



The Massachusetts Recycling Economy

This fact sheet highlights some of the economic benefits of recycling and recycling's contribution to the Commonwealth's economy. It is written for public officials and private financiers who make funding and investment decisions.

What is the Massachusetts Recycling Economy?

Recycling Includes:

Collection

A diverse network of public programs and private companies collect raw materials generated by residents and businesses.

Processing

Companies process and convert materials into raw materials and feedstock.

Manufacturing

Industries manufacture recycled-content products.

Reuse & Remanufacturing Includes:

Collection

Businesses and organizations collect and purchase discarded products and parts.

Processing & Resale

These entities sort, repair and remanufacture these items and sell them to businesses and consumers.

What are the economic benefits of the recycling economy?

By converting raw materials into products, recycling (including recycling-reliant industries such as paper mills, and reuse and remanufacturing) creates jobs, builds more competitive manufacturing industries and adds significantly to the Massachusetts economy.

Direct Impacts:

- 2,018 recycling business establishments
- 13,905 recycling jobs
- \$498 million annual payroll
- \$3.2 billion receipts

Indirect impacts:

Recycling businesses also provide important indirect benefits by purchasing goods and services that support other businesses.

Recycling businesses also generate an estimated \$95 million in state tax revenues.

(Source: Recycling Economic Information Study Update, DSM Environmental Services Inc. and Mid-Atlantic Solid Waste Consultants for Northeast Recycling Council, February 2009)

How significant are recycling jobs?

Job creation from recycling far outweighs disposal on a per ton basis. Jobs and wages increase the more recyclable materials move from collection to processing to manufacturing. Sorting and processing recyclables provides ten times as many jobs than if the same materials were thrown away.

Manufacturers that use recyclable materials to make new products employ even more people, and at higher wages, than sorting and processing companies. For instance, some recycling-based paper mills and plastic product manufacturers employ between 25 and 60 times as many workers as landfills do on a per-ton basis.

(Source: Institute for Local Self Reliance, <http://www.ilsr.org/recycling/recyclingmeansbusiness.html>)

What are examples of Massachusetts recycling businesses?

Massachusetts has a long and proud history of businesses and non-profit organizations that recycle raw materials that would otherwise be thrown away:

- **Reuse.** The Building Materials Resource Center of Roxbury collects and sells used building materials such as kitchen cabinets, windows, and appliances. Everyone benefits, as contractors save on disposal costs, building owners get a tax deduction, and low-income customers purchase products at discount prices.
- **Remanufacturing.** LaserTone Corporation of Littleton collects and remanufactures computer printer toner cartridges from businesses, diverting 200 tons of metal and plastic from disposal each year.
- **Collection.** E.L. Harvey & Sons of Westborough provides collection services for municipalities and businesses that generate recyclable paper and cardboard, bottles and cans and construction and demolition debris. E.L. Harvey sorts materials and sells them to manufacturers who use the raw materials to make recycled-content products.
- **Processing.** Warehouse Plastics of Millbury recycles scrap plastics by regrinding and selling them to manufacturers that use the plastics in their products.
- **Manufacturing.** The Newark Group of Fitchburg collects, processes and manufactures recycled paper products. Newark's mill uses recycled newspaper, magazines and office paper collected from cities and towns to make recycled-content book board for notebooks, hardcover books and game boards.

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This information is available in
alternate format by calling our
ADA Coordinator at
(617) 574-6872.



Interested in other Massachusetts recycling businesses?

Massachusetts Recycling Collection and Processing Companies:

<http://www.earth911.com>

Massachusetts Recycled Products Manufacturers:

<http://www.chelseacenter.org>

New England Reuse:

<http://www.epa.gov/ne/assistance/reuse/index.html>

Recycling Economic Information Study Update

http://www.nerc.org/documents/recycling_economic_information_study_update_2009.pdf

Where do I find additional resources?

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Recycling Market Development Program

<http://www.epa.gov/waste/consERVE/rrr/rmd/index.htm>