

SCHOOL CARTON RECYCLING

PROGRAM REFRESH CHECKLIST

Your carton recycling program has been up and running, and with the new school year approaching, it's time for a program checkup and refresh. Whether you're administering an individual school program or overseeing recycling efforts across the district, utilize this checklist to ensure your carton recycling program operates smoothly.

Complete this checklist before the start of a new school year and refer to it again at the end of the year to jot down any observations and notes for improvement.

Take Inventory & Plan Ahead

- Refer to your supply inventory sheet** and assess all supplies including recycling collection bins, strainers, mesh bags, and cleaning supplies.
- Identify any additional supplies that are needed** and communicate with your purchasing entity so supplies arrive on time.
- Update your supply inventory sheet** if needed and store it in a readily accessible digital folder for easy updating. Include vendor contact info and copies of purchase orders for future reference.
- Ensure that all essential items, such as strainers, mesh bags, and cleaning supplies, are **readily available and strategically positioned** for optimal station setup.
- Once the recycling station is set up, **take good photos and post** in the custodial closet and/or above the waste station so new staff or volunteers can easily help reset the recycling station at the end of the day.
- Determine school carton usage and establish waste diversion goals.** Use our [Impact Estimator](#) (page 16) and Impact Calculator (page 18) at the beginning and end of the year to track progress.
- Have a **method to record notes** on contamination, volume, and any other observations monthly.

PRO TIP: Have your primary contact keep an electronic Lessons Learned document and check it at the start and end of each school year!

Communication is Key

- **Determine the recycling program contact** for each school in the district. Share the contact info with the primary recycling contact and/or District Facilities office. If the program is limited to a single school or is still in the pilot phase, make sure staff knows who to contact with questions.
- **Review recycling program procedures with all food service & custodial staff** (day & evening) for liquid management, collection of recyclables, and transfer to outdoor receptacles.
- **Send lunchtime procedures to all staff and review with all students** via school announcements, newsletter, and classroom education. Remind everyone that your school recycles!
- **Enlist volunteers** to assist in the cafeteria. Establish a sign-up tool and schedule and communicate it along with start-of-school year announcements. Involve upper grades or leadership groups to teach younger kids how to recycle at school.
- **Promote your efforts.** Post your updated district/school recycling guidelines and program efforts to your website to increase awareness and build support from families and the school community. Include a photo of the recycling station set up to capture interest.
- **Form a Green Team.** Identify or develop a supporting group to lead the program like a school club or Parent Teacher Group. Having more than one contact can help with turnover and ensure program continuity. A successful team should include representatives from students, teachers, facility services, administration, and food service staff.
- **Update signage.** Ensure that recycling and waste stations are clearly marked with up-to-date signage featuring kid-friendly visuals. Determine any signage that needs to be refreshed or reprinted (use the [Best Practices Guide](#) for guidance on effective signage and examples)

PRO TIP: Set up a recycling meeting or memo prior to the start of the school year to address the items on your Refresh Checklist and assign responsibilities.

General Program Considerations

- **Have a weekly routine to deep clean** any supplies that are used to collect milk or milk cartons to prevent odors.
- **Create incentives** like a carton recycling contest, poster contest or contamination reduction contest.
- **Do a [waste audit](#)** (page 17) to educate and demonstrate the impact of recycling awareness.
- **Promote your recycling program** by creating videos for the morning announcements. Involve students to make it fun! This tool can also be used throughout the school year to address contamination or refresh participation.

**Keep your program documents in an easy to access electronic location for updating.
Contact the Carton Council team at info@recyclecartons.com any time with questions!**



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