

# Recycling Updates

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

April 2025

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## Reminder: Responsible Unit Recycling Annual Report Due April 30

Reminder: the responsible unit (RU) 2024 annual report is now available and **due April 30, 2025**.

Report reminders:

- Find instructions on the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR)'s [Recycling Annual Report](#) webpage.
- Individuals authorized to complete the RU Annual Report need a Wisconsin User ID (sometimes called a WAMS ID) and must request access using the DNR Switchboard. IDs are unique to an individual and should NOT be shared amongst staff. Using another person's ID can result in you being locked out of the system.
- [Switchboard registration instructions](#) are available on the DNR's [Recycling Annual Report webpage](#).
- Note that registration confirmation may take several days, so please allow enough time for this process before your report is due.
- If you have forgotten your WAMS ID or password, follow the instructions on the [Switchboard Help webpage](#).
- If needed, submit contact changes to [DNRWAFacilityContactRegistry@wisconsin.gov](mailto:DNRWAFacilityContactRegistry@wisconsin.gov).

### Accessing The Report

For individuals with reporting permissions, the report is available by logging in to the [DNR Switchboard](#). **You must open the report in Google Chrome or Microsoft Edge.**

## First "Recycling In Action" Month Set For May 2025

The first-ever Recycling in Action event will take place in May, giving recyclers the opportunity to show how recycling really works.

The Solid Waste Association of North America is partnering with the Association of Plastic Recyclers (APR) to increase visibility and confidence in the recycling process. Recycling In Action is an event for materials recovery facilities and plastic recycling facilities to open their doors for tours and information sessions to showcase what happens after recyclables are picked up from the curb.



According to APR president and CEO Steve Alexander, "There's been a lot of misinformation about what happens to plastic recyclables after they're placed in the bin. The truth is that, thanks to households and businesses recycling, the equivalent of 340 18-wheeler truckloads of plastic is kept out of landfills every single day. By letting people see recycling in their own communities, we hope to maintain trust in the system and inspire even greater participation."

For an up-to-date list of participating facilities, visit [RecyclingInAction.org](https://RecyclingInAction.org).

Read the [news release](#).

*Photo Credit: WM Germantown MRF, participating in Recycling in Action*

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## DNR Accepting Electronics Collection Grant Applications Through April 30



The DNR is accepting applications for the E-Cycle Wisconsin Electronics Collection Grant. The grants are for projects that will host an electronics collection site or event between June 2025 and December 2026. The application deadline is 5 p.m. CDT on April 30.

Businesses, local governments, nonprofits (including religious nonprofit entities) and tribal governing bodies are all eligible to apply. Grant recipients must register as E-Cycle Wisconsin collectors and meet all program requirements.

The DNR plans to award up to \$250,000 in grants for this round, with the following maximum award amounts:

- Maximum award per collection event: \$5,000
- Maximum award per permanent collection site: \$15,000

The minimum award for a project is \$1,000.

The DNR will give first priority to projects that will take place in a county that does not have a permanent collection site open to all residents registered under E-Cycle Wisconsin. This includes projects in Calumet, Crawford, Florence, Forest, Green Lake, Iowa, Iron, Jackson, Marinette, Marquette, Price and Taylor counties.

For more details, review the [E-Cycle Wisconsin Electronics Collection Grant Program Administration and 2025 Application Information](#).

To apply, submit the E-Cycle Wisconsin Electronics Collection Grant Program Application (Form 4400-329) and supporting documents by 5 p.m. CDT on July 31.

For more details on the program and a link to the application form, visit the [E-Cycle Wisconsin Information for Collectors webpage](#).

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## 2026 Clean Sweep Grant Applications Now Available



The 2026 Clean Sweep grant applications are now available for the collection and disposal of agricultural waste and farm chemicals, household hazardous waste and unwanted prescription drugs.

Counties, cities, towns, villages, tribal nations, regional planning commissions, sewerage districts, municipal law enforcement, public health departments and combinations of the above are eligible to apply. However, only counties are eligible for agricultural pesticide grants.

Completed applications are due by 11:59 p.m., May 23, 2025. Grant funding will be announced on or before Aug. 1, 2025.

Interested applicants can find a link to the 2026 grant application materials on the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture and Consumer Protection's [Clean Sweep website](#).

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## Recycling In America Webinar Series



The Recycling Partnership recently announced an upcoming webinar series: Recycling in America – What's Working, What's Not and What We Do About It.

### **April 24 – Community Recycling Programs: How Can We Take Recycling From Surviving To Thriving?**

What is going on with America's community recycling programs? Is recycling real? *Let's talk about it.* Join us for a discussion on what recyclables are really collected and how communities can get people educated and engaged.

### **May 1 – MRFs: Unpacking The Mystery Of Recycling's Magical "Black Boxes"**

When our recyclables get picked up, where do they go? What happens to them? *Let's talk about it.* Join us for a discussion on why some recyclables are difficult to sort and what

technologies and best practices are changing the game.

### **May 8 – End Markets: If Recyclables Have Nowhere To Go, Are They Really Recyclables?**

Recycling is all about turning old stuff into new stuff. For that, end markets are essential. What's the state of end markets today? How do impending tariffs, EPR policies and wavering corporate commitments affect the future of end markets? *Let's talk about it.* Join us for a discussion on end markets and their future.

### **May 15 – Recycling By Design: Exploring Definitions, Policies And The Road Ahead**

What is the definition of recyclability today? How is policy going to change it? *Let's talk about it.* Join us for a discussion on designing for recyclability – why it's challenging but necessary and how we can continue to improve.

### **May 22 – Policy: Shaping The Future Of Recycling**

Why is policy passing today? What makes for a good recycling policy? *Let's talk about it.* Join us for a discussion on the role of policy in building a better recycling system and what we can learn from those who passed policy decades ago.

[Register online.](#)

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## **U.S. EPA Posts New Version Of Excess Food Opportunities Map, Releases New Food Waste Report**

### **Excess Food Opportunities Map**

On March 13, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency updated the [Excess Food Opportunities Map](#), an interactive tool that supports nationwide diversion of excess food from landfills. The map now identifies and displays facility-specific information on over 960,000 potential generators and almost 15,000 potential recipients of excess food in the industrial, commercial and institutional sectors and also provides estimates of excess food by generator type.



The updated map features an increased number of food banks, pantries, soup kitchens, farmer's markets, anaerobic digestion and composting facilities. The map also features an improved "Near Me" tool that allows users to identify entities within a selected area or specified radius from a chosen point.

### **Estimating The Cost Of Food Waste To American Consumers**

The EPA also announced the release of a new report, "Estimating The Cost Of Food Waste To American Consumers," which estimates the cost savings available to Americans by reducing food waste. The EPA's research shows that, on average, a family of four spends almost \$3,000 per year on food that never gets eaten.

Wasting food wastes the labor and other resources spent to produce, package, transport and sell uneaten food; the nutrients in the uneaten food; and the money spent by households on food they did not consume.

Check out the new report, appendices and infographic on [the EPA's webpage](#).

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## 2025 Application Period Opens For Foam Recycling Grants

The Foodservice Packaging Institute's Foam Recycling Coalition announced that its grant program is now open for 2025, offering an opportunity to expand foam polystyrene recycling across the United States. Since it began, the grant program has enabled over 13 million additional residents to recycle foam polystyrene like cups, egg cartons, takeout containers and packaging materials. Facility operators, non-profits and solid waste authorities are encouraged to apply for grants of up to \$50,000 to help establish or enhance foam polystyrene recycling in their communities.



The 2025 application period is open through April 15. Eligible entities must engage in operating a material recovery facility, manage residential curbside recycling programs or manage a drop-off or convenience site recycling program.

Visit the [Foam Recycling Coalition website](#) to learn more about foam recycling, read about previous recipients and apply for a grant.

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## It's Earth Month! Celebrate By Learning About The Wisconsinite Behind Numbers On Plastic Containers

Did you know the idea behind the numbers we see on plastic containers originated from a woman from Sauk County?

When Milly Zantow learned that the landfill in her Sauk County community was closing much earlier than anticipated, she looked at what was being thrown away. Seeing for herself that there was too much plastic waste, she thought it should be recycled. At that time, no one was recycling plastics, partially because it was challenging to determine what type of plastic a container was made from. Ms. Zantow went on to come up with the idea for the numbering system to identify plastics for recycling, now used worldwide, and helped with the writing of Wisconsin's recycling law.

Learn more [about Milly Zantow from PBS Wisconsin Education](#).

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# Upcoming Webinars, Online Conferences And Events

*\*All times are in CT*

## **Food Waste Prevention Week Webinars**

April 7-13

Hosted by Food Waste Prevention Week

[Register online.](#)

## **The Potential Hazards To Human Health And The Environment From Microplastics And The Complexity Of Assessing Risks**

April 10, 11 a.m.

Hosted by National Academies

[Register online.](#)

## **Consumer Food Waste Webinar Series: Unilever & Too Good To Go**

April 14, 11:30 a.m.

Hosted by Ohio State University and Rutgers Cooperative Extension

[Register online.](#)

## **Exploring Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) Legislation: State Innovations And National Trends**

April 15, 1 p.m.

Hosted by National Recycling Coalition

[Register online.](#)

## **Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) For Products That Cause Fires: Batteries, Compressed Gas Tanks, Marine Flares & More**

April 16, 2 p.m.

Hosted by National Stewardship Action Council, Solid Waste Association of North America and North American Hazardous Materials Management Association

[Register online.](#)

## **Strategies For Addressing Waste In Animal Agriculture**

April 17, noon

Hosted by Northeast Recycling Council

[Register online.](#)

## **Perspectives On The Plastic Lifestyle: Plastic Pollution And Fate**

April 18, noon

Hosted by National Academies

[Register online.](#)

## **Breaking Down Consumer Sustainability Trends In The Great Lakes Region**

April 24, 11 a.m.

Hosted by Council of the Great Lakes Region

[Register online.](#)

### **Bin Labels & Signage**

May 14, noon

Hosted by Busch Systems

[Register online.](#)

### **Recycled Metals Commodities Markets Update**

May 20, 12:30 p.m.

Hosted by Pennsylvania Recycling Markets Center and National Recycling Coalition

[Register online.](#)

Several webinars can also be found on the [Public Resources-Product Stewardship Institute](#), the [EPA's Sustainable Materials Management Program](#) and the [Northeast Recycling Council](#) websites.

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### **Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources**

You are subscribed to the Recycling Updates from the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. These updates are now available only through periodic email newsletters. For information on past updates or to share new information, please contact Jennifer Semrau at [Jennifer.Semrau@wisconsin.gov](mailto:Jennifer.Semrau@wisconsin.gov).