



## Recycling Non-Mandated Materials

5 Points

10 Points

15 Points

20 Points

School

Updated October 2019

*This action is now a variable point, allowing schools to earn up to 20 points for recycling non-mandated materials.*

This action enables schools to earn points for implementing recycling initiatives that target materials that are not designated as mandatory recyclable items as per state law, the applicable county recycling plan, or the applicable municipal recycling ordinance. **A list of the mandatory recyclable items by county is available [here](#).**

This is a variable point action allowing schools to earn 5 points for each initiative **active in the current school year** up to a total of 20 points. The non-mandated recycling initiatives should be ongoing throughout the school year, with the exception of seasonal collection of certain items such as coats, prom dresses, and other important recycling collections that might not be run for the entire school year due to the scale of the collection and limited ability to store the materials for a long period of time. To qualify, collected non-mandated materials must be sent for recycling or reuse outside the school district. School initiatives to collect non-mandated materials can include but are not limited to:

- Recycling milk cartons
- Recycling/reusing old toys
- Recycling crayons/markers
- Plastic bag/film collection
- Battery/ink toner recycling

**Please note that schools are not eligible for points for recycling any of the items above if it is mandated by the county/municipality.** See lists of mandatory recyclable items by county [here](#).

### Initiatives that are NOT eligible for points under this action include:

- **Food waste recycling (composting):** These programs should be submitted for points under the Food Waste Management action.
- **Materials reuse:** There is a separate action for materials reuse activities. This action awards points to schools that have an ongoing program to **exchange materials within the school community**, such as a book swap program, locker cleanout to school supplies program, uniform exchange program, etc. Please note that initiatives such as a coat drive where the collected materials are distributed outside the school community should be submitted under the **Recycling Non-Mandated Materials** action.
- **Using “waste” materials in art projects.** While repurposing materials such as bottle caps into an art project is a wonderful activity, it does not qualify as a recycling program for this action. However, such an activity may be eligible for points under the Education for Sustainability actions if linked to a standards-aligned lesson or unit.

### Why is it important?

This action recognizes schools for recycling activities that are innovative and that target materials not covered by current recycling law. It will help lead to the development of new or more comprehensive school recycling programs, which will help the state move closer toward its goals of recycling 50% of the municipal solid waste stream and 60% of the total solid waste stream. Ultimately, finding ways to recycle non-mandated

materials brings us closer to a zero-waste society.

Recycling non-mandated materials, like all waste recycling, is important to sustainability for the following reasons:

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

## Who should lead and be involved with this action?

Teachers and school green team members can take the lead on school initiatives to recycle non-mandated materials with principal approval. Depending on the scope of the initiative, the school representative may need to coordinate with an outside company regarding the collection process for the non-mandated material(s).

### *Role of Recycling Coordinators*

Every municipality and county is required to have a designed recycling coordinator. Their role is to educate and encourage residents, businesses and public institutions to recycle appropriate items, allowing materials to be reused instead of wasted. They can be a valuable resource, regardless of the scope and scale of the project, providing ideas, resources, and contacts for school efforts. **Municipal and county recycling coordinators can be found [here](#).**

### *Role of the Municipal Green Team*

Similar to school or district green teams, municipalities participating in the Sustainable Jersey program also have a green team. It is possible that your municipal green team may already be collecting a non-mandated material that the school wishes to collect. For example, many municipalities have established plastic bag recycling programs that the local schools can participate in. This helps to make collection of the non-mandated material a collaborative effort throughout the entire community. So long as both the school and municipality are actively involved in the organization and promotion of the collection, both are eligible to earn points toward certification. A simple search for the primary and secondary contact on the [Sustainable Jersey Participating Communities Map](#) can help start this collaborative effort.

## Timeframe

A key component of any successful school recycling program is that all administrators, teachers, other staff, and students must "buy-in" and understand why the program is important. With sufficient support, it may take several months to plan, promote, set up, and implement a non-mandated materials recycling program. The school should reach out to the municipal or recycling coordinator for potential sources of funding. Municipal and county recycling coordinators can be found [here](#).

## Project costs and resource needs

The majority of the resources associated with launching a school-based non-mandated recycling initiative will be the time needed to plan, implement, promote and manage the effort. Engaging the whole school in the effort is a great way to get buy-in and provide an enhanced learning experience. The school may initially need to purchase some items such as collection bins or special signage. The green team should reach out to the municipal or county recycling coordinator for potential sources of funding. **Municipal and county recycling coordinators can be found [here](#).**

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

This section provides guidance and recommendations for implementing the action. A school does not need to follow this guidance exactly as long as it meets the requirements for earning points for this action.

Schools can earn 5 points each for up to four school-wide recycling initiatives to recycle non-mandated materials (up to 20 points). Documentation confirming the initiative is active during the current school year is required. Efforts to recycle the non-mandated material(s) must be ongoing throughout the year with the

exception of seasonal collection of certain items such as coats, prom dresses, and other important recycling collections that might not be run for the entire school year due to the scale of the collection and limited ability to store the materials for a long period of time. To qualify, collected non-mandated materials must be sent for recycling or reuse outside the school district.

School initiatives to collect non-mandated materials can include but are not limited to:

- Recycling milk cartons
- Recycling old toys
- Recycling crayons/markers
- Plastic bag/film collection
- Battery/ink toner recycling

**Please note that schools are not eligible for points for recycling any of the items above if it is mandated by the county/municipality.** A list of the mandatory recyclable items by county is available [here](#).

Initiatives that are NOT eligible for points under this action include:

- **Food waste recycling (composting):** These programs should be submitted for points under the Food Waste Management action.
- **Materials reuse:** There is a separate action for materials reuse activities. This action awards points to schools that have an ongoing program to **exchange materials within the school community**, such as a book swap program, locker cleanout to school supplies program, uniform exchange program, etc. Please note that initiatives such as a coat drive where the collected materials are distributed outside the school community should be submitted under the **Recycling Non-Mandated Materials** action.
- **Using “waste” materials in art projects.** While repurposing materials such as bottle caps into an art project is a wonderful activity, it does not qualify as a recycling program for this action. However, such an activity may be eligible for points under the Education for Sustainability actions if linked to a standards-aligned lesson or unit.

Below are suggested steps to establish a school-based non-mandated material(s) recycling initiative:

1. **Research non-mandated material(s):** School principals, facilities staff and teachers should research and evaluate non-mandated material(s) to add to the school’s initiatives. For example, the school may have performed a waste audit and determined that a considerable amount of foil-lined wrappers, such as chip bags and granola bar packages, ended up in the waste stream. The school can then begin to explore options for effective ways to recycle this material. See the Spotlights section of this action for ideas. Communication should also take place with the municipal green team to determine if the school can contribute to any non-mandated materials they are collecting. So long as both the school and municipality are both actively involved in the organization and promotion of the collection, both are eligible to earn points toward certification. A simple search for the primary and secondary contact on the [Sustainable Jersey Participating Communities Map](#) can help start this collaborative effort.
2. **Evaluate the costs, develop a collection initiative and agreement:** Finding an organization that will accept the targeted items can be a challenge. The municipal or county recycling coordinator can be a good resource to consult on this question. **Municipal and county recycling coordinators can be found [here](#).** The Resources section of this action lists companies that accept materials. In addition, an item-specific internet search may reveal some options. Based on the research, a proposal to collect the non-mandated material(s) can be prepared and presented to school administrators for approval. When evaluating the feasibility of the collection initiative, consider shipping costs, collection box costs, and any other upfront startup costs. Agreements with the organization accepting the materials should be in writing. After the initiative is decided on, an online account may need to be established with the company accepting the material. The account could be established by the principal, a teacher, facility staff, or another member of the school community approved by the principal. Determine who will be responsible for the recycling initiative if the current person in charge leaves. Costs associated with the collection of the material(s) should also be taken into consideration. Costs may include purchasing bins, shipping costs, developing promotional materials, etc.
3. **Evaluate material collection and end market:** Determine what kind and how many collection containers will be needed for the specific recyclable material(s) to be collected, and how frequently the collection will be inventoried and emptied. Will the collection containers be provided by the collection company? How big will the bins be and where will they be located around the school building? Once the boxes are full, will the material(s) be sent back to the collection company, or if working with a municipal green team, who will be responsible for the final collection and sending it back to the collection company? If coordination is taking place with a collection company, the policy surrounding the collection and recycling of the material(s) should be outlined in the agreement.

4. **Education and promotion:** Develop targeted educational and promotional materials to inform the school community (teachers, staff, students, parents), about the non-mandated material(s) recycling initiatives. Sample education and promotional materials could include a memo distributed to all staff informing them of the collection of the material(s)/the recycling practice(s), brochures, posters, flyers, morning announcements, etc.
5. **Program Evaluation:** Determine how the non-mandated material recycling program will be evaluated over time. How will data such as the weight or the number of the items collected be recorded? Is there a database already in place, either through the school or collection company, to keep track of the amount of non-mandated material(s) recycled? How will you assess the effectiveness of the initiative in removing these materials from the waste stream? Will presentations be made during school board meetings to update administrators on the collection initiative?

### What to submit to earn points for this action

Schools can earn up to 20 points (5 points each) for ongoing recycling initiatives in the current school year that target materials that are not designated as mandatory recyclable items as per state law, the applicable county recycling plan, or the applicable municipal recycling ordinance. **A list of the mandatory recyclable items by county is available [here](#).** In order to be awarded 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.

1. Description of Implementation: In the text box provided on the submission page for this action provide a short narrative (about 300 words or less) of what has been accomplished and the impact it has or will have on the school community. **Make sure to clearly articulate the items/programs you wish to earn credit for in your narrative.**
2. Upload: A completed [Non-Mandated Materials Recycling Submission Form](#)
3. Each Initiative Upload: Educational/promotional materials used to advertise the program to the school community of teachers, staff, students, and parents about the non-mandated material(s) recycling initiative in the current school year. Sample education and promotional materials could include emails, brochures, posters, flyers, presentations, morning announcements, etc. **Only one social media post per item will be accepted.**
4. For Each Initiative Upload: Documentation of the weight or amount collected. This could be an official report from the collection company or other reports or articles confirming the amounts collected.

### Resubmission Requirements

To earn points again after an approval has expired, the complete submission requirements need to be met for the application year + documentation that tracks the amount collected over time.

### 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

#### Atlantic Highlands Elementary School, Atlantic Highlands School District

Atlantic Highlands Elementary School began the "Feed the Monster" marker recycling program on March 1, 2015, in partnership with Crayola ColorCycle to prevent dried up markers from ending up in landfills when they can be converted to clean fuel energy. Each grade has its own monster to fill in the AHES art room and students are encouraged to bring in used markers to be recycled. To get the program started, AHES ran a contest to see which grade could bring in the most markers over a 3 month period. During this time, over 2000 markers were collected! The program is ongoing and is a favorite of AHES students, who are learning the importance of their role in protecting the environment. To view AHES' approved submission click [here](#).

#### Bret Harte Elementary School

To reduce the number of markers that end up in the trash, and raise awareness about the benefits of

recycling markers, the school has partnered with Crayola Color Cycle to give students, teachers, and the community the opportunity to bring in old markers. The markers are then sent to the Crayola factory so they can be converted into clean-burning fuel. The Bret Harte Environmental Club is in charge of counting the markers and shares this information with the school community through the newsletter.

- Outreach letter
- Photo of tracking chart

### **Highland Park High School (Middlesex)**

In 2012, Highland Park High school began started participating in the Terracycle program. The school collects foil-lined wrappers, personal care containers, cereal bag liners, baby food pouches, and cleaner product containers. Significant education and outreach has taken place since the program started to increase education and awareness of the Terracycle collection program. Every fall the school runs a Green Challenge encouraging students to properly sort their waste between Terracycle collection, recycling, and trash. During the two week period of the challenge, members of the Environmental club stand by the Terracycle bins in the cafeteria during lunch and direct students how to sort their waste. The school also ran five, 30-minute workshops on Terracycle during a service day, a half-day of school where all students go to workshops focusing on community service. After listening to a presentation about Terracycle, they made Terracycle boxes with information on what can be collected and placed the bins around the school.

- [Principal Letter Confirming Participation](#)
- [Guidelines for Distribution](#)
- [Green Challenge Photos and Pledges](#)
- [Service Day Terracycle Presentation](#)
- [Service Day Schedule](#)
- [Service Day Workshop Photos](#)

### **Lafayette Elementary School (Morris)**

The PTO Green Team began recycling markers through the Crayola ColorCycle program, which takes old markers and turns them into energy. Every year the students check markers at the end of the year to see if they can be saved for the following school year. If not, they are collected as part of the ColorCycle program. In the first year of the program, the school collected 23 pounds of markers. To promote the program, a marker collection notice was sent to teachers and parents via email. The goal is for the marker recycling tonnage to be reported to the Business Administrator to add to the annual tonnage report sent to the municipal recycling coordinator. The school hopes to expand its recycling of non-mandated materials by participating in the Terracycle program.

- [ColorCycle Registration Confirmation](#)
- [ColorCycle Notice to Teachers and Parents](#)
- [Tonnage Report](#)
- [Tonnage Correspondence with Municipal Recycling Coordinator](#)
- [Marker Collection Box](#)

### **Littlebrook Elementary School (Mercer)**

Littlebrook Elementary participates in the TerraCycle recycling program, which recycles items that were previously non-recyclable into new items. As a participant, Littlebrook Elementary receives \$.01 for each point worth of waste the school sends to TerraCycle, and funds received are used to support camps and extra-curricular activities for economically-disadvantaged families. The school promotes the collection of snack bags and wrappers, food and drink pouches and oral care products to the school community through a variety of community channels including electronic communications, website, and newsletters. Collection bins reside in the cafeteria and classrooms to collect these items. A teacher is responsible for the program, including the storage of the boxes and mailing of the waste to TerraCycle is one of the teachers.

- [TerraCycle Agreement](#)
- [Amount Collected](#)
- [PTO Webpage](#)
- [Parent Handout](#)
- [Newsletter](#)
- [Photos of Collection Bins](#)

### **South Mountain Elementary School/Annex (Essex)**

The South Orange Maplewood School District has had an electronic waste recycling program in place since November 2005. The goal of the program is to make it easier for the schools to dispose of old electronics in a responsible way, while simultaneously teaching children about the importance of protecting the environment.

Twice a year, the school librarians collect electronics that are being retired from the school faculty and staff. The collected items are brought to the Information Technology Department for evaluation. A list of the equipment is created and the school board approves a resolution for disposal or auction on govdeals.com. This program has an excellent level of participation from all the District's schools and has been very successful at keeping electronics out of the regular trash stream at all the schools in the district. Sample documentation is below:

- [Tonnage Report](#)
- [Electronic Waste Disposal Resolution](#)
- [Promotional Email to Staff](#)

#### **Taunton Forge Elementary School**

For the last few years, the school has had a robust plastic bag recycling program. To help reach this goal, students were given the challenge to collect 144,000 bags, which would build a 500 square foot deck built of TREX. This image has been used to help the students understand how plastic bags can be turned into "lumber" and how much material it would become. To date, the school has collected over 86,000 bags. The recycling program has also branched outside of the school community through newspaper articles about the collection program, which encourages Medford residents to also participate. The students have also made a DVD to share and advertise the recycling project.

#### **Whitehouse Elementary School**

The Whitehouse Home School Association recycles all used ink cartridges and toners through the Cartridges for Kids, a recycling program that pays schools and non-profit organizations cash for cell phones, laser, and inkjet cartridges, laptops, iPods, and tablets/eReaders, and notebooks. Items that they collect are remanufactured or refurbished for resale. The Cartridges for Kids website has a variety of promotional materials to help inform teachers and students about the program.

Click [here](#) to view Cartridge recycle container photo.

### **Resources**

#### **Association of New Jersey Recyclers**

<https://anjr.com/>

#### **ANJR Educational Video Series**

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nOLOp-oiKdQ&list=PL4H1HQBF-SVcU2j\\_jodWC5yleLN5VK3hM&index=3](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nOLOp-oiKdQ&list=PL4H1HQBF-SVcU2j_jodWC5yleLN5VK3hM&index=3)

#### **California Department of Resources, Recycling, and Recovery (Cal Recycle)**

<http://www.calrecycle.ca.gov/>

#### **Call2Recycle** (for recycling batteries)

<https://www.call2recycle.org/>

#### **Ecocycle** (Zero-waste non-profit based in Boulder, CO) <http://www.ecocycle.org/>

#### **Foam Pack Industries** (recycles Styrofoam)

<http://www.foampackindustries.com/eps-recycling-reselling-of-densified-eps.html>

#### **NJDEP - Recycling Office**

<http://www.recyclingnj.com/>

#### **NJDEP Designated Recyclables by County**

[http://www.nj.gov/dep/dshw/recycling/design\\_recy\\_county.pdf](http://www.nj.gov/dep/dshw/recycling/design_recy_county.pdf)

#### **New Jersey County/Municipal Recycling Coordinator Locator**

<https://www.nj.gov/dep/dshw/recycling/recycoor.htm>

#### **Recycle My Battery** (Offers free battery recycling program for New Jersey schools)

<https://recyclemybattery.org/battery-free-school/>

#### **Second Chance Toys**

<http://www.secondchancetoys.org>

#### **Terracycle (Offers Free Recycling Programs)**

<https://www.terracycle.com/en-US/brigades>

**United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)**

<http://www.epa.gov/epawaste/index.htm>

**Textiles Recycling Resources:****Council for Textile Recycling**

Non-profit organization dedicated to raising awareness about the importance of textile recycling and the need to reduce the amount of used clothing and post-consumer textile waste being sent to landfills.

<http://www.weardonaterecycle.org/index.html>

Information about what happens to your clothing, shoes, and textiles after they are donated or recycled -

<http://www.weardonaterecycle.org/about/clothing-life-cycle.html>

**Goodwill**

<http://www.goodwill.org/>

**Planet Aid**

<http://www.planetaid.org/what-we-do/for-the-environment/our-convenient-yellow-bins>

**Re-Purpose New Jersey**

<https://www.repurposenj.org/environmental-ed>

**The Salvation Army**

<http://newjersey.salvationarmy.org/>

**Secondary Materials and Recycled Textiles (SMART)**

<http://www.smartasn.org/index.cfm>

Educational Lesson Plans & Worksheets - <https://www.smartasn.org/resources/for-schools/>

**Texima**

<http://teximateam.com/>