

MCLEAN COUNTY SOLID WASTE PROGRAM 2022 ANNUAL REPORT



THE ECOLOGY ACTION CENTER HAS COMPLETED THE FOLLOWING ITEMS IN FULFILLMENT OF THE SOLID WASTE AND WASTE REDUCTION EDUCATION PROGRAM AGREEMENT OF JANUARY 1, 2020.

LEADING INDICATORS: SUMMARY OF PROGRESS¹

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 to date: EAC delivered our 4th grade recycling program to 63 in-person classroom visits, with 1,287 students presented to. This represents 72% of classrooms which exceeds our annual goal.²

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: EAC delivered recycling and waste reduction programs to three local libraries, reaching 34 individuals. This represents about 21% of our annual goal.³ This could be due to many reasons including the seen decrease of events during the pandemic. The EAC expects rates to be back up as more libraries are moving to in-person programs.

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.⁴

- ☐ Year to date: 13 programs, presented to 266 people, representing 52% of our goal. The EAC not reaching this goal could be due to many reasons including multiple staffing changes and onboarding's and the seen decrease of events during the pandemic. The EAC expects rates to be back up as there are more staff available and trained to lead these programs.

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.

- ☑ Year to date: Our year to date total interactions from social media is 73,048, surpassing our annual goal by 243%.

**2022 TOTAL REACH:
126,230 INTERACTIONS**
DIRECT (PROGRAMS, EVENTS, PHONE INQUIRIES): 3,635
MEDIA (NEWSPAPER, RADIO, SOCIAL MEDIA, WEB): 122,595

¹ The totals below represent Year-To-Date numbers. Specific details of this year's activities follow in other sections of this report.

² There are 86 Fourth grade classrooms in McLean County, which includes all public and private schools. Seven schools, representing 16 classrooms have historically declined the program invitations.

³ There are currently 14 local libraries in McLean County.

⁴ In practice, the EAC provides these programs for nearly 100% of those requesting the services.

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.

- Year to date: The year to date total of visits to our online resources is 36,687 visits, which exceeds our annual goal by 306%.

COUNTY WASTE GENERATION & RECYCLING RATE

McLean County's recycle rate increased slightly by 1.6% after seeing a decline during 2020. The Ecology Action Center's annual calculation of community-wide waste generation and recycling shows that the County reached a recycling rate of 43.8% in 2021. The county is still making progress towards its recycling rate goal of 50% set in the 20-year solid waste management plan. Some categories of recyclable materials saw significant fluctuations from the year prior due to various reasons including the Covid 19 pandemic, economic growth, large manufacturing facilities and powerful storms.

As the economy grew so did the overall waste generated in McLean County, however the amount of waste recycled also saw significant increase. Hard to recycle items that require drop off at a retail or specialized location increased most likely due to COVID-19 restrictions lifting. For example, fluorescent lighting, bulbs that contain a small amount of mercury and require specialized handling and disposal, rose significantly in 2021 vs 2020. Another cause for the increased rate can be due to recent industrial growth in our community and their related materials such as aluminum and batteries. Given the size of some of these manufactures the output is enough to sway the overall rate. January of 2021 saw a major ice storm causing widespread damage and in return the amount of brush collected and recycled increased nearly 95%. This increase caused the overall rate of organic recycling to rise significantly.

McLean County Waste Generation and Recycling Rates: 2016-2021

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Total MSW Recycled (tons)	83,335	88,459	94,804	88,330	76,487	82,182
Total MSW Landfilled (tons)	120,815	124,364	109,467	104,772	104,919	105,442
Total Municipal Solid Waste Generated (tons)	204,150	211,230	204,271	193,102	181,406	187,624
Recycling Rate	40.8%	41.9%	46.4%	45.7%	42.2%	43.8%

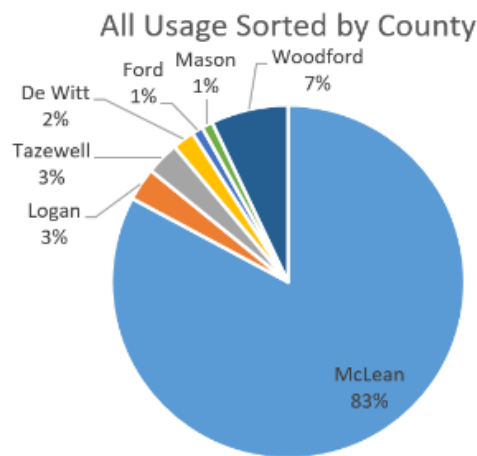
DROPBOX USER SURVEY

The general public may drop off sorted recyclable glass, metal, and plastic containers, as well as paper and cardboard, at four recycling drop box locations in Normal, IL. Funding to maintain these locations is provided by intergovernmental agreement between the City of Bloomington, the Town of Normal, and McLean County, and recyclables are collected and processed by Midwest Fiber. The Ecology Action Center periodically collects information from users of these

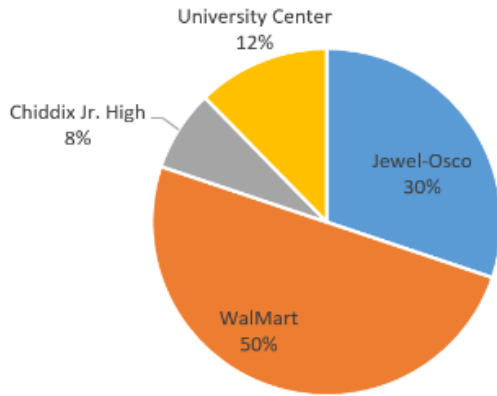
drop boxes in order to inform decisions regarding the drop box program, and to aid the Ecology Action Center and other McLean County stakeholders in achieving goals articulated in the 20-year Solid Waste Plan.

One hundred drop box users responded to the 2021 survey, with about half utilizing the Wal Mart location and about one third utilizing the Jewel-Osco location. Most users (90%) were over 40 years of age, and the majority (77%) visit the drop boxes once a week to once a month, with about one fourth of users visiting more or less frequently. For most drop box users, the primary reason for visiting the location was to drop off residential recycling; about 13% visit the drop boxes secondary to other errands, and about 15% drop off non-residential recycling. While users visited the drop boxes throughout the duration of the survey, variations in the number of users per hour depended on location and time of day.

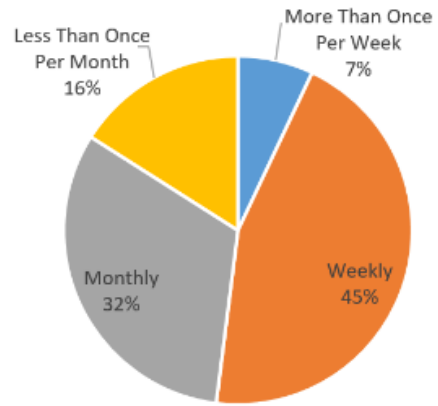
Dropbox visitors represented 28 different zip codes, including 13 other municipalities within McLean County, and 6 other counties. Of the users surveyed, 83% reside in McLean County. Dropbox usage among McLean County residents approaches an even split between residents of Bloomington (incorporated) (36%), Normal (incorporated) (29%), and those residing outside incorporated areas of Bloomington-Normal (35%). This is surprising, as only 23% of McLean County residents live outside incorporated areas of Bloomington-Normal. In addition, drop box usage among residents outside incorporated areas of Bloomington-Normal appears to have increased over time. This increasing and disproportionate drop box usage by McLean County residents who live outside incorporated areas of Bloomington-Normal, despite the fact that a greater investment in travel time and fuel may be required to access the drop boxes, warrants further consideration.



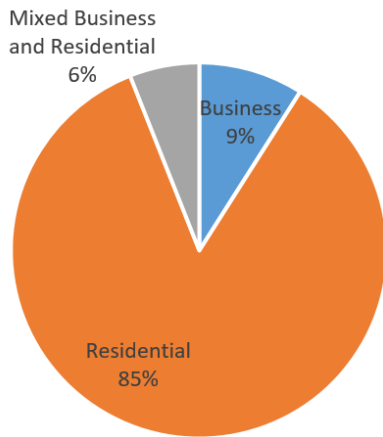
Location



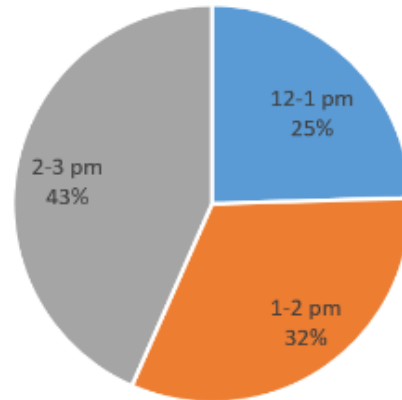
Frequency of Visits



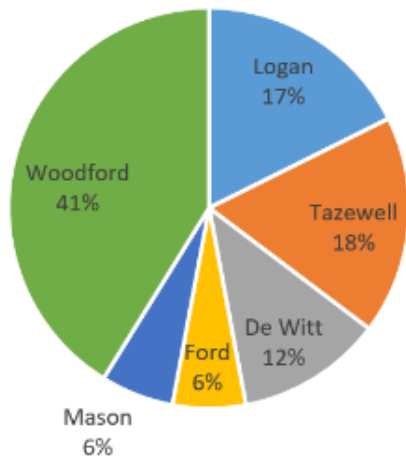
Material Source



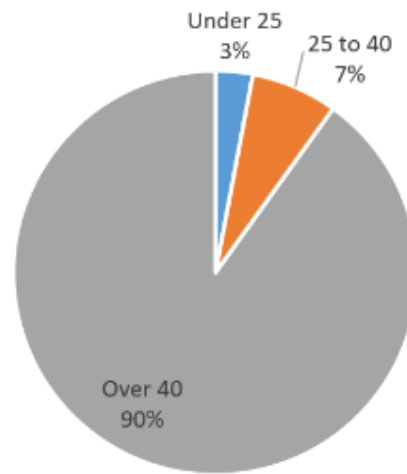
Time of Day



Usage from Outside McLean County



Age Range

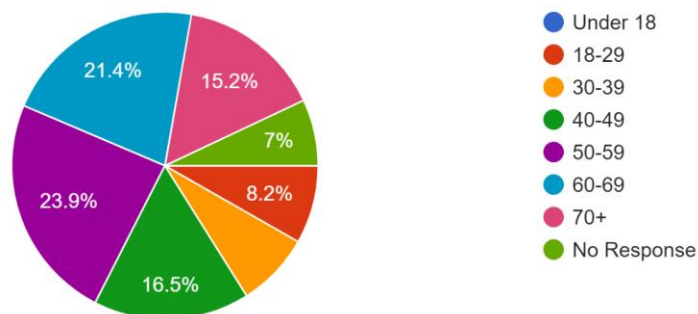


Stevenson Center Drop Box Survey:

The Stevenson Center's Sociology 477 graduate class conducted a social survey of drop box usage and barriers to recycling. The purpose of the study was to measure the barriers to recycling that McLean County residents experience. Through preliminary research, the research team selected four commonly occurring barriers to recycling: physical barriers, attitudinal barriers, behavioral barriers, and knowledge barriers. Each barrier category was represented by three questions in the survey, for a total of 12 questions. Answers ranged from extremely likely to extremely unlikely, and strongly agree to strongly disagree. To calculate the barrier that respondents experienced the most, the team awarded points to each answer.

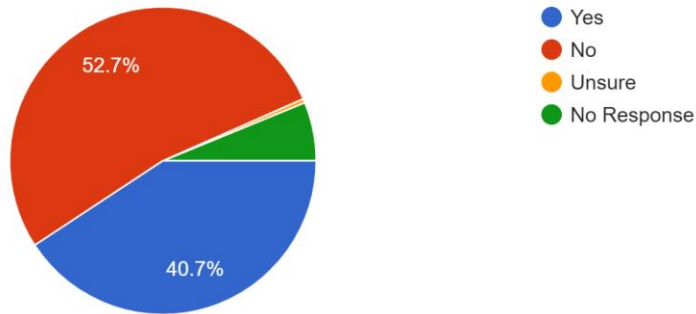
Which of these best represents your age range?

243 responses



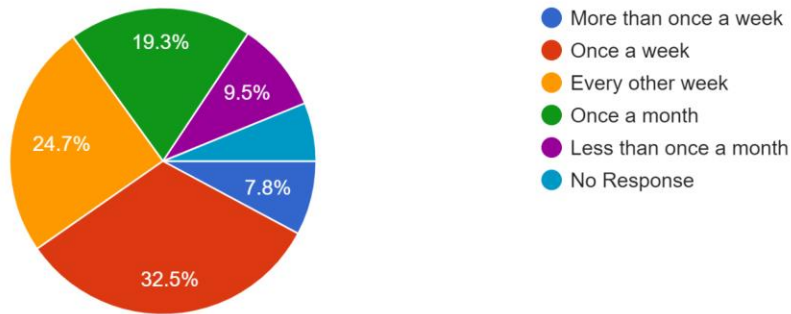
Do you have recycling collection at your home?

243 responses



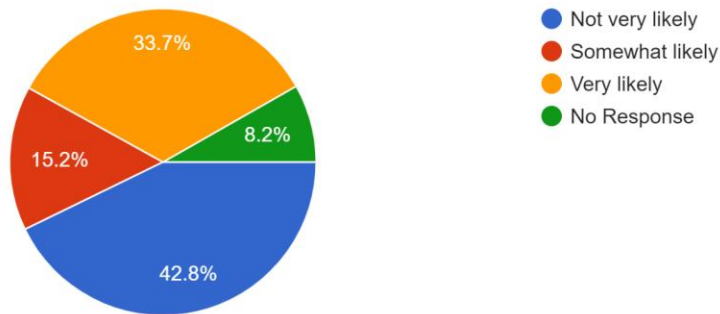
In an AVERAGE month how often do you use the recycling drop box?

243 responses



How likely are you to recycle if the DropBoxes weren't available in Bloomington-Normal?

243 responses



SOLID WASTE COORDINATOR ACTIVITIES

- Surveyed area waste haulers, recyclers, municipalities and institutions to compile relevant data for the 2021 Waste Generation and Recycling Rate for McLean County
- Ongoing updates to the online Recycle Coach application for comprehensive recycling which saw 12,062 users and 398,459 total interactions during 2022
- Authored a request for proposals for a feasibility study for a permanent hazardous waste facility. Evaluated proposals and made a selection.
- Began the five-year update to our Twenty-Year Materials Recovery and Resource Management Plan for McLean County, Bloomington and Normal, IL
- Hosted and attended Solid Waste Management Advisory Committee meeting
- Extensive planning in preparation for fall 2022 McLean County Household Hazardous Waste Collection in partnership with Illinois Environmental Protection Agency.
- Coordinated the siting review process for two new Pollution Control Facilities in McLean County
- Attended annual ILCSWMA conference at Starved Rock State Park
- Attended various webinars discussing compostable plastics, chemical recycling, plastics recycling, consumer electronics recycling act and funded recycling tools
- Submitted two grant proposals for Recycling Education and Outreach and Solid Waste Planning
- Answered 492 phone calls and other inquiries about the disposal of household hazardous waste and recycling.
- Received 36,687 visits to solid waste, recycling, and hazardous waste related pages within EAC's website.
- Promoted waste reduction, recycling, composting and proper disposal of household hazardous wastes through social media. EAC posted messages on its social media accounts (Facebook, Twitter, etc.) on solid waste topics, with a resulting 73,048 interactions.

EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

Fourth Grade Recycling and Waste Reduction Education Programs

- Normal
 - Grove Elementary School (3 classrooms, 81 students)
 - Epiphany Catholic School (26 students)
 - Metcalf Elementary School (2 classrooms, 50 students)
 - Glenn Elementary School (26 students)
 - Parkside Elementary School (2 classrooms, 38 students)
 - Sugar Creek Elementary School (2 classrooms, 27 students)
- Bloomington

- Washington Elementary School (3 classrooms, 60 students)
- Cedar Ridge Elementary School (3 classrooms, 70 students)
- Oakland Elementary School (3 classrooms, 78 students)
- Pepper Ridge Elementary School (21 students)
- Northpoint Elementary School (3 classrooms, 66 students)
- Bent Elementary School (3 classrooms, 53 students)
- Stevenson Elementary School (3 classrooms, 51 students)
- Benjamin Elementary School (4 classrooms, 96 students)
- Cornerstone Christi (2 classrooms, 32 students)
- Fox Creek Elementary School (1 classroom, 29 students)
- McLean County
 - Heyworth Elementary School (3 classrooms, 69 students)
 - LeRoy Elementary School (3 classrooms, 55 students)
 - Ridgeview Elementary School (2 classrooms, 30 students)
 - Towanda Elementary School (2 classrooms, 32 students)
 - Olympia North Elementary School (2 classrooms, 45 students)
 - Carlock Elementary School (15 students)
 - Hudson Elementary School (2 classrooms, 50 students)
 - Tri-Valley Middle School (4 classrooms, 72 students)

Summer Library Program

- Presented summer reading programs, specifically focused on waste reduction and recycling education, at three local libraries.
 - Normal Public Library (10 attendees)
 - Danvers Public Library (21 attendees)
 - Carlock Public Library (3 attendees)

Other K-12 activities

- Gave the fourth grade recycling and waste reduction education program to 6 homeschool students whose ages ranged from 1st grade to 5th grade.
- Presented recycling and waste reduction programs to two summer schools/summer camps, reaching 34 students.
 - D87 summer school (10 students)
 - WACC summer camp (24 students)

Preschool presentation

- Presented a composting program to 60 preschoolers at Metcalf Preschool focusing on what can and cannot go in their classroom's vermicomposting bin.

Scouting Activities

- Presented to 28 Girl Scouts aged 4th to 8th grade about reducing packaging and proper recycling at the annual STEMinar event.

- Presented to 5 middle school and high school aged Girl Scouts about proper recycling in McLean County.

University programs

- Presented to Heartland Community College's Sustainability and Renewable Energy class, consisting of 11 students and one instructor, about the EAC's solid waste programing.

Workshops

- Presented a backyard composting workshop to 7 people which provided information on how composting helps divert waste from landfills and reduce methane release. After the workshop, participants took home a custom-built 55-gallon compost bin.

Live Facebook EAQ

- Presented live Facebook EAQs presentations regarding:
 - Recycling guidelines focused on plastic recycling
 - Holiday recycling focusing on proper post-holiday disposal
 - Pharmaceutical donation in relation to new Illinois legislation
 - Compostable Products
 - Community Composting Program

Community Solid Waste Reduction Programs and Information Booths

- Discussed recycling information with 8 residents at the Bobzby First Fridays.
- Discussed recycling information with 10 residents at the McLean County Chamber Nonprofit Showcase.
- Collected an estimated 3,760 pounds of food waste to be composted at the Sweet Corn Circus.
- Discussed recycling information with 16 residents at the Nature Trail days at Sugar Grove Nature Center.
- Discussed recycling information with 18 residents at the Glorious Garden Festival.
- Presented to 14 residents about current solid waste management efforts at the Interfaith Green Team Meeting.
- Presented to 30 city managers from around IL about how the EAC assists the municipalities in reaching and going beyond solid waste mandates.
- Presented to 25 attendees from Project Oz about recycling information.
- Presented to 12 attendees from the First United Methodist Church about recycling information.
- Presented to 17 attendees from the local chapter of the Philanthropic Educational Organization about recycling.

MARKETING & OTHER ACTIVITIES

- Radio Promotions:
 - Interviewed with WJBC twice to a total of 2,000 listeners about the HHW event.
 - Interviewed with WGLT to a total of 1,000 listeners about holiday recycling.
- Newsletters:

- Produced three quarterly EAC paper newsletters featuring solid waste issues among other topics. Mailed to approximately 280 households each issue and made available as free download on the EAC website.
- Sent monthly issues of the EAC Action News email newsletters to 1,499 email addresses to promote general recycling and waste reduction.
- Sent a New Year's Resolutions email newsletter to 1,489 email addresses to promote better recycling and proper waste disposal in 2023.
- 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.

MCLEAN COUNTY HOUSEHOLD HAZARDOUS WASTE COLLECTION

Due to circumstances beyond our control, the Fall 2022 McLean County Household Hazardous Waste Collection event was cancelled by the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency. Heritage Environmental, the hazardous materials contractor for the Illinois EPA, stopped accepting materials due to a fire at their processing facility. This issue impacted all fall hazardous waste collections in the entire state of Illinois as well as the five permanent Household Hazardous Waste Collection facilities in Illinois. Despite our best efforts to find a new contractor, this event ultimately had to be cancelled.

- Sent cancellation notices to 764 participants who signed up for the Hazardous Waste Collection event, including sending 8 hard copy notices to individuals without an email address
- Educated public on the reasoning for the cancellation through an article in the Pantagraph, an interview with WGLT, and interviews with CI Proud local news station. Urged participants to wait until next year when collection events are anticipated to resume