



TOWN OF HARVARD

PAY AS YOU THROW CASE STUDY

In a [Pay-As-You-Throw \(PAYT\)](#) solid waste program, residents purchase official bags or preprinted stickers for disposal of trash, thereby paying directly for solid waste they generate. There is no direct fee for recycling.



Official Harvard green SMART bags are disposed of in a trash compactor at the Harvard Transfer Station.

Community Population: 6,520

Households Served: 1,345

Services Provided: The Town of Harvard operates a transfer station for its residents. Trash is collected at the transfer station twice per week and is taken to the Covanta Energy in Haverhill. Recycling is picked up by a small, local hauler weekly. The recycling program includes three stream collection. One compactor for steel cans and mixed plastics 1-7; two compactors for newspaper, mixed paper, and corrugated cardboard; and two roll-offs for mixed glass. Finally, residents can bring their textiles, hard to recycle materials (such as electronics and appliances), bulky items (including mattresses), and construction and demolition (C&D) materials to the transfer station for recycling and/or disposal.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW:

- The Town of Harvard Selectboard voted to adopt a PAYT (referred to in the town as “Save Money and Reduce Trash” – or SMART program), in the spring of 2019, with an effective implementation date of July 1, 2020.
- The goal of the SMART Program was to help reduce solid waste management costs, to reduce the volume of materials entering the waste stream, and to increase recycling.
- Residents pay an annual fee to access the transfer station and all trash must be placed in an official Harvard SMART bag, which is purchased at local retailers.
- Basic recycling is free (paper, cardboard, metal, glass, and plastic).
- Residents may recycle or dispose of bulky items, hazardous and universal wastes, and hard-to-recycle materials for a fee using a punch card system.
- The Town has a mandatory recycling policy as well as comprehensive private hauler regulations that require private haulers to provide integrated solid waste and recycling services to residential customers for one bundled price (i.e., all customers receive recycling collection with trash collection).

IMPLEMENTATION:

- Harvard received a \$13,450 grant from MassDEP through the Sustainable Materials Recovery Program (SMRP) for PAYT start-up funds. These funds were used to fund the upfront costs of bags, outreach and educational materials, and other approved program start-up costs.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

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www.mass.gov/lists/pay-as-youthrow-paytsave-money-and-reduce-trashsmart

- Prior to the PAYT program, an annual sticker for access to the transfer station was \$250. With the adoption of PAYT, the Town reduced its annual fee to \$130, which covers the operating costs of the transfer station (e.g., electricity, labor, etc.).
- The fee for each PAYT bag then covers the tipping costs to dispose of the trash. The bags are available at several local retailers and are sold for \$1 per 15-gallon and \$2 per 33-gallon bag. The bag price has not changed since the beginning of the program.
- The Town conducted extensive outreach and education leading up to implementation, with regular website updates, announcements through online newsletters, press releases and newspaper articles, postcards, and distribution of the new flyer/brochure with transfer station annual stickers.
- The Town now uses [CivicRec](#), which is a software system that allows the transfer station to accept payment online, without cash or check.

ENFORCEMENT

- The Transfer Station attendants are primarily responsible for the enforcement of the program and ensuring that Harvard PAYT bags are used.
- For the first few weeks of implementation, an additional worker and two volunteers helped to monitor and enforce the program.
- The Town has not noted any increase in illegal dumping.

RESULTS:

- By its second year of the program, the Town of Harvard reported that everything was running smoothly, and they continue to implement with no major issues.
- More impressive is that they reduced their trash generation by 31% as compared to prior to PAYT. This is particularly impressive since the first two years of their program was dominated by Covid-19 and many other municipalities experienced increases in waste generation during that time.
- They have kept this trajectory, with each year generating less trash and more recycling. The complete results from 2019 (pre-PAYT) through 2022 are noted in the chart below.

