



CITY OF LYNN RECYCLING IQ KIT CASE STUDY

The Recycling IQ Kit provides cities and towns with steps, tools and resources to help improve the quality of local recycling programs by providing direct feedback to residents about what should and should not be recycled.



City of Lynn Recycling IQ Kit Team

Community Population: 94,063

Households Served: 27,000

Recycling Program: Bi-weekly single-stream curbside recycling collection (96 gal carts)

PROGRAM OVERVIEW:

- An Increase in contaminated recycling was first noted in Lynn in 2015
- Lynn was awarded the MassDEP Recycling IQ Kit grant in 2017 which provided \$15,000 of funding and 40 hours of technical assistance to implement the program. The City used \$25,000 in Recycling Dividend

Program funds to cover the remainder of the costs

- The top contaminants in the recycling were plastic bags, and food and liquids
- The City implemented 8 weeks of curbside feedback to 5,000 households (18.5% of households served)
- City-wide outreach included mailers, newspaper and social media ads, billboards, banners, sandwich boards, and store signs

IMPLEMENTATION:

- The recycling coordinator spent 6 weeks preparing - getting consensus to reject contaminated recycling carts on collection day, developing the budget, timeline, and operating procedure, hiring staff, and printing outreach materials
- Curbside feedback was focused in areas with the most contaminated recycling – approximately 500 households on each of the 10 recycling routes
- Four staff (three cart checkers and one route supervisor) were hired for 18 weeks at 20 hours per week; the cart checkers were college students on summer break
- Cart checkers attached “oops tags” to recycling carts with the most problematic items with instructions to “correct this and we collect next time”
- Two mailers were sent out – one that went to all Lynn residents focused on what is recyclable and what isn't and a second mailer about plastic bags was sent to the 5,000 households along the routes targeted for curbside feedback. All the printed materials were in English and Spanish
- Citywide signage included billboards, banners, store signs, and sandwich boards focused on the top contaminant: plastic bags
- Outreach included paid and earned media in local newspapers, on social media, Local Access Television segments and announcements

- Letters were sent to 294 property owners of buildings where heavy contamination was found. Letters offered assistance training residents on proper recycling
- The route supervisor communicated regularly with the hauler (Waste Management) to let them know which carts were tagged and left unemptied at the curb
- Lynn received a second MassDEP grant to implement the program in an additional 20% of the City's households in 2018

“Most residents have good intentions but they simply don't know some of the rules to recycling.”

*– Julia Greene
Lynn Recycling Coordinator*

RESULTS:

- The overall rejection rate (tagging rate) decreased 71.5% from the first week (31.6%) to the last week of the program (9.8%)
- The single-family home areas (Monday routes) had significantly fewer contaminated carts than the areas with large concentrations of multi-family homes (Tuesday-Friday Routes)
- It took two Oops tags or less to bring 98% of HHs into compliance in the most compliant area
- It took two Oops tags or less to bring 87% of HHs into compliance in most non-compliant area
- Letters sent to 118 property owners of multiple Oops Tag properties in week 6 resulted in 85% decrease in Oops tags to those properties in the last week of the program

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

- **Lynn Primary Contact:** Lisa Nerich, DPW Associate Commissioner, lnerich@lynnma.gov, 781-628-8000
- **Lynn IQ Kit Program Manager (2017):** Julia Greene, jgreene@bedfordma.gov, 781-918-4271
- **MassDEP Recycling IQ Kit Manager** –Janice Paré, Janice.pare@mass.gov, 617-292-5848
- **Website:** http://www.ci.lynn.ma.us/citydepartments_trashrecycle.shtml

To apply for the Recycling IQ Kit grant, visit:

tinyurl.com/RecyclingIQKit-MA

Tagging Rate

■ WEEK 1 ■ WEEK 16

