

MassDEP Reduce & Reuse Working Group: Summary of Stakeholder Input on Strategies to Promote Reduce/Reuse/Share/Repair

MassDEP held 10 meetings of the Reduce & Reuse (R&R) Working Group between March 2020 and January 2021. More than 320 individuals participated in these meetings. This document represents the input we received from participants over the course of this process. However, listing of strategies in this document does not imply acceptance or endorsement by MassDEP.

EDUCATION/BEHAVIOR CHANGE:

- Develop a state-wide education campaign to promote the value and benefits of waste prevention and best practices for reusing, repairing and sharing (similar to Recycle Smart MA).
- Create an online calculator to quantify the environmental, social, and economic benefits of choosing reuse/repair/share over purchasing new and disposal.
- Explore opportunities for point-of-purchase campaigns to promote how items can be repaired, donated for reuse or properly recycled at point of purchase.

TOOLS, RESOURCE, & TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE:

- Develop an online search tool/ directory to connect Massachusetts residents with reuse/repair/share resources across the state.
- Develop rating system or scoring index for appliances on durability and repairability.
- Provide state-wide guidance documents, technical assistance, and start-up funding for restaurants switching from single use to reusable systems (via Recycling Works).
- Assist non-profit organizations in finding creative solutions to storage capacity issues.
- Work with reuse organizations to train staff/volunteers to identify and tag donated items with labels related to chemicals of concerns, recalls, etc.
- Expand guidance, technical assistance, and incentives for Colleges and Universities to adopt reusable food ware programs in cafeterias, cafés and catering.
- Develop best practice documents, trainings, technical assistance, and financial incentives¹ to promote the expansion of local repair events, library of things, tool lending libraries, and swap shops throughout the state.

¹ Incentivized currently through the Recycling Dividends Program Reuse point

- Incentivize restaurants to offer reusable containers for reuse and refill in accordance with current Food Code requirements.
- Incentivize² adoption of model ordinances or bylaws to requiring food service businesses to provide single-use packaging items upon request only for take-out food and to require reusable service ware for all on-site dining.
- Create best management practices around donating and sales of second-hand household goods, engaging with stakeholders (health agents, reuse organizations, legal team etc.) to create fact sheets for issues involving recalls, expiration dates, liability protection, disinfection etc.
- Expand guidelines around project planning and materials management for optimizing reuse in deconstruction and new construction/renovation of buildings (Recycling Works).
- Develop model ordinance/bylaw to regulate placement of textile drop-off/donation bins to decrease the likelihood of illegal dumping while supporting non-profit and for-profit reuse organizations.
- Develop and incentivize² model historic preservation ordinance that stipulates deconstruction (over demolition) and reuse mandates.
- Partner with Mass School Building Authority (MSBA) to offer sustainable materials management guidance, trainings, and resources for new K-12 school construction projects including planning for dishwashers and reusable service ware in the cafeteria, considerations for recycling bin placement, and coordinating the reuse and recycling of surplus furniture and fixtures.
- Provide support program for non-profit reuse centers including trainings, networking, technical assistance, best-practice resources, and grant funding (Recycling Works, Reuse MA organization?)
- Provide guidance for municipalities and non-profits to address illegal dumping outside of donation bins and at donation centers, including continued support for the [MassDEP Strike Force Anti-Dumping Surveillance initiative](#).
- Foster development of a program for refillable 1 lb propane gas cylinders modeled after “ReFuel Your Fun” program in California.
- Partner with U.S. Green Building Council LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) Program and the CHPS (Collaborative for High Performance Schools) Program to encourage furniture reuse & recycling through certification process.

² Add these to reuse best practices as part of the Recycling Dividends Program

- Work with reuse organizations to develop and distribute labels for donation bins on what is and is not accepted to discourage “wishful donations” and overflowing bins/illegal dumping.
- Develop a college/university pilot to lease furniture to students in apartments to reduce ongoing purchase and disposal of furniture at move-in and move-out each year.
- Develop a social capital credit program with local municipalities where individuals earn social capital credits for tasks that benefit the community that can then be redeemed for municipal services or used as currency for local businesses. This would incentivize people to make the effort to reuse.
- Promote or develop a [Fair Trade Recycling Offsets](#) program

GRANTS/FINANCIAL INCENTIVES:

- Continue to provide MassDEP [Reuse Micro-Grants](#) and [SMRP Waste Reduction grants](#) to NGOs, businesses, and municipalities to increase capacity of reuse and repair initiatives throughout the Commonwealth.
- Continue to incentivize municipal investments in reuse/repair/share programs through the [Recycling Dividends Program](#).
- Continue to incentivize the adoption of Pay as You Throw programs across the state through the SMRP PAYT Grant program and Recycling Dividends Program.
- Incentivize² municipal public-private partnerships to provide infrastructure including access to commercial dishwashing facilities for reusable/refillable food and beverage containers (similar to a bikeshare program).
- Encourage municipalities² to provide more community drop-off/donation days to make reuse more convenient and accessible.
- Provide technical assistance and incentives for companies to adopt use of reusable shipping containers (Recycling Works, RDBG Grant).
- Fund a pilot project(s) for residential deconstruction and reuse projects to help develop cost/benefit analyses, case stud(ies), guidance documents, best practices, model ordinances, and a deconstruction job training program.
- Develop and incentivize² a model procurement policy for local and state governments that discourages wasteful “panic buying” at the end of a fiscal year.

JOB TRAINING/ WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT:

- Partner with Voc-Tech Schools to develop a training program around repair and refurbishment of durable goods to support workforce development in the repair sector.
- Pilot a Workforce Development Grant Program to support repair, refurbishment, resale and reuse organizations throughout the state.

- Support the development of a job training program for home deconstruction through a start-up grant (Recycling Business Development Grant, Waste Reduction SMRP grant)
- Partner with local universities and colleges to develop and offer courses on “design thinking” focused on designing for durability and repairability.

NETWORKING:

- Continue to bring R&R stakeholders together frequently to facilitate information sharing/networking.
- Facilitate information sharing amongst reuse stakeholders through an online listserv & resource sharing platform/repository.
- Identify an agency/organization to take the lead on reuse and coordinate efforts across the state, similar to [Reuse Minnesota](#).
- Help foster partnerships between commercial contractors and architects to support building material and Furniture, Fixtures & Equipment (FF&E) reuse and recycling.

LEGISLATION AND POLICY:

- Support Right to Repair legislation.
- Identify potential allies for reuse legislation in MA and start a dialogue with legislators (local and state) about reuse/repair.
- Advocate for the reform of the General Mining Act of 1872.
- Support Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) legislation for paper and packaging products (PPP), solar panels, electronics, and textiles.
- Support state-wide legislation banning single-use bags and polystyrene take-out containers.
- Incentivize purchasing of secondhand items by exempting secondhand items from sales tax (possibly starting with a “second-hand tax-free day”) and bolstering tax incentives for donating items for reuse.
- There is confusion about how the Food Code applies to use of reusable containers at food service establishments. MassDEP should consult with DPH’s Food Protection Program to understand requirements and rationale of relevant Food Code requirements relative to reusable containers, discuss the Federal role in rulemaking, and determine whether there any opportunities to expand reusable container use while protecting public health.

PROCUREMENT:

- Partner with Massachusetts Operational Services Division (OSD) Environmentally Preferable Products and Services (EPP) program and the Leading by Example (LBE) program to create procurement policies that drive demand for refurbished, durable, and repairable products at the state and local level.
