



**CARTON
COUNCIL**



CARTON RECYCLING IN SCHOOLS

Best Practices Guide



**CARTON
COUNCIL**

GETTING STARTED

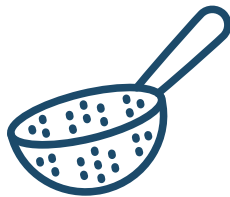


GETTING STARTED

Equipment to help with your program



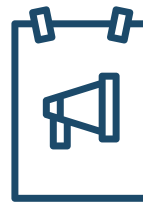
BUCKETS



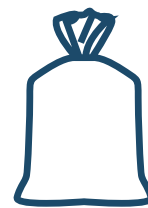
STRAINERS/
SCREENS



RECYCLING
CONTAINERS



SIGNAGE



PLASTIC OR MESH
BAGS



LITTER STICKS

***PLEASE REFER TO OUR PROGRAM GUIDE FOR
DETAILED HELP IN DEVELOPING YOUR PROGRAM.***



GETTING STARTED

Carton recycling basics: Empty those cartons!

1



2



1. Students from Forest Hill Elementary in Camden NJ empty their residual milk and juice into a 5- gallon bucket (purchased at any Home Depot or Lowes) that has a strainer in it to capture any food, straws or wrappers. These buckets are easy for custodial staff to lift and empty.
2. Students from Waukesha, WI can empty their residual milk and juice into a 33-gallon container. Installing a spigot at the bottom of that container makes it easier for the custodian to pour the residual liquids into a floor sink.



GETTING STARTED

Carton recycling basics: Empty those cartons!

3



3. A custodian at Ridgewood Middle School in Arnold, MO created a system where students empty residual milk into a metal funnel attached to a hose that empties into a sink. A bin is placed below the system for carton recycling.
4. A custodian at E.P. Foster Elementary School in Ventura, CA built this system after having difficulty lifting the residual milk to empty it into the sink. Students pour milk into two strainers nested in a rectangular bin, which sits atop an old painter's dolly. The custodian can crank the dolly up to pour liquid into the sink from the spigot installed at the bottom of the bin.
5. A school in Agawam, MA created their own branding for their program: "Got Milk Cartons?" The students quickly caught on and correctly put cartons in the recycle bin.

4



5





GETTING STARTED

Carton recycling basics: Empty those cartons!

6



- Liberty Elementary School students from the Harrisburg School District in South Dakota piloted this residual bucket prototype. They used a 5 gallon pickle bucket from the cafeteria to collect the residual milk and attached a spigot to the bottom of the bucket so it could be emptied over a floor drain. They purchased the dolly from Grainger Industrial Supply for about \$20.00. The strainer on the top of the bucket is for gold panning and was ordered from Walmart for about \$14. They modified the strainer slightly by grinding off some little flanges on the sides that prevented it from dropping securely into the bucket.

7



- Students love the smiley face design on the Recycling and Draining Station designed and manufactured by 35 Main for HospitalityGreen.



**CARTON
COUNCIL**

RECYCLING STATIONS



RECYCLING STATIONS

Basic recycling stations

1



1. New York City Schools Recycle Cartons! The city created some creative carton recycling bin signs and materials. These materials are available to any school throughout the country to use. Find the Grow NYC toolkit materials at <https://www.grownyc.org/recyclingchampions/cafeteria-best-practices>

Notice: NYC schools recycle cans, bottles, and cartons all in one bin. The residual liquid bucket is placed in the middle and the schools provide different sized containers for smaller children to reach.



RECYCLING STATIONS

Basic recycling stations

2



2. Students at Lincoln Public School District in Lincoln, NE empty their cartons into a residual bucket and then drop their cartons into a recycling bin that has a reusable mesh bag liner. Mesh bags allow any residual milk to drain to the bottom of the container keeping cartons dryer.

**See Resource section for more information on mesh bags*

3. This elementary student in Boston, MA heads to the milk carton bin to recycle his carton. These attractive bins are available through grants provided by the Carton Council. Contact info@recyclecartons.com for more information.

3





RECYCLING STATIONS

Advanced recycling stations

4



4. Students in St Paul, MN can easily recycle what's left after lunch at the recycling station. The smaller openings used on the recyclables container on the left help prevent contamination. All the containers are on dollies with wheels. This station has excellent, easy to read, color coordinated signage as well.

5



5. This school received grant money from their county to build a carton recycling station. Similar stations can be purchased starting around \$1,200.

Students set down their trays which makes it easier to dismantle their lunch. The custodian can wheel the entire station away for cleaning and emptying!

6



6. This is a low cost recycling station used in Arlington, MA. It has bright, clear signage and all containers are on dollies with wheels to make emptying very easy.



RECYCLING STATIONS

Advanced recycling stations

7



7. Joanne T. Megargee, 2018 Superintendent of Leonia, NJ's Public Schools and members of the Leonia Green Team providing incentives and training the students at the Middle School on the first day with 35 Main's Recycling and Draining Station.



RECYCLING STATIONS

Breakfast in the Classroom Program



1. Upon arriving at school in the morning, volunteer students pick up a rolling cooler that is labeled with their classroom name and number. Inside each cooler is milk, yogurt, and anything else that needs to be chilled. Dry ingredients such as pastries are in a plastic bag tied to the top of the cooler. Note that when breakfast includes a hot item, like a breakfast burrito, they put a small second insulated cooler on top of the chilled rolling cooler. Plastic utensils and napkins are in a pocket on the side of the chilled cooler.
2. One or two students pick up a lined trash can on a rolling dolly and a small recycling bin. All students return to the classroom where breakfast is consumed.
3. After breakfast is over, any residual milk is poured in either the lined trash can or down the classroom sink. Cartons are placed in the blue recycling bin and the trash is placed in the lined trash can.
4. Students put the blue recycling cart on top of the trash in the rolling trash bin and return the trash bin to a designated collection spot.
5. Students also roll the insulated cart back to a designated collection spot. Both the trash can, and the insulated rolling cart are labeled with the classroom so that the custodial and nutrition staff can tell if any are missing.
6. The custodian consolidates the cartons and puts them in the outside recycling roll-off. The trash is also consolidated and goes into the outside trash roll-off. The insulated rolling carts are sanitized in the school kitchen, so they are ready for the next day's breakfast.



**CARTON
COUNCIL**

PROGRAM TIPS



PROGRAM TIPS

1. Don't forget an “empty” station



DRAINING RESIDUAL MILK AND JUICE IS CRITICAL TO A SUCCESSFUL RECYCLING PROGRAM. USE A SCREEN (RIGHT) TO CAPTURE ANY WRAPPERS, STRAWS OR FOOD THAT GET TOSSED WITH THE MILK.



PROGRAM TIPS

2. Consider using mesh bags



**MESH BAGS GET RID
OF RESIDUAL MILK.
LESS MILK INSIDE THE
RECYCLING BIN = BETTER
QUALITY CARTONS FOR
THE HAULER**



PROGRAM TIPS

3. Keep cartons loose



WHETHER YOU USE REUSABLE MESH BAGS OR PLASTIC BAGS, CARTONS MUST BE REMOVED FROM THE BAGS. CARTONS GO LOOSE INTO OUTSIDE COLLECTION CONTAINERS.



This is what happens to cartons that have been stored in closed plastic bags. They start to decompose and cannot be recycled. If you use a plastic bag to line a container, dump the cartons into the outdoor recycling dumpster without the plastic bag and either reuse the bag or throw it away.



PROGRAM TIPS

4. Set up a green team and get students involved



This system is placed on a table to accommodate taller middle school students.



This system is placed on inverted milk crates for student volunteers at an elementary school.

SCHOOLS CAN DETERMINE THE TYPE OF RECYCLING SYSTEM THAT WORKS BEST FOR THEIR STUDENTS. GET STUDENTS INVOLVED AND DESIGN YOUR SYSTEM TO MEET THEIR NEEDS!



PROGRAM TIPS

5. Make it fun!



A custodian in Hillsboro, OR created an innovative program to recruit and reward volunteers to help with the recycling program. She created her own “fun money” and store.

Student volunteers are “paid” for their work, and save their “money” to spend at the custodian’s store. The store contains toys and trinkets acquired through donations, thrift shops, or dollar stores. Items are priced from \$1 to \$10, which teaches students to save money for something big.

***USE INCENTIVES TO RECRUIT
RECYCLING PROGRAM VOLUNTEERS!***



PROGRAM TIPS

6. Find your champion



***DON'T FORGET
TO THANK YOUR
CHAMPIONS!
CHAMPIONS CAN
BE TEACHERS,
STUDENTS,
PARENTS,
FOOD SERVICE
DIRECTORS, AND
PRINCIPALS.***





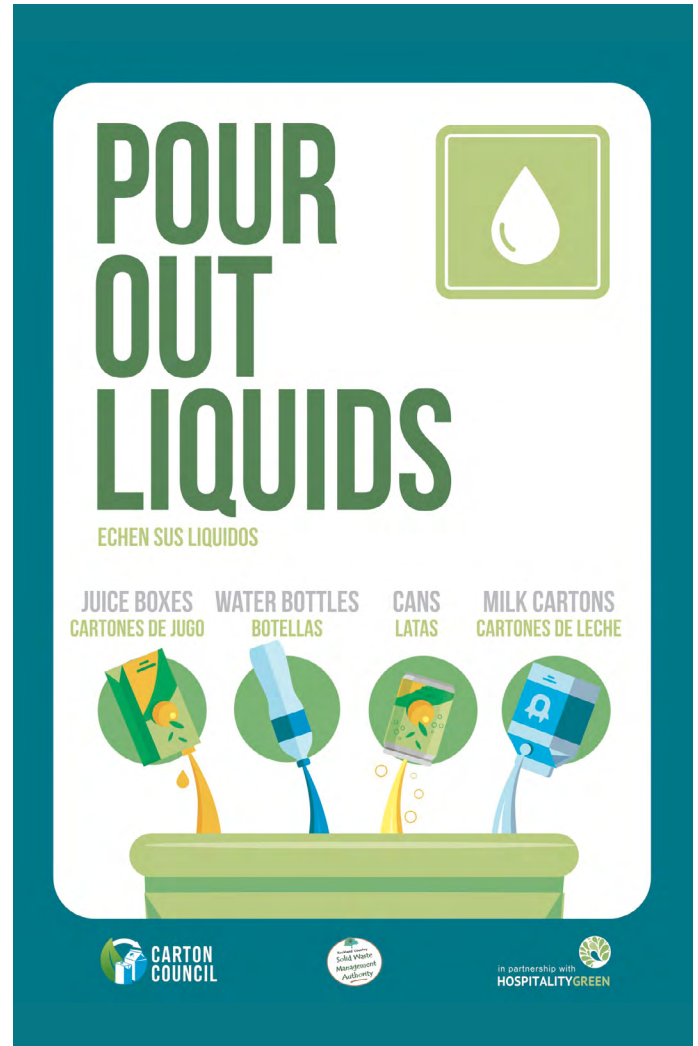
**CARTON
COUNCIL**

CARTON RECYCLING POSTERS



CARTON RECYCLING POSTERS

Examples



CARTON RECYCLING POSTERS HAVE A GREATER IMPACT WHEN DESIGNED BY YOUR OWN STUDENTS, TEACHERS AND PARENTS.



CARTON RECYCLING POSTERS

Examples





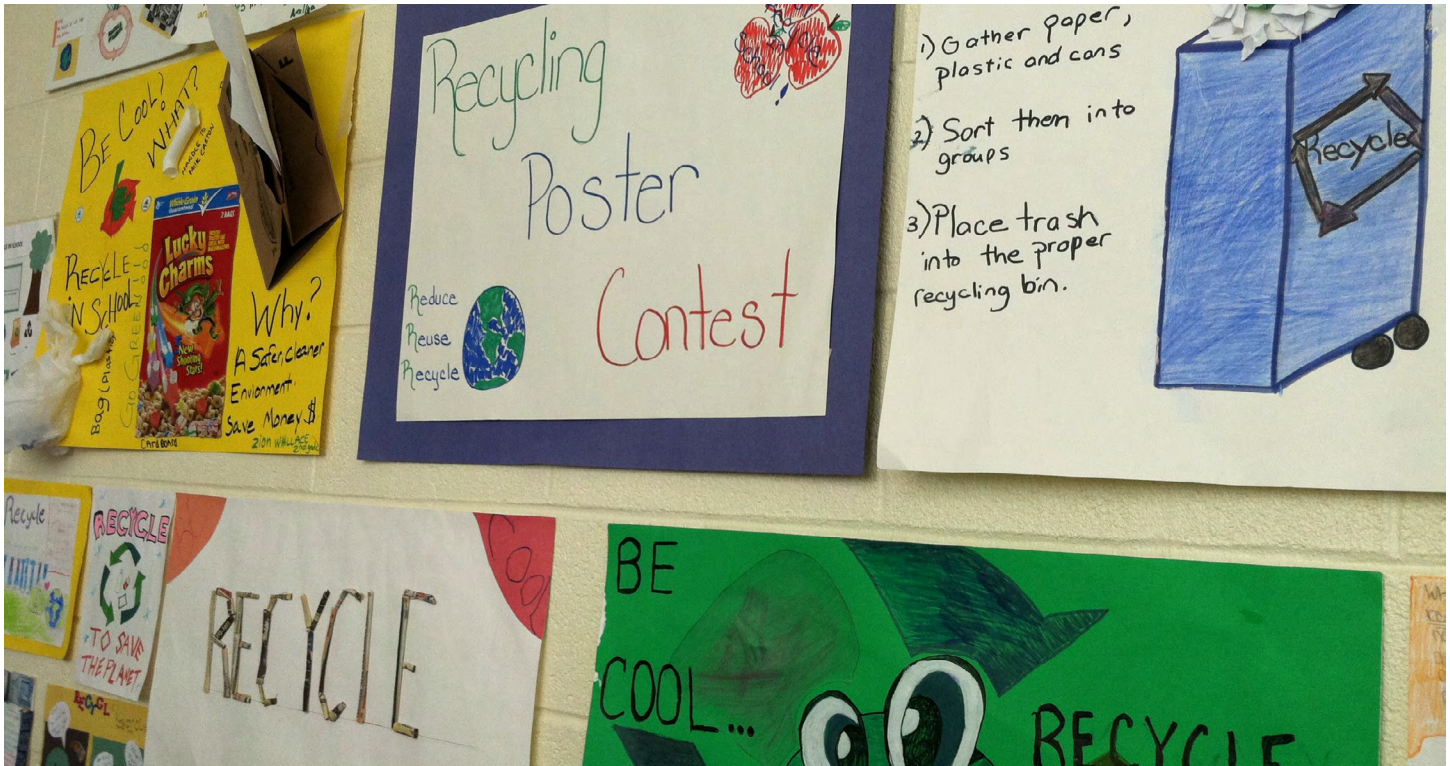
**CARTON
COUNCIL**

CONTESTS



CONTESTS

Poster design contest



This poster was designed by a student in NC as part of a poster contest for high school students. It is available free on the [Carton Council website](#).

**CONTESTS
ARE A GREAT
WAY TO GET
STUDENTS
INVOLVED IN
THE DESIGN
OF A NEW
POSTER!**



CONTESTS

Incentivize carton recycling



Boston Public schools held a contest to see which classes recycled the most cartons and rewarded them with banners and a pizza party.



**CARTON
COUNCIL**

ADVICE FROM PEERS



Advice from peers



“ Make sure you have support from the top administrators and plan to work closely with everyone—principals, cafeteria staff, teachers, custodians and students. Listen to the people working at the schools, because they know the culture best and design the program for their unique system. We have ten schools recycling cartons and each one does it slightly different, but they do it in a manner that is sustainable and works for them.”

— KIM O'ROURKE, MIDDLETOWN SCHOOL DISTRICT
RECYCLING COORDINATOR, CONNECTICUT

“ A kick-off education campaign is critical to participation and long-term success. Involve student council, another student group or an upper-level class in your campaign. Incorporate multiple elements such as a short assembly, PA system announcements, posters and banners, and even a participation contest between grade levels. Have the student group involved in creating and implementing these. Send a letter home to parents announcing the program and highlighting the benefits to the environment. Remember that when students are involved, faculty will have more buy-in.”

— CYNDRA DIETZ, ECO-CYCLE, COLORADO



Advice from peers



“ Implementing a school carton recycling program takes a village. Think of the school as if it is a small community. To be successful, engage representation from all sectors of the school and offer clear messaging. Highest success is received when the planning team includes representation from students, staff, facility services, administration, and food service staff. Don’t forget to offer frequent reminders and clear signage to ensure procedures are understood and continue each day especially after winter and spring breaks. At the beginning of each school year, take time the first week to help new students and staff learn the waste sorting line layout and procedures. It also serves as a great reminder for the students and staff returning. ”

— **SUSAN SCHULLER, EDUCATION AND OUTREACH COORDINATOR, RECYCLING CONNECTIONS, WISCONSIN**

“ Principal and custodial support is key to starting a carton recycling program. Each school may have a different cafeteria or lunch court trash and recycling set up, so it’s important to understand the logistics, the student dismissal process, and then identify the best fit for including a liquids station(s) and carton recycling bin(s) into the mix. Getting student Green Team volunteers to help direct their peers on how to participate, and possibly helping to pour out extra milk to help the process move quickly, is also a great way to get students involved. ”

— **JANET WHITED, ENVIRONMENTAL SPECIALIST, SAN DIEGO UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT, CALIFORNIA**

“ Through support from the Carton Council, we have been able to design and develop recycling systems that can provide tools to other schools to launch carton recycling programs. ”

— **CHRIS JIMIESON, ACTIVE PARENT VOLUNTEER AND SCS ENGINEERS, MADISON METROPOLITAN SCHOOL DISTRICT, WISCONSIN**

“ One piece of advice that I would like to share with other schools who are interested in starting a carton recycling program would be to allow students to take the lead on initiating and sustaining the program. At our school, Student Council members presented their vision for a milk carton recycling program during meetings with administrators, facilities personnel, and cafeteria staff. Educational materials obtained through the Carton Council provided the framework for students to learn and share information about the positive impact derived from recycling. Students shared this information with our school population through video, posters, class presentations, and hands-on teaching. I believe the ongoing success of a school carton recycling program is ultimately dependent upon successful student involvement and student leadership. If students believe in the value of what they are doing, they will make it happen. ”

— **TINA SECOR, K-5 VISUAL ARTS AT LIBERTY ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS, SOUTH DAKOTA**



**CARTON
COUNCIL**

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Bins and screens available



32" x 36" Mesh Bags

Available on [Amazon](https://www.amazon.com)



Pour Away Screens

Available at www.pourawayusa.com



Strainer Insert for 5 gallon Bucket

Available at www.bayteccontainers.com



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

School waste reduction resources

[The Center for Green Schools](#) offers teachers and school facilities staff opportunities to educate and engage the school around recycling and more. Check out hands on curriculum for all grades on Learning Lab and take action with your community as part of Green Apple Day of Service.

USDA Resources:

- [Reducing School Lunchroom Waste](#)
- [Creative Solutions for Ending School Food Waste](#)

[The Go Green Initiative](#) is all about helping schools create a campus-wide culture of conservation. Their programs are free and accessible to any school, anywhere.

[Alameda County Stop Waste at School](#) (CA) works with students, teachers, and school district staff to become leaders in waste prevention and proper

recycling and composting at school. This website is full of great resources that could be used as examples for any school district.

[The Oakland USD Green Gloves Program](#) is a national leader in helping schools decrease waste through the efforts of Nutrition and Custodial Services staff. This site includes waste sorting videos and free resources including how to set up a food share table and a waste sorting system, waste-free school party, signage, and more.

[Green and Healthy Schools Wisconsin](#) empowers, supports, and recognizes schools for nurturing healthy kids and sustainable communities. Their free guide provides suggestions for creating and sustaining a sustainability team and gives background information, tips, and ideas for each of the nine focus areas for school sustainability initiatives.



At an elementary school in Westchester County, NY, cartons are part of the recycling stream and can be collected with other recyclable containers (aluminum cans and plastic bottles)



Indian River County, Florida launched a pilot recycling program at four of their local schools. Each school received recycling containers for their cafeterias, classrooms, offices, hallways, and outdoor areas. Check out the video of the program launch [here](#).



FOR MORE INFO

Contact us

Debbi Dodson

Carton Council Schools
Recycling Coordinator – West Coast
ddodson1@me.com
858.272.6804

Michele Wagner

Carton Council Schools
Recycling Coordinator – Central Region
micheleawagner@gmail.com
303.710.5355

Barbara Heineken

Carton Council Schools
Recycling Coordinator – East Coast
bheineken@recycle.com
813.802.8036

General Inquiries

info@recyclecartons.com



CartonOpportunities.org

info@recyclecartons.com
1-855-7-CARTON



Follow us on Facebook or Twitter @RecycleCartons