describe what your school did to encourage your school community to reuse, identify key dates of events organized to promote material reuse, and estimate the number of people participating, number of materials collected, and tons reduced. This should include a discussion of what the overall and individual goals are for the program.
2. Upload copies of promotional materials developed and used to promote the program and its benefits, indicating dates of the program or events, e.g., press releases and flyers students take home every three months.
3. Upload a copy of the tracking form created to log the type and quantity of materials collected for reuse.

Resubmission Requirements

To earn points again after an approval has expired, the complete submission requirements need to be met for the application year.

Approved Action Expiration Date

Approved actions will expire on August 31, 1 year after the certification application was submitted. For example, in a 2020 application the approval would expire on August 31, 2021.

IMPORTANT NOTES:

There is a limit of six uploaded documents per action and individual files must not exceed 50 MB. Excerpts of relevant information from large documents are recommended.

All action documentation is available for public viewing after an action is approved. Action submissions should not include any information or documents that are not intended for public viewing. Please make note of this,

especially if submitting photographs, videos, or the individual work of students. Efforts must be made to follow appropriate confidentiality policies of the school system.

Spotlight: What New Jersey schools are doing

George L. Catrambone Elementary School (Monmouth) 2023

Students and staff at GLC collected gently used and new uniforms to stock the GLC Uniform Closet. The purpose of this closet was to provide uniforms to families in the GLC school and community who may have been unable to afford them. Third-grade students took responsibility for organizing and folding uniforms by size and type in the community Kids Kloset. All uniforms were washed and prepared for distribution to families in need. Requests for uniform assistance were posted on the digital bulletin board throughout the year, allowing families to participate or seek uniform assistance as needed. This project had been ongoing for several years, benefiting families in need while also reducing clothing waste and promoting sustainability by extending the life of garments through reuse and hand-me-downs.

To see the accompanying documentation, go to the [Certification Report](#) and scroll to the Materials Reuse action.

Ardena Elementary School (Monmouth) 2023

Ardena School proudly participated in the Little Free Library program. In addition to supporting the two local Little Free Libraries within the school community (one located in a local park, another in a low-income housing apartment complex), a third Little Free Library was opened on Ardena's Campus in the spring of 2022. Throughout the school year, students and staff collaborated with instructional coaches to organize book donation events, providing materials to update inventory with new titles for the community to enjoy.

To see the accompanying documentation, go to the [Certification Report](#) and scroll to the Materials Reuse action.

Bret Harte Elementary School

Every year on the last day of school during lunch/recess, students have the opportunity to bring in books they are no longer reading and swap them with students for books they want to read. Additionally, every year before the winter carnival, a request is made for Beanie Babies to be reused as prizes for the school winter carnival. Both of these reuse initiatives allow students to appreciate the value of reused items that do not produce additional waste and have been donated to another student in the school.

[Book Swap Log](#)

Galloway Township Middle School

Galloway Township Middle School participates in the ShoeBox Recycling Program throughout the school year. The program is used to introduce service learning and sustainability to incoming 7th graders by asking them to donate their old shoes as they start a new journey at the middle school. To date, over 175 pairs of lightly worn shoes have been collected. Information about the collection program is shared on social media.

Hopewell Valley Regional School District

Since 2010, the Hopewell Valley Regional School District has run an annual Election Day Textile Recycling Drive. The drive has grown every year and is greatly appreciated by Hopewell Valley residents. Through a partnership with SpinGreen, a Brooklyn-based textile recycling company, readily-visible outdoor collection bins maintained by SpinGreen are located at all six Hopewell Valley schools. The school district works with SpinGreen, who pays by the pound for all the items collected. SpinGreen has several partner charities who are given first pick of the clothing. The remaining textiles are either sold and/or exported to emerging markets; in the case of items that are not wearable, the textiles are recycled into other products, including rags, carpet padding, insulation, and car seat stuffing. The funds raised by each bin go to the PTO (Parent-Teacher Organization) of that school. PTOs cover expenses such as field trips, assemblies, school gardens, science fairs, library books, some classroom supplies, playground and gym equipment, teacher appreciation events, special technology purchases, and other programs that enrich the educational experience for all students. The school district maintains a [Facebook page](#), and [map of the bins](#) to assist the school community in learning more about the program. For more information, visit their [website](#).

Princeton Public Schools

To help students better understand how different types of school supplies impact the waste stream, John Witherspoon Middle School held a locker clean-out and recycling event in June 2013. With the help of students, staff, and parents, items such as notebooks, pens and pencils, locker shelves, and other items were

collected for reuse.

Resources

Reach out to your local county or municipal recycling coordinator for help implementing this action:
<https://www.nj.gov/dep/dshw/recycling/recycloor.htm>

General Resources

Association of New Jersey Recyclers: "The Recycle More New Jersey Toolkit for Your School"
<https://anjr-school.com/>

Ecocycle
<http://www.ecocycle.org/>

Habitat ReStores
<http://www.habitat.org/env/restores.aspx>

NJDEP Source Reduction Page (variety of resources available)
http://www.state.nj.us/dep/dshw/recycling/source_red.htm

Northeast Recycling Council
<http://www.nerc.org>

Reuse Development Organization
<http://www.redo.org/>

Reuse Marketplace
<http://www.reusemarketplace.org/>

United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
<http://www.epa.gov/epawaste/index.htm>

Educational Materials

California Integrated Waste Management Board: School Waste Reduction
<http://www.calrecycle.ca.gov/ReduceWaste/Schools/>

California Integrated Waste Management Board: School Supplies
<http://www.calrecycle.ca.gov/Reuse/Links/School.htm>

Connecticut Department of Energy & Environmental Protection
http://www.ct.gov/DEep/cwp/view.asp?a=2714&q=443766&deepNav_GID=1645

New York State Department of Environmental Conservation: A School Waste Reduction, Reuse, Recycling, Composting & Buy Recycled Resource Book
http://www.dec.ny.gov/docs/materials_minerals_pdf/schoolhb.pdf

NJDEP Source Reduction Page
http://www.state.nj.us/dep/dshw/recycling/source_red.htm

State of Minnesota "Reduce Waste: If Not You, Who?" Campaign (At School Section)
<https://www.pca.state.mn.us/sites/default/files/w-hhw1-12.pdf>

USEPA Waste Reduction Resources <http://www.epa.gov:443/environmental-topics/land-waste-and-cleanup-topics>

USEPA Reduce and Reuse
<http://www2.epa.gov/recycle>

Training Resources

New Jersey Recycling Certification Series: Rutgers Office of Continuing Education
http://www.cpe.rutgers.edu/programs/recycling_solid_waste.html