

Hamilton County Recycling and Solid Waste District's Social Marketing Campaign Plan

Overview: Hamilton County Recycling and Solid Waste District's social marketing campaign plan is aimed at increasing residential recycling. The plan details a county-wide outreach program focused on increasing the quantities of material recovered by getting more people to recycle. The plan focuses on changing behavior through social marketing methods.

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| Target Audience: | Residents |
| Social Marketing Strategy: | Social Norms and Diffusion |
| Goal/Objective: | To increase the residential recycling rate for Hamilton County by 3%, by informing residents how to and motivating them to recycle. |
| State Plan Goal: | Goal 2 and 4 |
| Summary: | <p>The Hamilton County Solid Waste District's social marketing campaign plan, titled "We're All In", is based off of the basic social marketing principles (refer back to the Case Study introduction).</p> <p>The District implemented the new campaign after determining that its existing outreach program was no longer effective in increasing residential recycling efforts in the county. Therefore, in 2011 the District hired a market research firm to create a marketing campaign. The campaign was based on phone surveys and focus groups. The "We're All In" uses basic social marketing principles to persuade people to recycle.</p> <p>The basic message conveyed through the "We're All In" campaign is recycling is easy and anyone can do it. The campaign uses social norms and diffusion as the primary social marketing strategies. Social norms are those behaviors that are widely accepted as typical within a community. Social diffusion is the manner in which those behaviors are spread throughout the community. The idea is to use people's desire to fit in as a way of getting them to adopt behaviors their neighbors are doing.</p> <p>The District implements social norms and diffusion by showing pictures of residents who have committed to recycling on posters, advertisements, social media posts, videos, billboards, and other sources of communication. The program targets Hamilton County residents who occasionally recycle. For more detailed information see attached document (<i>Social Marketing Campaign Plan: Hamilton County, Ohio</i>).</p> <p>In addition to the countywide campaign, the District targets at least two communities each year as a part of its Targeted Community Outreach Program (see Hamilton County: Targeted Community Outreach case study). The Targeted Community Outreach Program assesses the needs of each community and the</p> |

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barriers to participating in the community's recycling program. This allows the District to determine strategies in order to break those barriers down and lead to positive change.

Barriers to Desired Behavior:

- Lack of commitment towards recycling
- Recycling is a lot of work and not convenient
- Recycling costs money
- Recycling takes a lot of time
- Not knowing what can or cannot be recycled
- Inadequate space to store recyclables

Barriers with Implementation:

- People not being receptive towards new outreach and marketing materials during the first couple of months of implementation.
- Some residents may not understand the recycling infrastructure, contracts, and overall system that the District has put into place.
- Timing of direct mail (don't compete with election or Christmas mailings).
- Tailor advertising to demographic.
- Ensure the message is heard at least three times.

Timeline for Rollout:

- I. February:
 - a. Facebook and Twitter posts
 - b. Set-up new URL
- II. Mid-March:
 - a. Send Postcard Mailer
 - b. Radio ad
 - c. Post-it ad
 - d. Facebook and Twitter posts to alert residents of upcoming Guide
 - e. Place graphic on website
- III. April through June:
 - a. Launch motivational/ad campaign
- IV. Mid-April:
 - a. Send Guide and Magnet
 - b. Distribute bin stickers
 - c. Promote the Guide and Magnet during Earth Day media coverage
- V. Through October:
 - a. Make Guide and Magnet available at all events, in offices, and at other community locations

Considerations:

- Focus groups and phone surveys showed that using relatable citizens from the District on materials was more desirable than celebrities.
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- Community council approval may be needed before moving forward in targeted communities.
- The Social Marketing Campaign Plan that is attached can be used as a tool to guide other SWMDs in implementing similar strategies.

Measurement Methods: The success of the program is based on the recycling rate and its increase from year to year.

Resources Required: Hamilton County Solid Waste District hired an outside marketing firm to conduct phone surveys and focus groups to determine the most effective methods to increase recycling rates. The cost of hiring that particular marketing firm was \$51,500. Currently, a PR Coordinator is shared by both the Solid Waste and Air Quality Divisions of Hamilton County Environmental Services.

Overall Results and Metrics Residential recycling rates for the District over the last 5 years (rates do not include yard waste diverted from landfills):

| Year | Recycling Rate for District | Increase from previous year |
|------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 2009 | 11.46% | n/a |
| 2010 | 13.04% | 1.58% |
| 2011 | 14.40% | 1.36% |
| 2012 | 14.39% | -0.01% |
| 2013 | 14.05% | -0.34% |

*Recycling haulers changed their reporting resulting in reduced residential tonnages that are now attributed to the commercial sector.

Wrap Up: The Hamilton County Solid Waste District's social marketing campaign plan is currently being used throughout the District. The "We're All In" brand is incorporated into all District outreach materials.

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