



What Can Residents Do?

Fact Sheet

Residents can spearhead the effort to implement or improve a recycling program in their multi-unit buildings. Residents want to recycle and will if their building's program is simple and convenient. This fact sheet discusses how residents can get a recycling program started in their building, determine if their program is effective, and challenge other residents to reduce and reuse to minimize the building's waste.

How Can a Resident Start or Improve a Recycling Program?

If you live in or own a building with five units or greater (referred to as a 'multi-unit building'), your building is required to have an effective recycling program in place that includes separating at least three recyclables from your trash, educating residents about recycling, and preparing a written recycling plan. A source-separated, single stream recycling program, similar to Chicago's Blue Cart program for single-family homes and buildings with four units or less, is the recommended method for multi-unit buildings. Source-separated recycling is any process that separates recyclable materials from other solid waste before the point of collection and keeps them separated until they can be returned to the economic mainstream as new, reused or reconstituted products which meet the quality standards of the market place. Single stream, a type of source-separated recycling, is when all types of recyclables are placed into a single container for pickup.

Many multi-unit buildings have a recycling program in place, but it may not be a source-separated recycling program. Also, in many buildings, resident participation may be limited and the collection of recyclables is minimal. Residents can work within the building to start a new program or improve existing recycling program by considering some of the ideas presented below.

- **What is your building currently doing?** Just walk through the building to get an idea of what your recycling program is like. Where are the recyclable collection containers? Are the locations convenient for residents? How many recyclables are collected?
- **Talk to other residents about current recycling efforts.** Many residents would like the convenience of recycling in their building. Will they help you promote or improve the recycling program?
- **Review the Recycling Toolkit for ideas.** Remember, the easiest way to promote change is to be able to provide positive ideas of what can be done!
- **Work with your condo board/building manager to start a program or improve your existing program.** For a successful program, your "recycling team" should consist of residents, board members, the building manager and maintenance staff. Everyone can contribute. Review the Recycling Toolkit for Ideas.
- **Start recycling!** Keep monitoring your recycling program to determine if your building has enough containers and they are in convenient locations. Consider designating a resident as a recycling coordinator to ensure your building's recycling program is effective.
- **Educate, educate, educate!** Remind residents on how to recycle in the building. It's important to continue to provide information on your recycling programs. Many ideas to share with residents are provided in the Recycling Toolkit.
- **While your building is getting a recycling program up and running, you can still recycle.** Recycling drop-off centers are located around the city. For a complete list of drop-off centers, go to www.chicagorecycles.org.
- **Residents who've tried the ideas above** and are still not seeing results can call Department of Environment's complaint line at (312) 744-7672.

Get Kids Involved!



Kids can be great motivators for getting others to recycle. They may already be learning about it in school and could be eager to participate at home. Ask around in your building and organize a group of interested kids. Under the supervision of adults, two kids out of a rotating group could help distribute flyers or even help collect recyclables from tenants who may need assistance (such as the elderly or disabled). The kids could be recognized and/or rewarded from building funds for their involvement. Adult tenants should always monitor the kids and help keep up the program. The results will be increased recycling and great resident involvement!