

# Hamilton County Recycling and Solid Waste District's Targeted Community Outreach

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**Overview:** The Hamilton County Recycling and Solid Waste District uses its Targeted Community Outreach Program to help communities improve their recycling programs. Each year, the District selects two communities and provides targeted, comprehensive outreach and technical assistance to those communities throughout the year. The ultimate goal is to increase those communities' recycling rates. The District uses a combination of its countywide Social Marketing Campaign Plan and community specific outreach to achieve the goal. 2014 marked the ninth year the District has provided this program since starting it in 2006.

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<b>Target Audience</b>	Residents and Commercial Businesses
<b>Social Marketing Strategy</b>	Communication, Social Norms and Diffusion, Convenience, Commitments, and Prompts
<b>Goal/Objective:</b>	To increase the recycling rates of communities within Hamilton County with under-performing recycling programs.
<b>State Plan Goal:</b>	Goal 2 and 4
<b>Summary:</b>	<p>Hamilton County Recycling and Solid Waste District (District) implemented its Targeted Community Outreach Program as an opportunity to partner with communities to improve their recycling rates. Each year the District identifies two communities that have low recycling rates and/or have recycling programs that can be improved. The District then works with representatives from each community to determine how best to address the community's needs. The overall goal is to increase participation in and the quantity of material collected through the community's recycling program.</p> <p>The District conducts research to learn about the community's demographics, perceived and actual barriers that prevent people from recycling, current outreach efforts, and existing curbside or drop-off recycling opportunities. The District uses the conclusions of its research and its understanding of the community's specific behaviors and barriers to develop a strategy for the community.</p> <p>The District works with the community to develop an outreach campaign that uses social marketing tools to reach residents. A community's campaign uses appropriate components of the District's countywide social marketing campaign plan combined with outreach materials and a message that are specific to the community. While advertising to and educating residents is an important part of the overall strategy for a community, the strategy may also involve upgrading drop-off sites, providing</p>

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better signs for drop-offs, conducting outreach to businesses and schools, implementing event recycling, involving community leaders, and anything else that is needed to improve that community's recycling program.

As a community implements its outreach program and other strategies, the District continuously monitors the resulting effects on the community's recycling rate. At the end of the year, the District creates a case study for each community. The case study describes the District's research, the strategies for addressing identified barriers and other needs, a timeline for implementing the strategies, and the results of each strategy (see attached Target Community Wrap Up 2013: Village of Lincoln Heights).

## **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:**

The barriers will be different from community to community. However, some common barriers the District encountered in multiple communities are:

- People not being receptive towards the materials
- Some residents may not understand the community's recycling infrastructure, contracts, and how to use the recycling program.

## **Considerations:**

- The District's research showed that people wanted to see relatable citizens on outreach materials rather than celebrities.
- It may be necessary to obtain approval from the community's political leaders before moving forward in a targeted community.
- The Hamilton County Recycling and Solid Waste District's brand is on all program materials. This helps maintain consistency between the programs in the targeted communities and the countywide social marketing campaign.
- The District implements the majority of outreach efforts (design, mailing, funding, etc.), while the community implements infrastructure-based programs.
- In order to measure the results of the program on

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recycling in a community, it is necessary to calculate recycling rates for each community.

- The District measures the recycling rates of each community every 6 months after they conclude their assistance.

## Measurement Methods:

The targeted community program measures success based on the recycling rate and tonnage collected from year to year. The District measures the recycling rates of each community every 6 months after they conclude their assistance. However, the targeted communities have additional measurements of success based on the programs being implemented. Examples of measurements for Lincoln Heights are displayed below:

- **Send direct mail to all households in Lincoln Heights:** measured by the number of households receiving direct mail and the number of calls answered by the Hamilton County SWMD.
- **Improve recycling drop-off signs and visibility:** measured by the number of signs installed and the tonnage collected per year at a given drop-off location.
- **Keep recycling in the forefronts of residents' minds by including recycling articles in all available print and web media:** measured by the community outlets contacted and articles/materials submitted to print sources.
- **Promote backyard composting to residents:** measured by the number of residents who attended a composting seminar.

## Overall Results and Metrics

The District has achieved success through the targeted community outreach program throughout the years. A spreadsheet detailing the changes in recycling rates for the targeted communities since 2006 is attached. The cells highlighted in yellow are the targeted communities for that year. After the targeted outreach program is implemented in a community, the District monitors and evaluates the community's recycling rate from year to year. Below is a table from the *Target Community Wrap Up 2013: Village of Lincoln Heights* that lists the results from the campaign implemented in that community:

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Increase in Recycling After 2013 Promotional Campaign			
	Tons Recycled	Recycling Rate	Increase in Tons
<b>Lincoln Heights 2012</b>	5.56	0.43%	n/a
<b>Lincoln Heights 2013</b>	9.52	0.69%	3.96 tons (71.22%)

*The original goal of this outreach was to increase tons recycled by 50% which was achieved.*

For further results of the individual programs implemented in Lincoln Heights, please see the attached document titled *Target Community Wrap Up 2013: Village of Lincoln Heights*.

**Wrap Up:** To date, the Hamilton County Solid Waste District has currently targeted 16 different communities. In 2013, the two targeted communities were Lincoln Heights and Golf Manor. Both of the communities saw an increase in their recycling rates.

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