



# Loveland, Colorado

56% Residential Waste Reduction



## Overview

In the early 1990's, Loveland overhauled its waste management system in response to rising worker compensation insurance rates and aging trash trucks in need of replacement. The city instituted a dual-collection system for trash and recycling and a separate system for curbside collection of yard debris. In addition, the city instituted pay-as-you-throw (PAYT) trash fees to encourage waste reduction. In 1996, the city diverted 56% of its residential waste from disposal; 19% was recycled and 37% was composted. Average trash landfilled per household dropped from 6.6 pounds per day in 1989 to 2.6 pounds per day in 1996 — a 60% reduction. Residents pay a mandatory flat monthly fee for recycling and composting services plus a fee for each bag of trash disposed. They can also subscribe to weekly curbside pick-up of yard debris or take the material to a central drop-off site. A drop-off site for recyclables not collected at curbside is also available. The new waste management system, fully implemented citywide in 1993, results in fewer staff injuries, integrates recycling with trash collection, and contains costs.

## DEMOGRAPHICS

**POPULATION:** 37,352  
(1989); 44,300 (1996)  
**HOUSEHOLDS:** 17,476  
(1996); 15,220 single-family households, 2,256 multi-family units

## Keys to High Waste Reduction

Keys to Loveland's high diversion rate are PAYT trash rates, convenient collection of recyclables, and diversified yard debris recovery. PAYT trash fees encourage participation in curbside and drop-off waste reduction programs.

Residents must either buy a stamp (\$0.85 for 30 gallons or \$0.45 for 13 gallons) to place on their own trash can or bag, or they must purchase special trash bags printed with the city logo (\$1.00 for 32-gallon blue bags and \$0.55 for 15-gallon green bags). The city's weekly curbside recycling program accepts eleven different materials. The city provides recycling bins to participating households and requires minimal

## RESIDENTIAL PROGRAM SUMMARY

	1989	1996
<b>Tons Per Year</b>	<b>15,680</b>	<b>17,973</b>
<b>Percent Diverted</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>56%</b>
Recycled	0%	19%
Composted	0%	37%
<b>Average lbs./HH/day</b>	<b>6.63</b>	<b>5.86</b>
<b>Net Program Costs/HH</b>	<b>\$63.16</b>	<b>\$85.48</b>
Disposal Services	\$63.16	\$40.36
Diversion Services	\$0	\$45.12

Notes: 2,880 households served in 1990 ;2,928 in 1997. 1990 dollars adjusted to 1997 dollars using the GDP deflator. Numbers may not add to total due to rounding.

Source: Institute for Local Self-Reliance, 1999.

sorting of materials by residents (two major segregations are required: paper and commingled containers). Loveland residents have a variety of options for diverting their yard debris from disposal. They can subscribe to the seasonal curbside collection service, which operates from April through November at a cost of \$4.25 per month; use the city's drop-off site; or handle their own materials through mulch mowing and home composting. In 1996, drop-off accounted for two-thirds of yard trimmings collected for composting in the city program.

### Cost-Effectiveness

In 1996, the city spent about \$1.45 million to provide trash, recycling, and yard debris services to 16,422 households — about \$90 per household served. Materials revenues reduced this by \$81,000 to \$1.40 million (or \$85 per household served). Per household costs are higher under Loveland's current waste management system than they were before the



changes (\$63 in 1989; \$85 in 1996). However, residents receive more services than before, and waste reduction may also ensure future cost-effectiveness for Loveland's waste management systems as it cushions Loveland against expected increases in landfill tip fees.<sup>1</sup> The city estimates it saves \$100,000 per year through its dual-collection system as compared to separate trash and recycling collection.

### MATERIALS RECOVERED

#### CURBSIDE:

newspapers, corrugated cardboard  
brown grocery sacks  
glass containers  
cans  
scrap metal (including aluminum foil, pie, food trays, white goods, and aerosol cans)  
narrow-necked #1 and #2 plastic bottles  
grass clippings, leaves, brush, and other yard and garden debris

#### DROP-OFF:

magazines and catalogs, mixed office paper, phone books  
motor oil, antifreeze, transmission fluid  
automotive batteries  
fluorescent tubes  
grass clippings, leaves, brush, and other yard and garden debris

*Loveland city staff use a unique dual-collection vehicle to collect trash and recyclables.*



### Tips for Replication

- Be prepared for resistance to change.
- Try to anticipate likely questions.
- Enact PAYT trash fees.
- Do your own homework to fit program to your community.
- Sell program to those active in the community.



#### Notes:

<sup>1</sup>At \$10 per ton, Loveland pays the lowest tip fee of the record-setters profiled (and among the lowest in the country). If tip fees had been just \$25 per ton in 1989, per household costs for solid waste management would have dropped between 1989 and 1996.

### Contact

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