



Chatham, New Jersey

65% Residential Waste Reduction



Overview

This wealthy, tree-lined suburban community diverts 65% of its residential waste from disposal (22% through recycling and 43% through composting). The borough instituted a pay-as-you-throw (PAYT) system for trash in 1992. Residents must place their trash in special bags or the city's contracted trash collection firm will leave it at curbside. Another contractor provides curbside collection twice a month for 21 types of recyclables. The borough collects fall leaves curbside and provides a drop-off location for brush and other yard trimmings. Chatham had a successful waste reduction program that diverted 63% of its residential waste in 1991, before the PAYT system was introduced. The current system is even more successful. In 1996, the average Chatham household produced 6% less waste than in 1991 and per household trash disposal dropped by more than 10%. Furthermore, average household costs for solid waste management decreased 50% within this same time period.

DEMOGRAPHICS

POPULATION: 8,007
(1990); 8,289 (1997)
HOUSEHOLDS: 3,285
(1996) 2,735
dwellings of 3 units
or less. 550 multi-
family dwellings

Keys to High Waste Reduction

Pay-as-you-throw trash fees, a curbside recycling program that collects many materials, and a convenient yard debris collection and composting program contribute to Chatham's waste reduction program success. Chatham's trash hauler only collects trash that residents place in special 30- and 15-gallon bags. The bags cost \$1.25 and \$0.65 respectively; the price was set so bag fees cover the cost of tip fees for trash disposal. The Advanced Recycling Technology Systems, Inc. (ARTS) recycling company provides twice monthly curbside recycling for 21 categories of materials and services the borough's drop-off site. Composting of yard debris accounts for nearly two-thirds of

RESIDENTIAL PROGRAM SUMMARY

	1991	1996
Tons Per Year	8,581	8,007
Percent Diverted	63%	65%
Recycled	13%	22%
Composted	50%	43%
Average lbs./HH/day	16.85	15.81
Net Program Costs/HH	\$456.62	\$227.76
Disposal Services	\$392.81	\$158.02
Diversion Services	\$63.81	\$69.74

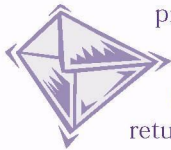
Notes: 2,750 households and 35-40 small businesses (2,790 total) served in 1991; 2,775 (2,735 households, 40 businesses) in 1996. 1991 dollars adjusted to 1996 dollars using the GDP deflator. Numbers may not add to total due to rounding.

Source: Institute for Local Self-Reliance, 1999.

residential waste reduction in Chatham. Fall leaf collection accounted for about 80% of all yard waste recovered in 1996. In order to encourage residents to participate, solid waste management calendars with recycling information and drop-off/pick-up times are mailed every year to Chatham households.

Cost-Effectiveness

Before switching to the PAYT trash system in November 1992, each Chatham household paid the previous trash hauler a flat annual fee of \$350 for trash collection and disposal, equivalent to more than \$300 per ton. The trash bag costs are now set to cover tip fee disposal costs; total per ton trash costs were \$157 in 1996. Composting collection and processing costs average \$48 per ton; recycling collection and processing, \$39 per ton. Also, the recycling contractor returns half of materials revenues to the



MATERIALS RECOVERED

CURBSIDE:

newspapers and inserts, magazines and catalogs, corrugated cardboard
mixed paper (paper bags, phone books, paperback books, paperboard,
colored and white paper, envelopes, mail, computer paper, wrapping
paper, and egg cartons)
glass containers
cans
juice and milk cartons
#1 - #3 plastic bottles
scrap metals (including aluminum foil and metal clothes hangers)
empty latex paint cans
aerosol cans
household batteries
white goods
leaves

DROP-OFF:

All materials accepted in
curbside program
(with the
exceptions of
household batteries
and white goods)
plus:
brush
grass clippings

*Recyclables set out at
curbside in Chatham*



community. In 1996, these revenues defrayed recycling collection costs by 60%. Chatham's recovery rate surpassed 60% under both the old private trash collection system and the new publically contracted system but per household costs dropped dramatically when the new system was implemented.



Funding for Chatham's residential waste management program is supplied by a \$75 per household fee paid by borough residents, the cost of trash bags, and county and state funds.

Tips for Replication

Make program participation convenient. Chatham switched to commingled collection of containers because of residents' preferences.

Pay-as-you-throw systems encourage trash reduction.

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