



Phase 1 Results

Measuring the Organics Diversion Improvements from Enhanced Tenant Engagement at Four Multi-Family Dwellings in Albany, CA

A man with a beard and dark hair, wearing a dark shirt, is smiling and pointing towards a sign on a green recycling bin. The sign reads "FOR RECYCLABLES ONLY PLEASE DO NOT DISPOSE OF TRASH IN THIS RECYCLABLE". The bin has "RECYCLED RECYCLING" and "Waste Management" printed on it.

Prepared by
Global Green USA
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Project Summary

Landfilling or burning recoverable wastes costs cities and businesses millions of dollars each year and releases potent greenhouse gases. With the support and participation of a variety of corporate and philanthropic partners, Global Green's Coalition for Resource Recovery (CoRR) helps to develop, implement, and improve systems by which these wastes can be consistently and economically recovered, bringing valuable material back onto the market and creating a net greenhouse gas benefit. These partners have the opportunity to advance their sustainability and waste diversion performance, better serving customers and residents seeking to lead greener lives.

To achieve the goal of reducing and diverting food scraps, Global Green USA is focusing on one of the most difficult areas for program implementation – multi-family dwellings (MFDs). MFDs pose unique challenges due to the fact that the tenants do not have a direct incentive to reduce waste generated, or divert their wastes cleanly, since all the waste is placed in a common bin that is paid for by the property manager. Education and outreach programs rely instead on motivation by tenants to act responsibly toward their community, as well as help their building reduce waste-related costs overall.

Global Green USA used a pilot approach to determine the likely diversion outcomes from common tenant outreach and engagement strategies. In coordination with waste haulers, city agencies, and property managers Global Green undertook in-depth analyses of targeted buildings to determine the food scrap reduction and diversion rates for the first tenant engagement scenario – distribution of kitchen pails and compostable, water resistant paper bags, as well as door-to-door, one-on-one outreach. From these findings, we determined:

- Overall diversion rates for the buildings selected (the total material, by weight, being recycled or composted);
- Volume and contamination of the organics stream; and
- Recommendations to increase organics diversion.

Based on the success of this project, Global Green USA is seeking to expand the pilot to additional buildings in more cities across the San Francisco Bay Area, and evaluate the success of a wider variety of resident engagement strategies.

For more information, please visit www.thecorr.org.

Providing the Kitchen Pails, Bags, and Training Increased Organics Diversion by 9%

Compared to the control buildings, which were of similar size, in similar neighborhoods, and had started organics service at about the same, organics diversion was higher by 9% in the selected buildings, where Global Green had provided equipment and training. This amounts to approximately 0.5 lbs. per household per week. Annually, this amounts to an improvement at these targeted buildings of over 1,200 lbs. relative to a scenario in which these buildings had not received this assistance. Contamination rates in both selected and control buildings were approximately 5%.

Participating Locations Achieve 40% Diversion, 7% Greater than Control Group

This was an improvement from the hauler Waste Management's estimated 19% diversion for these locations prior to the introduction of the compost service. However, it is clear from the waste audits that many recoverable items still being sent to landfill.

Resident Satisfaction with the Program and Equipment was High

On average, residents rated the kitchen pails and water-resistant paper bags at between 4 and 5 (5 being the highest possible rating) for leakage, odor control, and ease of use. All participants were using either just the bag (18%), just the pail (2%), or both (80%) to collect food scraps in the home. No participant was using an alternative method (e.g., milk carton). Two households were not participating due to language barriers, and only one household was not participating by choice. Several tenants suggested changes to the bin and bag system, including the following:

- A multi-chamber bin that shows what the desired proportions of waste should look like.
- Bins and water-resistant paper bags that are designed to fit together.
- Foot pedal for small pail, since most people keep the pail on the floor or under the sink.

Making Bags Available Locally or In the Building Will Help Make the Program Successful

The most commonly asked question from residents after using the water-resistant paper bags was, "Where can we get more?" The typical model for providing bags is through local retailers, where the tenant has the responsibility of procuring the bags. However, an emerging model, which is used in some buildings in San Francisco and elsewhere, places the responsibility on property managers and/or waste haulers to purchase and provide bags to tenants in a central location. This model was pioneered by CoRR member EcoSafe Zero Waste, and has not yet been tested in the East Bay.

Language Diversity is Essential for Outreach Materials

Outreach materials for this program were provided in English, Spanish, and Korean. In many cases, the children in households that spoke an additional language were able to translate for the heads of the households. However, there were some cases in which this was not possible. In order for it to be possible for outreach materials to be understood by all residents, additional languages would need to be included, particularly Farsi, Hindi, Mandarin, and Tagalog.

Acknowledgements

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About Global Green USA and its Coalition for Resource Recovery

Global Green USA is the U.S. arm of Green Cross International, which was founded by President Mikhail S. Gorbachev to foster a value shift towards a sustainable and secure future by reconnecting humanity with the environment. Global Green USA works to create sustainable urban environments and combat global warming through a unique, model-oriented approach that merges innovative research, technical assistance, community-based projects, and targeted education and outreach.

The Coalition for Resource Recovery (CoRR) is a working group of companies, under the direction of Global Green USA, dedicated to combating climate change and generating business value by transforming waste into assets. CoRR conducts pilots and related research to identify and accelerate development of scalable, transferable waste diversion programs and technologies.

For more information about this report and the Coalition for Resource Recovery, please visit www.thecorr.org, or contact Lily Kelly at lkelly@globalgreen.org.