

PE5 Action: Recycling Bins in Government Buildings

3 Points

A. Why is this action important?

Increasing the rate of recycling reduces energy use and makes efficient use of limited resources. People are more likely to recycle when it is easy and convenient. If government employees have to go out of their way to recycle an item, they are more likely to dispose of it in the trash than to go to another location to recycle it. Placing recycling bins next to all trash receptacles makes recycling easier, provides a visual reminder to recycle items when possible, and reminds employees that they work for a government that is committed to the goals of the Climate Smart Communities (CSC) program.

B. How to implement this action

This action is implemented by creating a municipal policy that requires placement of recycling bins wherever there is a trash bin and by implementing that policy by providing recycling bins in all common areas in local government buildings (such as kitchens and copy rooms) and at every employee's desk.

The policy can be a standalone policy or be part of a larger strategy for managing the solid waste generated in local government buildings. The policy can be enacted through a resolution, executive memorandum, executive order, or it can be part of an employee handbook that covers the local government's internal sustainability practices.

Local governments should ensure that trash and recycling bins are clearly distinguishable, with different colors and signage. Create new signage, if needed, to educate employees on what types of items are recyclable and which types will be go a landfill. It may be worth considering providing a recycling receptacle larger than the trash receptacle in settings where users are more likely to generate recyclable waste than trash. For example, some local governments have provided small trash cans that hook to the side of a larger recycling bin at employees' desks since the waste generated is often recyclable paper waste.

C. Time frame, project costs, and resource needs

This action can be implemented in a fairly short period of time. Staff time may be involved in developing and implementing the policy. Other costs and resources include the purchase of recycling bins, labor time to place them throughout local government buildings, signage for staff education, and some extra time for custodial staff to pick up and dispose of recyclables separately from the trash.

D. Which local governments implement this action? Which departments within the local government are most likely to have responsibility for this?

Any local government that has recycling service can implement this action. The types of recyclables collected will vary depending on the recycling services available in each community. This will most likely be implemented by the local recycling coordinator, or staff in the public works department and/or facilities department.

E. How to obtain points for this action

Three total points are available for local governments that implement this action as per the above requirements.

F. What to submit

Submit evidence that the local government has a policy requiring placement of recycling bins wherever there is a trash bin; this can take the form of a resolution, executive memorandum, executive order, or it can be part of an employee handbook.

Submit at least one photograph for each type of location (common areas and employee desks in government buildings), as a sample to demonstrate proximity to trash receptacles and accompanying signage. Submit information on the number of trash and recycling bins provided in each of the two categories to demonstrate an approximate match between the two types of bins. If possible, provide procurement records indicating the acquisition of the equivalent number of recycling bins.

All CSC action documentation is available for public viewing after an action is approved. Action submittals should not include any information or documents that are not intended to be viewed by the public.

G. Links to additional resources or best practices

- [DEC Office Waste Reduction, Reuse, Recycling, Composting, and Buy Recycled Resource Book](#)
- [DEC Recycling and Composting](#)

H. Recertification requirements

The recertification requirements are the same as the initial certification requirements.