



SWACO Solid Waste Management Plan Overview

Purpose: This document provides a high-level overview of SWACO's amended Solid Waste Management Plan. Community leaders are encouraged to review the Plan for a more comprehensive understanding of SWACO's programs and priorities.

Background: The Solid Waste Authority of Central Ohio's (SWACO) mission is to improve the community's solid waste stream through effective waste reduction, recycling, and disposal. SWACO's jurisdiction ([District](#)) includes Franklin County and political sub-divisions with over 50% of their population in Franklin County.

As required by the Ohio Revised Code and Ohio EPA, all solid waste districts and authorities must develop and revise a Solid Waste Management Plan (Plan) approximately every five (5) years. The purpose of the Plan is to address state mandated goals and outline programs and initiatives to reduce reliance on landfilling, increase recycling and reuse, and minimize waste generation.

Process: SWACO's revised draft Plan covers a fifteen (15) year period beginning in 2018 and ending in 2032. The Solid Waste Management Plan approval process follows this schedule over 18 months:

1. SWACO staff prepare the draft Plan
2. Ohio EPA reviews
3. SWACO provides a public comment period and public hearing
4. The draft Plan seeks ratification (current step of the process)
5. Ohio EPA issues final approval.

The ratification process is a ninety (90) day period, beginning on August 1st and concluding on October 31st, in which the political subdivisions in the District vote on Plan approval. In order for ratification, Plan approvals are required from:

- political subdivisions representing 60% of the District,
- the largest city (Columbus),
- and the Franklin County Commissioners.

Overview: SWACO started Plan revisions in 2016, during which the District documented a record-high 45% landfill diversion rate through reuse, recycling, and composting. During Plan development, SWACO worked with local and national consultants to evaluate needs and opportunities for enhancing waste reduction and recycling activities, and conduct general evaluations of its existing programs (included in Appendix H of the Plan).

This analysis informed the recommendation of new initiatives and activities that will advance waste reduction, reuse, recycling, and composting within the District, and help to establish Central Ohio as leader in sustainable materials management. Programs included in the Plan range from:

- District-wide educational campaigns designed to increase knowledge and participation in recycling,
- New initiatives that assist businesses, multi-family apartments, institutions, and industries with establishing waste reduction and diversion programs,
- Expanding curbside recycling programs promoting cart-based collection,
- Assisting communities with establishing waste reduction action plans enhancing quality of life,
- Developing resources to reduce waste at large public events,
- New innovative grant programs and strategies to support entrepreneurial initiatives,
- Collaborative efforts to improve recovery of difficult to manage materials such as food waste, electronics, textiles, and tires.

SWACO will also be conducting comprehensive evaluations of historical and longstanding programs such as the Drop-off Recycling Program, Environmental Crimes Task Force, Yard Waste Program, and Household Hazardous Waste program, to maximize operational efficiency and impact. More details on these programs are included below, and a comprehensive list with descriptions can be found in Appendix I and L of the Plan.

To finance the Plan, SWACO will continue to use a five-dollar (\$5.00) Generation Fee collected on every ton of waste generated within the District and landfilled. The funds collected from the Generation Fee are restricted to the use of the programs contained within the Plan. More details on Plan financials can be found in Chapter 6 and Appendix O of the Plan.

The Plan also enables SWACO to have District rules and policies to ensure the safe and effective management of solid waste within the District. In a parallel process to revising the Plan, SWACO also updated existing Rules to reflect changes in the state statute and to enhance clarity within the existing provisions. Updated Rules are outlined in Appendix Q.

SWACO staff members are available to meet with community leaders to discuss the Plan, SWACO initiatives, or other topics related to solid waste in the District. More information on SWACO's current programs can be found on SWACO's website – www.SWACO.org, where individuals can also register to receive e-newsletters and updates on SWACO's activities.

Plan Programs:

The following information provides more details on programs, initiatives, and services described within the Plan, although the below list is not exhaustive. More complete descriptions and details can be found in Chapter 5 and Appendices H, I, and L within the Plan.

Community Recycling

Needs & Opportunities: 96% of single-family households within the District have access to curbside recycling, yet there are still opportunities for improvement. Opportunities include 1) adopting best practices such as cart-based collection, 2) volume based disposal, 3) residential education and awareness, and 4) working toward 100% of single-family households having access to curbside recycling and yard waste composting.

Plan Programs: SWACO will continue to enhance and expand its contract assistance and community consortium programs to help communities grow their recycling programs in cost effective ways, such as promoting cart-based recycling, incentives for reducing waste, and improved data collection. SWACO will also launch new educational campaigns and resources for communities and residents to increase participation and improve basic knowledge on how to recycle properly. SWACO will also work closely with community leaders to develop customized waste reduction action plans enhancing quality of life for community residents.

Multi-family Housing

Needs & Opportunities: Multi-family housing, apartments and condominiums, are commercial businesses or housing associations typically not serviced by residential recycling contracts, resulting in a gap of recycling services offered to these households.

Plan Programming: SWACO will analyze this sector and develop new programs to assist with establishing or expanding recycling and waste reduction programs. Programs may consist of incentives to start recycling, resources and educational materials for residents, and hands-on program implementation assistance.

Commercial Businesses and Institutions

Needs & Opportunities: Almost 60% of materials landfilled in Franklin County is generated by commercial business, institutions, and other 'away-from-home' facilities and activities. Most frequently landfilled materials by volume include paper and cardboard, which are largely generated by this sector. Historically, minimal programs targeting this sector have been offered in the District.

Plan Programming: SWACO will develop and launch a new program area targeting this sector during the planning period. Programming will include incentives for businesses and facilities to start or expand recycling programs, and educational resources such as trainings, sorting signage, waste assessments, and recognition activities. Specific approaches will be developed to assist small, medium, and large businesses, manufacturing industries, schools and higher education institutions, events and large venues, and government agencies and offices.

Hard-to-Recycle Materials

Needs & Opportunities: Hard-to-recycle materials, or materials that are not readily recyclable in curbside programs make up a significant portion of the waste stream. These materials require special handling or additional steps to properly reuse, recycle, or compost. Due to these factors, hard-to-recycle materials are recovered less often than traditional recyclable materials like plastic bottles and cardboard. For example, food waste and textiles are two large categories of materials currently being landfilled. Developing solutions for diverting these materials could create additional community and economic benefits.

Plan Programming: During the planning period, SWACO will establish programs and initiatives to address difficult waste streams and materials. Programs and solutions will be developed targeting specific materials relating to food waste, electronic waste, textiles and clothing, tires, and durable goods such as mattresses and furniture. SWACO will be working with new and existing service providers to grow these opportunities for increased diversion.

Grant Programs

Needs & Opportunities: Grant programs provide financial resources to address unique waste reduction and diversion needs throughout the District. Grants are also used to encourage collaboration and innovative approaches transferrable to other communities and organizations.

Plan Programming: SWACO will be offer new competitive grant programs that help communities and organizations address their unique challenges and opportunities through innovative and collaborative approaches. Planned grant programs include 1) the new Community Waste Reduction Grant offered to local government and non-profit entities, and 2) the Event Waste Reduction Grant assisting event organizers with implementing recycling and waste reduction strategies. SWACO will also develop a market development grant that will focus on enhancing local recycling services and entrepreneurial opportunities for using recycled materials locally.

Existing Programs and Services

Needs & Opportunities: SWACO has provided waste reduction and recycling programs throughout the District for over two decades. The following programs have remained in place for much of that time without thorough evaluation or significant updates: the Drop-off Recycling Program, Yard Waste Program, Environmental Crimes Task Force Program, and the Household Hazardous Waste Program. Evaluation is required to ensure SWACO's programs are evolving with the changing waste stream and behaviors of Central Ohio communities. .

Plan Programming: During the planning period, SWACO will conduct thorough evaluations of each of the above mentioned programs to ensure community needs are met with efficient and effective operations. If improvements are needed, updates and modification will be made with careful consideration and community engagement.

Education, Outreach, and Awareness

Needs & Opportunities: Education, outreach, and awareness activities play a vital role in the success of any waste reduction and recycling efforts. These types of activities are woven throughout all of SWACO's programs, but also contain unique features addressed in the Plan.

Plan Programming: SWACO will be revamping its education and outreach strategies during the planning period to reach more residents and businesses with new educational tools and resources for increased diversion. These approaches include, but are not limited to, a website with 1) easy to navigate features and resources including a searchable tool on how and where to divert many items, 2) a community calendar of events, and 3) descriptions and resources related to all of SWACO's services. Services include: educational workshops for residence and businesses, newsletters, social media strategies, tabling at public events, and innovative awareness and education campaigns and materials.

Research and Analysis

Needs & Opportunities: SWACO collects data on solid waste trends and issues to develop the most impactful programs and services for reducing waste and increasing recycling. Improving data collection and conducting new research will ensure the most effective programs, with measurement strategies, are in place.

Plan Programming: During the planning period, SWACO will be improving data collection with its public and private partners to better understand the performance of residential curbside diversion programs as well as activities in the commercial sector. SWACO will also be conducting research on the economic impacts of the recycling industry to strengthen the network of recycling industries within the District, quantify the current beneficial economic impacts, and identify opportunities for economic growth in this sector. Other research includes waste characterization and composition studies that will help to identify and target the key material types in the waste stream for recovery.