

# MCLEAN COUNTY SOLID WASTE PROGRAM 2019 ANNUAL REPORT



THE ECOLOGY ACTION CENTER COMPLETED THE FOLLOWING ITEMS IN FULFILLMENT OF THE SOLID WASTE AND WASTE REDUCTION EDUCATION PROGRAM AGREEMENT OF JANUARY 1, 2017.

## LEADING INDICATORS: SUMMARY OF PROGRESS<sup>1</sup>

**Goal:** Visit **70%** of eligible classrooms in McLean County, Bloomington, and Normal for elementary school recycling and waste reduction education programs. Reaching this target means directly engaging with approximately 1,500 students.

- Year-end total: There are 82 Fourth grade classrooms in McLean County, which includes all public and private schools. In 2019, EAC made fifty-two visits and met 1,209 students. This represents 63% of our goal.<sup>2</sup>

**Goal:** Visit **60%** of public libraries within McLean County, Bloomington and Normal and provide a summer reading program on recycling and waste reduction topics. Reaching this target means directly engaging with approximately 300 library patrons.

- Year to date: There are 14 public libraries in McLean County. In 2019, the EAC made 9 library visits and met 298 people, which exceeds our annual goal.

**Goal:** Provide recycling and waste reduction presentations for **25** local groups or approximately 750 individuals including civic groups, scouts, preschools, non-target school groups, university classes.<sup>3</sup>

- In 2019, we conducted 38 programs, reaching 760 people, thus exceeding our annual program goal.

**Goal:** Promote recycling and sustainable practices to direct audiences utilizing social media channels including Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and YouTube with a target of **30,000** interactions annually.

- In 2019, our social media posts resulted in 166,313 interactions, which exceeds our annual goal.

**Goal:** Provide and promote comprehensive online resources on recycling and waste disposal for Bloomington, Normal, and McLean County with a target of **12,000** visits to these pages annually.

**2019 TOTAL REACH:**  
**1,194,728**  
**INTERACTIONS**  
**DIRECT** (PROGRAMS, EVENTS, PHONE INQUIRIES): 17,609  
**MEDIA** (NEWSPAPER, RADIO, SOCIAL MEDIA, WEB): 1,177,319

<sup>1</sup> The totals below represent year-end numbers. Summaries of this year's activities are described on the pages that follow.

<sup>2</sup> There are 7 schools, representing 16 classrooms, that have historically declined program invitations. Three schools, representing 10 classrooms, opted to schedule their program in Spring 2020. Two schools, representing 5 classes, have not opted for programs since personnel changes in the Education Coordinator position in 2018. One school, representing one classroom, that was visited in 2018 has not opted in for a program this year.

<sup>3</sup> In practice, the EAC provides these programs for nearly 100% of those requesting the services.

- ☑ In 2019, our online waste and recycling resources were visited 154,327 times, which exceeds our annual goal.

## COUNTY WASTE GENERATION & RECYCLING RATE

The main goals of the McLean County Solid Waste Program are to increase both recycling and source reduction. The annual measurement and reporting of these rates by the EAC serve as lagging indicators of the success of outreach efforts. The value of this performance indicator is also limited by other factors affecting recycling and waste generation rates, such as accessibility of recycling programs and macroeconomic forces. While quantifying source reduction of municipal solid waste is difficult, tracking recycling rates is much more reliable.

McLean County's recycling rate increased for the third year in a row in 2018. The Ecology Action Center's annual calculation of community-wide waste generation and recycling shows that the County reached a recycling rate of 46% with an increase of 4.5% from 2017. As a result, the County maintained progress made in 2016 in breaking the previous community-wide recycling goal of 40% while also making progress towards the new community-wide recycling rate goal of 50% set in 2017 under the new 20-year solid waste management plan.

No single category of recyclable materials saw significant fluctuations from the year prior, while there were minor fluctuations across the board in all material streams. However, a likely contributing factor to the improved recycling rate is an improvement in the quality of data received by the EAC by local entities. Annually, as part of the waste and recycling rate calculations, EAC staff is working to improve the process and reduce the opportunity for errors or omissions.

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Total MSW Recycled (tons)	85,196	81,302	83,335	88,459	94,804
Total MSW Landfilled (tons)	141,068	154,662	120,815	124,364	109,467
Total Municipal Solid Waste Generated (tons)	226,264	235,964	204,150	211,230	204,271
<b>Recycling Rate</b>	<b>37.7%</b>	<b>34.5%</b>	<b>40.8%</b>	<b>41.9%</b>	<b>46.4%</b>

With the closure of the McLean County Landfill in late 2018, the Ecology Action Center continues to focus on waste management priorities as outlined in the Twenty-Year Materials Recovery and Resource Management Plan for McLean County, Bloomington, and Normal, Illinois. This includes diversion strategies for waste that would otherwise require landfill disposal further away from the source of origin.

## SOLID WASTE COORDINATOR ACTIVITIES

- Facilitated Solid Waste Technical Committee Meeting including reviewing the shift of the solid waste program funding to a three-party funded program.
- Attended Illinois EPA statewide e-waste meeting and coordinated opt-in of McLean County in the Consumer Electronics Recycling Act program for 2020 through McLean County Land Use Committee.
- Assisted with Illinois EPA site audit of Normal Public Works e-waste collection to verify compliance with Consumer Electronics Recycling Act.
- At the request of Normal and Bloomington municipal administrations coordinated stakeholder input for a possible ordinance that would require the recycling of

construction and demolition materials to the City of Bloomington and Town of Normal, consistent with the recommendations of the recently approved new 20-year solid waste management plan.

- Attended the regional ILCSWMA meeting with discussion on county program updates, new e-waste legislation and pharmaceutical programs.
- Conducted survey on quality of the Ecology Action Center's 4th grade Solid Waste and Recycling Program. Feedback is intended to help structure program content and delivery moving forward as recycling standards are likely to remain static.
- Hosted first compost bin workshop after an extended hiatus due to a significant loss of supplies and workshop space from a fire in later 2017.
- Assisted Normal apartment managers in the transition to on-site recycling for multifamily housing residents. EAC staff developed educational materials for distribution to students and others in apartment housing as well as updating these addresses within the RecycleCoach app.
- Submitted final report of stakeholder survey results and recommendations regarding a construction and demolition recycling ordinance to the City of Bloomington and Town of Normal staff. This research and outreach is in accordance with one of the six priorities within the recent 20-Year Materials Recovery and Resource Management Plan for McLean County, City of Bloomington, and Town of Normal, Illinois.
- Awarded the McLean County Recycling and Waste Reduction Award and Anne McGowan Making a World of Difference Award at the EAC's Sustainable Gourmet annual fundraiser. The McLean County Recycling and Waste Reduction Award identifies businesses, schools or organizations with outstanding recycling programs or waste reduction efforts. The Anne McGowan Making a World of Difference Award recognizes outstanding projects, activities, or individuals in McLean County who promote environmental awareness or natural resource conservation. The McLean County Recycling and Waste Reduction Award was awarded to a group of community volunteers, Amie Keeton, Janet Guaderrama, Marcia Nagy, and Melanie Ziomek, who coordinate the local Terracycle program. The Anne McGowan Making a World of Difference Award was awarded to Henry Brockman, a local organic produce farmer in the Congerville area.
- Received approval on Solid Waste Program Agreement renewal from the City of Bloomington, Town of Normal, and McLean County for 2020 through 2022. The agreement establishes a framework for the continuing administration and implementation of the McLean County Solid Waste Program, and provides assistance to the City, Town, and County in meeting the requirements of the Illinois Solid Waste Management Planning and Recycling Act.



## HOUSEHOLD HAZARDOUS WASTE (HHW) COLLECTION

- The EAC successfully held a locally funded Household Hazardous Waste Collection in September 2019 for McLean County residents at Rivian Automotive.
- 1,050 cars passed through the event, bringing waste from an estimated 1,680 total households. This was the first HHW event that the EAC required residents to register in advance of the event via a web-based registration system. This led to a significant reduction in wait time for attendees with 1,236 appointments made and only 14 non-appointment attendees showing up to the event.



- 16,242 gallons of household hazardous waste materials were collected for safe disposal, with an additional 17,501 pounds of e-waste collected.
- 79 volunteers put in over 300 hours of work to assist the EAC staff in managing the event.
- Through several months of fundraising, the EAC raised \$34,009 in private contributions, sponsorships, and donations of in-kind services to supplement the \$140,000 in local government funding provided for the event. Semi-final event costs came to \$155,027, leaving approximately \$18,982 dedicated funding for the anticipated 2021 McLean County Household Hazardous Waste Collection.



- Many months of planning on the part of the EAC staff went into this event, including negotiating site with Rivian Automotive, permitting process with the Illinois EPA, researching risk management and liability issues, developing marketing, advertising, site planning, volunteer recruitment, contingency planning, scheduler set-up, sponsorship solicitation, and appointment-setting.

## SPECIAL PROJECT-ILLINOIS PRAIRIE COMMUNITY FOUNDATION GRANT

- In 2018, the EAC applied for and received full funding from the Illinois Prairie Community Foundation Green Endowment for a program titled “Reducing Barriers for Sustainable Recycling.” The program sought to eliminate the economic and perceived barriers reducing residents’ ability to recycle. Barriers in both the Town of Normal and the City of Bloomington were addressed through two separate programs based on the respective municipality’s most significant barriers and needs. In Normal, grant funding was used to purchase household recycling carts for distribution to lower-income households. In Bloomington, grant funding was used to purchase permanent outdoor recycling receptacles for this area of high pedestrian traffic.

- Grant funding ended in May, at which point the EAC assessed how successful the pilot program was in meeting the program's primary goals; to increase the feasibility of recycling for individuals residing in the City of Bloomington and Town of Normal, and eliminate the associated barriers to recycling by expanding the existing infrastructure.
- In Normal, 41 households participated in the program. Over the course of the grant period, households utilized weekly recycling pick up nearly 75% of the time. It was promising to find that around 80% of the households would either throw away unfamiliar items or inquire what to do with them before making a decision.
- In Bloomington, over 3,976 pounds of waste material was diverted from the landfill over the course of the grant period. However, this number only represents that collected in the four grant-funded receptacles as part of the initial project. There are 8 total recycling receptacles in downtown Bloomington, 4 from the EAC grant, and 4 sponsored by local recycling and waste haulers. The total amount of material diverted from the landfill for all eight bins is estimated to be closer to 5,964 pounds.



## EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

- **Recycling and Waste Reduction Fourth Grade Presentations:**
  - Heyworth Elementary (3 classes, 82 students)
  - Parkside Elementary (2 classes, 39 students)
  - Calvary Christian Elementary (1 class, 7 students)
  - Cedar Ridge Elementary (4 classes, 88 students)
  - Colene Hoose Elementary (3 classes, 83 students)
  - Carlock Elementary (1 class, 22 students)
  - Epiphany Elementary (1 class, 29 students)
  - St. Mary's Elementary (1 class, 15 students)
  - Glenn Elementary (2 classes, 49 students)
  - Trinity Lutheran Elementary (1 class, 28 students)
  - Ridgeview Elementary (2 classes, 52 students)
  - Fox Creek Elementary (3 classes, 78 students)
  - Benjamin Elementary (4 classes, 104 students)
  - Sugar Creek Elementary (3 classes, 54 students)
  - Lexington Elementary (2 classes, 33 students)
  - Danvers Elementary (2 classes, 34 students)

- Oakdale Elementary (2 classes, 43 students)
- Oakland Elementary (3 classes, 67 students)
- LeRoy Elementary (3 classes, 65 students)
- Northpoint Elementary (3 classes, 84 students)
- Hudson Elementary (2 classes, 56 students)
- Grove Elementary (4 classes, 97 students)

**2019: 22 Total schools; Total classrooms 52; people: 1,209**

- **Other K-12 School Activities:**

- Presentation for Epiphany Jr. High students on EAC programs and mission regarding solid waste and recycling (1 class, 33 students)
- Presentation for BJHS Green Team students as part of their training to oversee proper composting and recycling during lunch periods at the junior high (2 classes, 15 students)
- Glenn Elementary Earth Day Clean Up (25 volunteers)
- Composting Program for Children's Home & Aid students (15 attendees)

- **Preschool Presentations:**

- Recycling and Composting Presentation for Mulberry School students on recycling and composting (3 classes, 67 students)
- Composting program at Little Jewels Learning Centers (3 classes, 70 kids total)

- **Scout Activities:**

- Presentation on solid waste and recycling for Corpus Christi 4th grade Girl Scouts (8 students)
- Presentation on recycling and composting for St. Mary's Boy Scouts group (31 attendees)

- **University Programs:**

- Presentation for ISU Alternative Spring Break group on local watersheds and sources of pollution (40 students)
- Presentation to ISU advisors on volunteer opportunities including those through the Solid Waste program (16 attendees)
- ISU Careers Chat on EAC programs including solid waste and recycling (24 interactions)
- Presentation on EAC programs including solid waste and recycling for Heartland Community College class (27 students)

- **Community Solid Waste Reduction Programs and Information Booths:**

- Information table at Girl's World Expo promoting EAC solid waste and clean water programs (51 interactions)
- Info booth at ISU Sustainability Fair promoting EAC general program areas including recycling (26 interactions)

- Info booth at Labor and Street Fair promoting EAC general program areas including recycling (29 interactions)
- Info boot at Green Top Grocery for Stronger Together Event promoting EAC general program areas including solid waste and recycling (15 interactions)
- Info booth at Chamber Twin City Showcase on general program areas including solid waste and recycling (73 interactions)
- Info booth at Sugar Creek Arts Festival promoting EAC general program areas including solid waste and recycling (272 interactions)
- Info booth at the Sweet Corn Circus promoting EAC general program areas including compost and recycling (883 interactions, 9 carts of composting collected)
- Info booth at Bloomington Library How-To Fest promoting composting and recycling (42 interactions)
- Info booth at Festival ISU promoting apartment recycling and new apartment guidelines (110 interactions)
- Info booth at Chamber Non-Profit Showcase on general program areas including solid waste and recycling (15 interactions)
- Info booth at Heartland Community College promoting EAC programs including solid waste and recycling (17 interactions)
- **Library Summer Reading Program at area libraries “Why Should I Recycle?”:**
  - LeRoy Crumbaugh Library (83 attendees)
  - Mt Hope-Funks Grove Library (44 attendees)
  - Town of Normal Library (30 attendees)
  - Carlock Public Library (38 attendees)
  - Heyworth Library (36 attendees)
  - Martin Township (Colfax) Library (7 attendees)
  - Lexington Public Library (32 attendees)
  - Chenoa Public Library (9 attendees)
  - Bloomington Public Library (26 attendees)
- **District 87 Summer Feeding Programs - Information table at program locations promoting recycling and vermicomposting:**
  - Stevenson Elementary (2 visits, 66 interactions)
  - Sheridan Elementary (2 visits, 14 interactions)
  - Irving Elementary (1 visit, 16 interactions)
  - Bent Elementary (2 visits, 10 interactions)

o **Other Programs:**

- o Continued distribution of new standardized recycling flyer with simplified messaging for Town of Normal and City of Bloomington residents, coupled with increased marketing messages and education outreach addressing issues of contamination.
- o Presentation to BHS senior advisory teachers on composting and recycling (29 teachers)
- o Presentation for Mom's Group at St. Pat's Church of Merna on solid waste and recycling (18 attendees)
- o Presentation for Compeer Financial group on EAC general program areas including solid waste and recycling (7 attendees)
- o Presentation for EAT group at Mennonite Residential Community on recycling (28 attendees)
- o Presentation at Luther Oaks on solid waste and recycling (19 attendees)
- o Program for Children's Discovery Museum Explorers Camp on solid waste, pollution and recycling (23 kids)
- o Presentation for women's non-profit group on general program areas including solid waste and recycling (10 attendees)
- o Vermicomposting workshop at the Miller Park Zoo (2 classes, 15 attendees)
- o Compost Bin Workshop (2 bins built, 3 attendees) Compost Bin Workshop (5 bins built, 5 attendees), Composting Workshop (5 attendees, \_\_ bins built)
- o Presentation on recycling for Miller Park Senior Adult Group (13 attendees)
- o Presentation on recycling and composting for District 87 Food Service Staff (55 attendees)
- o Presentation on recycling for local Kiwanis Club chapter (47 attendees)
- o Presentation on recycling and reuse activities for BCAI Summer Arts Exposure Camp (13 attendees)
- o Presentation on recycling and reuse activities for Ixcell Students' Summer Camp (46 attendees)
- o Presentation on recycling for Sunrise Rotary Club (21 attendees)
- o Presentation on recycling for senior group at Lincoln Leisure Center (8 attendees)
- o Presentation on EAC programs including solid waste and recycling for McLean County Leadership group (27 attendees)



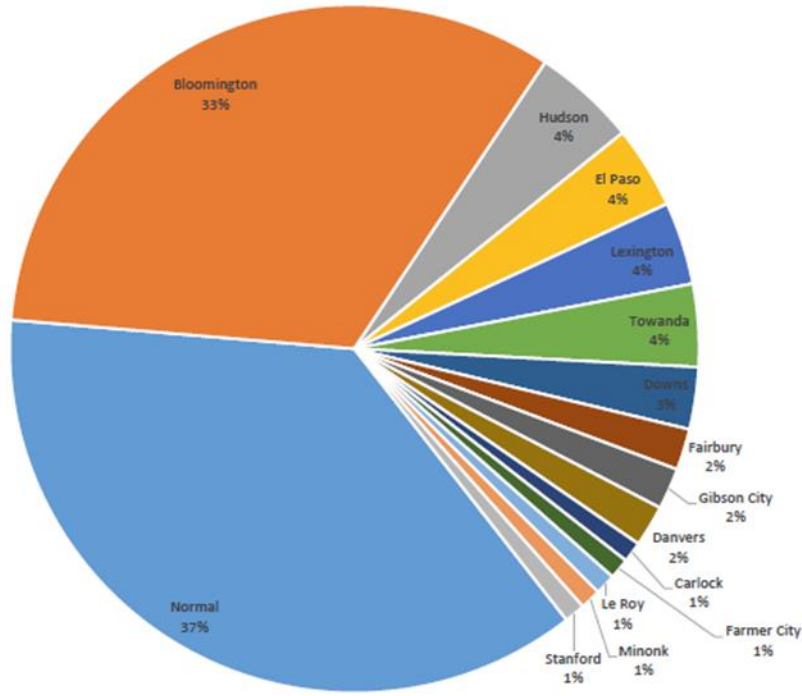


## OTHER ACTIVITIES

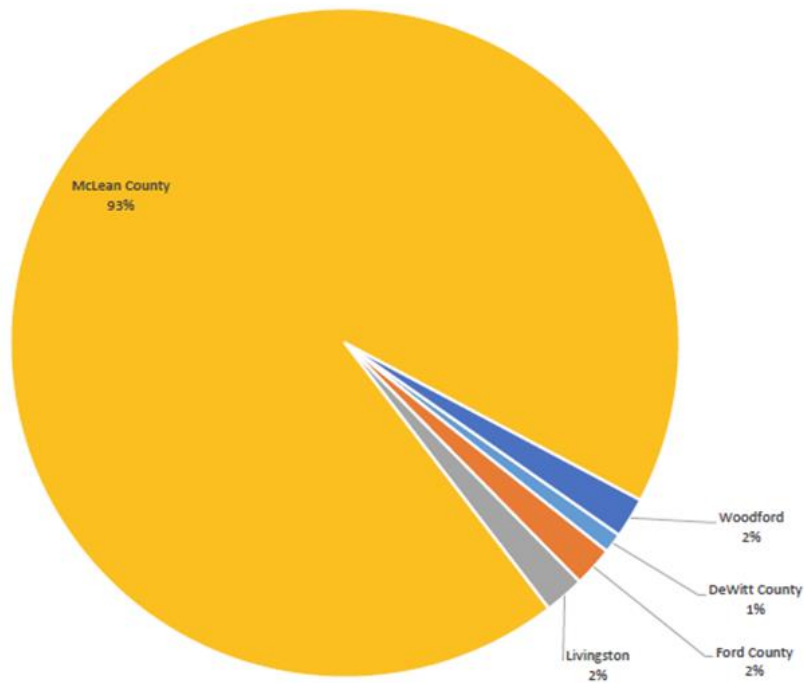
- Coordinated recycling and composting services during breakfast and lunch at the Home, Lawn & Garden Day annual event (6 volunteers).
- Worked with District 87 staff to conduct composting and recycling training for BJHS Green Team students to help oversee proper composting and recycling during the lunch periods. This training was also provided to senior advisory teachers at the high school.
- Developed educational materials for Town of Normal apartment managers to assist with the implementation of multi-family housing recycling. EAC staff also conducted outreach and surveying of recycling at apartments to document and record contamination rates among sites.
- Coordinated annual Constitution Trail and Sugar Creek clean up event in April, removing trash from a 1.6-mile stretch of Sugar Creek from Tipton Park to Audubon Gardens. One hundred citizens volunteered with this effort and helped collect 1,000 pounds (1/2 ton) of trash.
- Assisted NCHS Computer Science cohort student group on the development of their project aiming to encourage and increase recycling in McLean County.
- EAC facilitated composting of corn cobs and other waste at the Sweet Corn Blues Festival. Nearly one ton of compostable material was collected for proper recycling. (883 interactions)
- Coordinated large-scale recycling initiative at the twentieth annual Brügala Beer Festival at the Normal Corn Crib in partnership with the Bloomington-Normal Jaycees for the second year in a row. Twenty-five volunteers and five EAC staff members worked over the two-day event and diverted 3,962 total pounds of recyclable material from the landfill.
- Surveyed users of recycling drop-off receptacles located throughout the Town of Normal to better understand the population utilizing the bins. Survey data represents recycling behaviors and serves as an indicator of how well the community's needs are being met in increased outreach for recycling.



Recycling Dropbox Users By Municipality



Recycling Dropbox Users by County of Residence



- Debuted new compost barrel model at compost workshop in celebration of America Recycles Day with 5 people in attendance. The new barrel is made from a durable, 55-gallon drum that is convenient for composting and transportation. The EAC plans to bring back this model for workshops in 2020, in addition to a new composting video presentation to accompany the workshops.
- Conducted outreach to identify all multi-family housing locations in the Town of Normal and corresponding recycling providers, as all multi-family housing landlords are required by ordinance to provide onsite recycling in Normal. Information will be used to update our RecycleCoach app with more accurate, geographic-specific recycling information to McLean County residents.
- Celebrated America Recycles Day during the week of November 15 by encouraging residents to #recyclesmarternother and help reduce contamination through a social media campaign. Answers to common recycling questions were shared each day through social media platforms. Followers were asked to help inspire others to #recyclesmarternother by sharing the posts. With the help of community members, this information reached over 16,000 people.
- Education Coordinator attended annual Illinois Counties Solid Waste Management Association Conference in Springfield, Illinois.
- Produced three quarterly EAC paper newsletters featuring solid waste issues among other topics. Mailed to approximately 259 households each issue and made available as free download on the EAC website.
- Sent monthly issues of the EAC Action News email newsletters to over 860 email addresses on average to promote general recycling and waste reduction.
- Promoted waste reduction, recycling, composting and proper disposal of household hazardous wastes through social media. EAC posted messages on its Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and YouTube accounts on solid waste topics, with a resulting 202,952 interactions.
- Answered 1,560 phone calls and other inquiries about the disposal of household hazardous waste and recycling.
- Received 59,709 visits to solid waste, recycling, and hazardous waste related pages within EAC's website.
- Promotion and oversight of Recycle Coach, a web and mobile based app that serves as an educational resource for McLean County residents with questions regarding local recycling programs and waste collection services. 15,536 total users, and over 94,466 interactions.
- Administration and promotion of McFreeCycle, a free listserv on the internet for the free exchange of materials in McLean County to avoid disposal of useable items. 1,996 current members with an average of 44 messages exchanged monthly. While membership continues to increase, usage of the service is declining. This is likely due to redundant "free items" services now available as a part of social media platforms like Facebook and Nextdoor.com.
- Radio Outreach:
  - EAC staff was interviewed on WJBC about new quick and easy recycling guidelines for McLean County residents
  - EAC staff was interviewed on WJBC about the current status of recycling in McLean County including updates on glass recycling

- EAC staff was interviewed on WBNQ and B104 about Earth Day, Constitution Trail Clean Up Event, recycling and HHW
- Radio and newspaper promotions included promotions of “RecycleCoach” recycling information application, anti-contamination messages, and heavy marketing of the September Household Hazardous Waste collection. Several local media channels were utilized to reach more diverse audiences in Bloomington Normal.