

Chicago Conservation Corps Speakers Bureau  
Recycling in Chicago



**Goals:**

1. Understand the solid waste hierarchy as well as source reduction and closing the loop.
2. Make connections between consumer behavior and waste production.
3. Provide resources for increasing recycling participation in Blue Cart areas and Drop-Off Centers.

**Materials:** Bag of recyclable material including two items in each recyclable category, Rethink Recycling Activity, *Recycling Drop Off Center Maps*, *Recycling: It Starts with You*, *Keep Your Home and City Safe and Clean HCCRF Guide*.

**KEY TERMS:**

Source Reduction    Close the Loop    Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, Rethink    % Post-Consumer Material

**Step 1: Introductions**

**Time: 10 mins.**

TIP: *Remember to always introduce yourself, smile and make eye contact*

1. **Introduce yourself and the goals of the presentation.**
2. **Develop a leading question.** This will help you get a sense for your audience and peak their interest.  
**Review** the *Myth Busters* and *FAQ's* for assistance.

**Leading question examples:**

- How much waste is produced in Chicago annually (on average)? *7,299,174 tons*
- What recyclable material is most commonly found in Chicago's waste stream? *29.5% of all waste produced in Chicago is PAPER.*
- How many times can aluminum be recycled? *Unlimited!*

(Source Chicago Waste Diversion Study and US EPA)

3. **Group introductions:** Use these questions as an opportunity for group introductions.

**Step 2: Overview**

**Time: 15 mins.**

TIP: *Recycling is a touchy issue in Chicago. Start the presentation with a disclaimer that you are a volunteer and are not in the position to answer all questions about Chicago's recycling system or policy. Defer nay-sayers to C3 staff.*

**THEME: Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, Rethink: these are important first steps for waste reduction.**

**Big Picture Overview**

- Between 1960 and 2008 the amount of waste each person creates has almost doubled from 2.7 to 4.5 pounds per day.
- 75% of all waste produced in your home is recyclable.
- Recycling an aluminum can will save enough energy to run your TV for 3 hours.
- Manufacturing bottles from recycled plastic uses 70 % less energy than manufacturing them from scratch.
- Recycling five 2-liter bottles produces enough fiberfill to make a winter jacket.
- Recycling decreases emissions of greenhouse gases that contribute to global climate change
- Waste prevention also known as **Source Reduction**, is the practice of designing, manufacturing, purchasing, or using materials in ways that reduce the amount of waste created.
- **Closing the Loop** is accomplished when someone recycles material and then buys products made from recycled material. Paying attention to this process will reduce the number of new resources being processed and manufactured into new material. This is usually listed as a percentage of Post-Consumer Materials.

### Thinking About Natural Resources

- Aluminum is made from Bauxite Ore, a mineral that is strip-mined or dug out of the surface of mountains in China, Africa and India to name a few locations. **Landfill time:** 80-100 years
- Glass is made from sand, soda ash and limestone mainly from Australia. **Landfill time:** 1 million years
- 4 billion trees are used for paper annually. One ream of paper uses 24 trees and 17 gallons of water. **Landfill time:** 1 month
- Plastic containers are made from petroleum based material (PET or *Polyethylene terephthalate*). All the plastic that has ever been manufactured still remains. **Landfill time:** 700 years

### Chicago Specific Overview

- Chicago Climate Action Plan** aims to reduce, reuse and recycle 90% of landfill waste by 2020. Since 2007, Chicago has decreased landfill waste by 26%.
- Chicago's Blue Carts and Drop-Off Locations are the main way Chicagoans can recycle. Materials are collected, picked up and sorted at three private facilities.
- Multi-unit buildings use private waste haulers. Contact the building owner for more information.
- Chicago Plastic Bag Tax Ordinance** created plastic bag recycling drop offs at grocery and drugstores.
- Rubble Reuse Ordinance** has been very effective. Construction and Demolition debris (C+D) makes up 53% of the waste stream and has an 83% recycling rate.
- The Household Chemical and Computer Recycling Facility (HCCRF)** accepts batteries, CFL's, house paints/thinners/aerosols, lawn and garden chemicals, cleaning products, computers, TV's and cell phones.
- Chicago accepts the following plastics for recycling: #1, #2, #3, #4, #5, and #7.
- Batteries can be recycled at all Chicago Public Libraries.
- Burnt out CFL's can be recycled at Home Depot and Ace Hardware and other hardware stores.
- Broken CFL's can be recycled at the HCCRF.

(Sources: U.S. EPA, Chicago Climate Action Plan, DOE Waste Characterization Study, the California Dept. of Conservation-Division of Recycling).

### Questions?

5 mins.

## BLUE CART RECYCLING

Reciclando con el Bote Azul

### Put these items in your Blue Cart:

Ponga estos artículos en su bote azul:

 Glass jars & bottles Botellas y envases de vidrio	 Aluminum cans, foil & pie tins Latas, papel y recipientes de aluminio		 Milk, juice cartons, and aseptic containers Cartones de leche, jugo, y aseptic envases	 Plastic bottles & containers Botellas y envases de plástico
 Telephone books Directorios telefónicos	 Magazines & catalogs Revistas y catálogos		 Office paper & file folders Papel de oficina y las carpetas de archivo	 Newspaper & inserts Periódicos y propaganda
 Cereal boxes, paper towel rolls, etc. Cajas de cereal, mbos de cartón etc.	 Junk mail Correspondencia publicitaria	 Cardboard (flatten all boxes) Cajas de cartón (desarmadas)	 Paper bags Bolsas de papel	 Tin or steel cans Latas de acero u hojalata

**Step 3: Rethink Recycling Activity****Time: 20 mins.**TIP: *Adapt this activity as you see fit. In some instances, it may be best to complete the activity as a big group.***Directions**

1. Split the audience into teams.
2. Hand out copies of the *Rethink Recycling* Activity Sheet and material examples.
3. Ask the group to evaluate the items in the bag and respond as a team.
4. Ask each group to present their results.

**Recyclable**

Batteries  
 Aluminum can  
 #1 plastic container  
 CFL  
 Plastic bag

**Non- Recyclable**

Soiled paper  
 #6 plastic container  
 Styrofoam  
 Plastic fork  
 Plastic food packaging

**The Four R's of Recycling**

<b>Reduce</b>	Think about packaging and waste before purchasing. Use pocket book power.
<b>Recycle</b>	Buy items that can be recycled and <b>MAKE SURE TO RECYCLE.</b>
<b>Reuse</b>	Find creative ways to repurpose and think your "waste". Is it really waste?
<b>Rethink</b>	Try to buy items that are made with at least 50% post consumer materials.

**Step 4: Questions and Wrap Up****Time: 10 mins.**TIP: *Sum up the presentation theme: Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, Rethink: these are important first steps for waste reduction.***Additional Resources****City of Chicago Publications**

*Recycling Drop Off Center Maps* brochure  
*Recycling: It Starts with You* brochure  
*Keep Your Home and City Safe and Clean HCCRF Guide* handout  
*Guide to Multi-Unit Recycling* one- pager

**Local Resources**

- Chicago Department of Environment:** 312-744-7606, [www.chicagorecycles.org](http://www.chicagorecycles.org)
- Blue Cart Recycling Hotline:** 312.744.5702
- Household Chemical and Computer Recycling Facility:** 1150 N. North Branch
- The Resource Center:** a non-profit environmental education organization providing innovative techniques for recycling and reusing materials, (773)821-1351, [info@resourcecenterchicago.org](mailto:info@resourcecenterchicago.org).
- Chicago Recycling Coalition:** champions environmentally and fiscally sound management of solid waste through research, education, and advocacy of waste reduction, [info@chicagorecycling.org](mailto:info@chicagorecycling.org).
- No Foam Chicago:** Local grassroots organization working to ban Styrofoam in restaurants and food service in Chicago, [info@nofoamchicago.org](mailto:info@nofoamchicago.org).

**National Resources**

- US EPA:** [www.epa.gov](http://www.epa.gov)
- Recycle Bank:** National incentivized recycling program, 1-888-727-2978
- Terra Cycle:** Offers collection programs (many of them free) to collect items like chip bags and juice boxes and then convert it into a wide range of products and materials, 866-967-6766, [customersupport@terracecycle.net](mailto:customersupport@terracecycle.net)