

Recycling Updates

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

January 2026

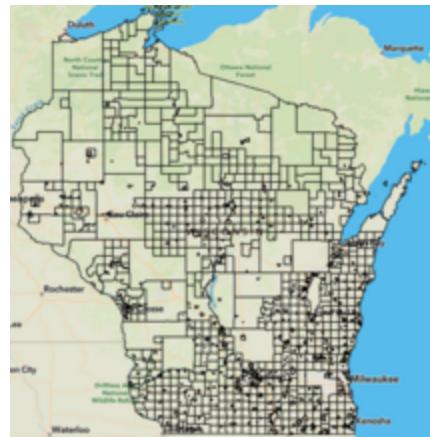
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New Tools For Recycling Haulers

Revisions to the administrative code related to effective recycling programs went into effect on July 1. The rule affects recycling responsible units (RUs), as well as haulers and materials recovery facilities (MRFs) that serve RU programs.

Among the new requirements, by Feb. 1, haulers must provide recycling tonnage data to each RU in which they collected residential recycling from single-family or two- to four-unit properties. This requirement applies to both contracted and noncontracted RUs, including individual subscription service customers.



To assist haulers with providing this information to RUs, the DNR has created a mapping tool. Haulers can find RUs and their contact information using the [Map of Wisconsin Responsible Units with Contact Information](#). Please note that tribes are not currently reflected on the map. Haulers should reach out to their tribal contact for more information on tribal land borders.

For a list of Wisconsin municipalities and RUs that serve them (with RU contact information), visit the [Database of Wisconsin Responsible Units by County or Tribe with Contact Information](#).

Recycling Excellence Award Winners Focus On Food Waste



The DNR announced the [winners of the 2025 Recycling Excellence Awards](#) on America Recycles Day, Nov. 15, 2025. We will highlight the work of our winners over the next few editions of our Recycling Updates.

The following winners have focused on diverting food waste from landfills by repurposing edible food, providing accessible composting and educating residents. Their work supports Wisconsin's goal to reduce the tons of food waste disposed of in landfills on a per-capita basis by half by 2030, based on 2020 levels.

- Badger Prairie Needs Network (Dane County) repurposes food for its pantry. In one year, the pantry recovered 400 tons of food. Unusable food goes on to be used as animal feed or gets composted.
- Since spring 2024, Dane County Department of Waste + Renewables has diverted 140,000 pounds of food scraps from the landfill.
- Oshkosh Correctional Institution (Winnebago County) recycled 57,000 pounds of food waste in one year with its vermiculture program.
- Since 2022, Sustain Dane (Dane County) food scrap collection program has accepted over 90,000 pounds from Madison-area residents.
- Since 2024, the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee's (Milwaukee County) Office of Sustainability has recycled 169,289 pounds of food waste from the university's kitchen operations and Panther Pails program.
- Merrimac Community School (Sauk County) has some exceptionally well-fed chickens. Students and staff divert food scraps and waste for use as feed.
- Shorewood Elementary (Dane County) reduces waste with "share tables" where prepackaged, unopened food can be shared with others and composted.

A Sustain Dane staff member collects food waste from Madison resident. / Photo Credit: Sustain Dane

Tri-County Recycling Partnership Releases New Video

The Tri-County Recycling Partnership of Brown, Outagamie and Winnebago counties released a new educational video of their materials recovery facility earlier this month.



The video follows single stream recyclables as they move through the Tri-County MRF's equipment. It discusses why practices like rinsing out containers and keeping out tanglers helps ensure recycling goes smoothly. The video runs 12 minutes and 29 seconds. [View the video.](#)

Free DNR Publications, Cart Stickers For Order

The DNR stocks and provides free publications to local governments and organizations. Publications on recycling, composting, open burning and other topics can be ordered by accessing the DNR's [Recycling Education and Outreach webpage](#).



The following publications just became available for order through the Waste and Materials Management Program's online ordering form:

- Burn Barrel Information (FR-357)
- Burning Permits: It's Your Responsibility (FR-400)
- Can I Burn? Business Card (WA-1885)
- Nature Recycles Poster (CE-5013)
- Unwanted! Jumping Worms (FR-550)

Several versions of large cart stickers are also currently available for order. These are limited in stock and will not be reprinted when they run out. Only five can be ordered of each kind.

Register For Recycling Connections Group Compost Bin Sale

Recycling Connections is once again holding its community compost bin sale. Communities have two options to participate in the program.



The deadline to buy compost bins in bulk closed Jan. 15. The second option where communities work with Recycling Connections to host an online bin sale closes early March.

[Access the 2026 Group Compost Bin Purchase Program Guide.](#)

Let's Go Compost Providing Free Indoor Compost Bin Kits To 100 Public Schools



Know of any schools with an interest in vermicomposting? Sign up for a free indoor worm composting farm kit through Let's Go Compost. The program is giving away kits to 100 public schools across the U.S. with support to get the kit started and integrated into class curriculum.

[Apply for a kit online through the Google Form.](#) Applications are being processed as they are received.

Upcoming Webinars, Online Conferences And Events

**All times are in Central Time.*

Using RMA To Advance Sustainability and Durability in Roadways in the Midwest

Jan. 21, 1 p.m.

Tire Recycling Foundation

[Register online.](#)

Food Waste Power Plays You Need to Adopt in 2026

Jan. 22, noon

Leanpath

[Register online.](#)

Green Team Mini-Grant Info Sessions

Feb. 2 and Feb. 4, 4-5 p.m.

KEEP- Wisconsin K-12 Energy Education Program

[Register online.](#)

Buy Recycled Procurement: Policy Implementation and Practice

Feb. 11, 11 a.m.

Maryland Recycling Network

[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.



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.



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