

2023 Drop Box Recycling Survey Report



Prepared by the



The Town of Normal hosts four residential dropbox recycling locations throughout the Bloomington-Normal community. These locations exist to improve the access to recycling and are funded through an intergovernmental agreement between the Town of Normal, City of Bloomington, and McLean County. Recyclables are collected and processed by local material recovery facility, Midwest Fiber. Each dropbox is located outdoors and consists of three to four large roll-off dumpsters that accept sorted recyclable metal, glass, plastic, cardboard, and paper. The Ecology Action Center periodically surveys users of the dropbox recycling program to better understand their use and to make informed decisions regarding the program. The four recycling dropbox locations are located at the Walmart on Greenbriar, the Jewel Osco on Cottage, Heartland Community College, and the Crossroads Center.

Two hundred and sixty-seven users responded to the 2023 survey. Walmart continues to be the most utilized location with 69% of 2023 users recycling at that location. Users over the age of 40 continue to make up the largest age group with 76% of total users falling into that category. More than half (63%) of users were multitasking by running other errands and nearly all (90%) of the material being recycled came from a residential source while 7% came from a business and 3% came from both. 55% of dropbox users stated that they also have curbside recycling collection where they live and 73% of those users utilize that service in addition to the dropboxes.

Dropbox visitors represented 31 municipalities from 7 different counties. McLean County represents 86% of all users. Within McLean County, the Town of Normal represents 37% of users, the City of Bloomington represents 28%, and the remaining 37% come from other municipalities within McLean County including unincorporated areas of Bloomington-Normal. The top municipalities within McLean County outside of Bloomington-Normal using the recycling dropboxes are Hudson (13%), Carlock (11%), LeRoy (11%), and Lexington (11%). Most users visit the sites for recycling one a week or twice a month (27% for both) and 24% visit once a month.

Survey

The 2023 Dropbox Survey was conducted over one week in October (10/16-10/21) during different time slots each day. During the week, volunteers and EAC staff surveyed from 4pm-6pm on Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday and 9am-12pm on Wednesday and Friday. On Monday and Tuesday only one pair of volunteers were available leaving Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday the only days that all four sites were surveyed at the same time. The "Dropbox Usage by Location" data was accurately analyzed from these three days only. On Saturday, a pair of volunteers surveyed from 8am-11am at one location.

Volunteers met at the EAC prior to their shift time and received a brief training on administering the survey. The survey was created using Google Forms and each volunteer used their cell phone to access the survey. As the form was completed the responses were automatically uploaded and was later downloaded to a spreadsheet and analyzed.

Data

The date and time of day were automatically recorded by the Google form. Volunteers then recorded which location they were at and preceded to ask the following questions:

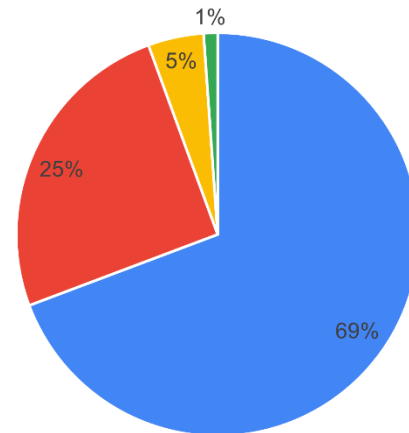
1. What is your zip code?
2. Do you have curbside recycling where you live?
3. If so, do you utilize that in addition to this drop-off?
4. Does the waste you're recycling today come from a home, a business, or both?
5. Are you here strictly to drop-off waste or are you multitasking by running other errands?
6. What is your age group? Under 18, 18-24, 25-40, over 41, prefer not to say
7. How often do you use this dropbox for your recycling? Once a week, twice a week, once a month, twice a month, other

Results

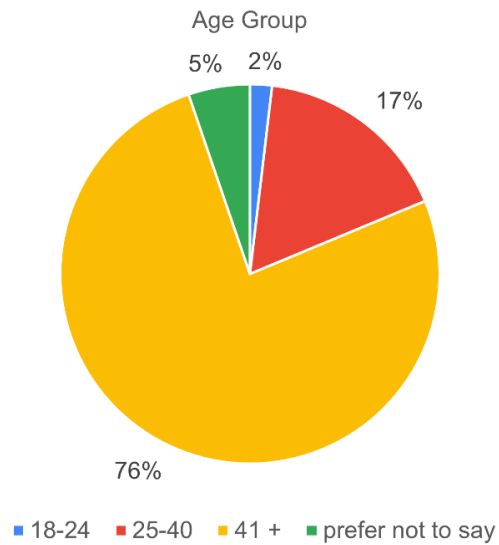
Dropbox Usage by Location (only data from the 3 days that all 4 sites were surveyed at the same time was used)

- Walmart - 124 visits
- Jewel Osco - 45 visits
- Heartland - 8 visits
- Crossroads - 2 visits

Dropbox Usage by Location



■ Walmart ■ Jewel Osco ■ Heartland ■ Crossroads



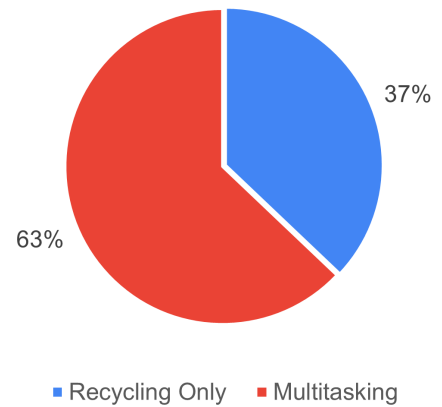
Dropbox Usage by Age Group

- 18-24 - 5 users
- 25-40 - 45 users
- 41+ - 203 users
- Prefer not to say - 14 users

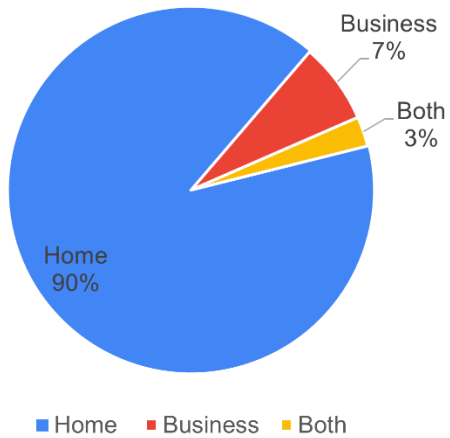
Dropbox Usage Multitasking vs Recycling Only

- Recycling Only – 99
- Multitasking – 168

Multitasking vs Strictly Recycling



Waste Source



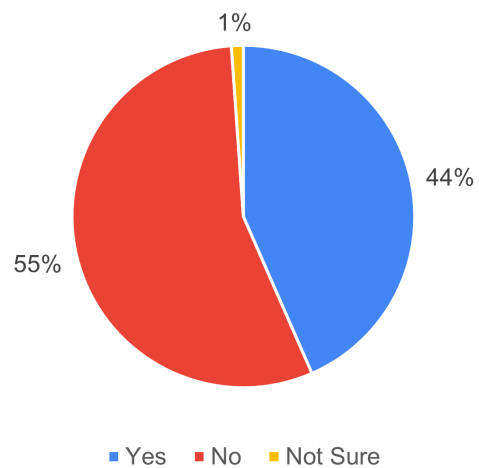
Dropbox Usage by Waste Source

- Home – 239
- Business – 19
- Both – 7
- Unanswered - 2

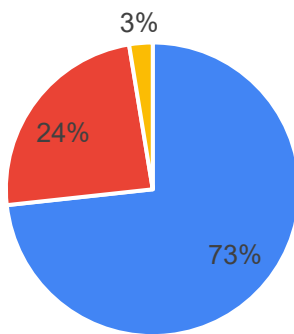
Dropbox Users with Curbside Recycling

- Yes – 116
- No – 148
- Unsure – 3

Curbside Recycling



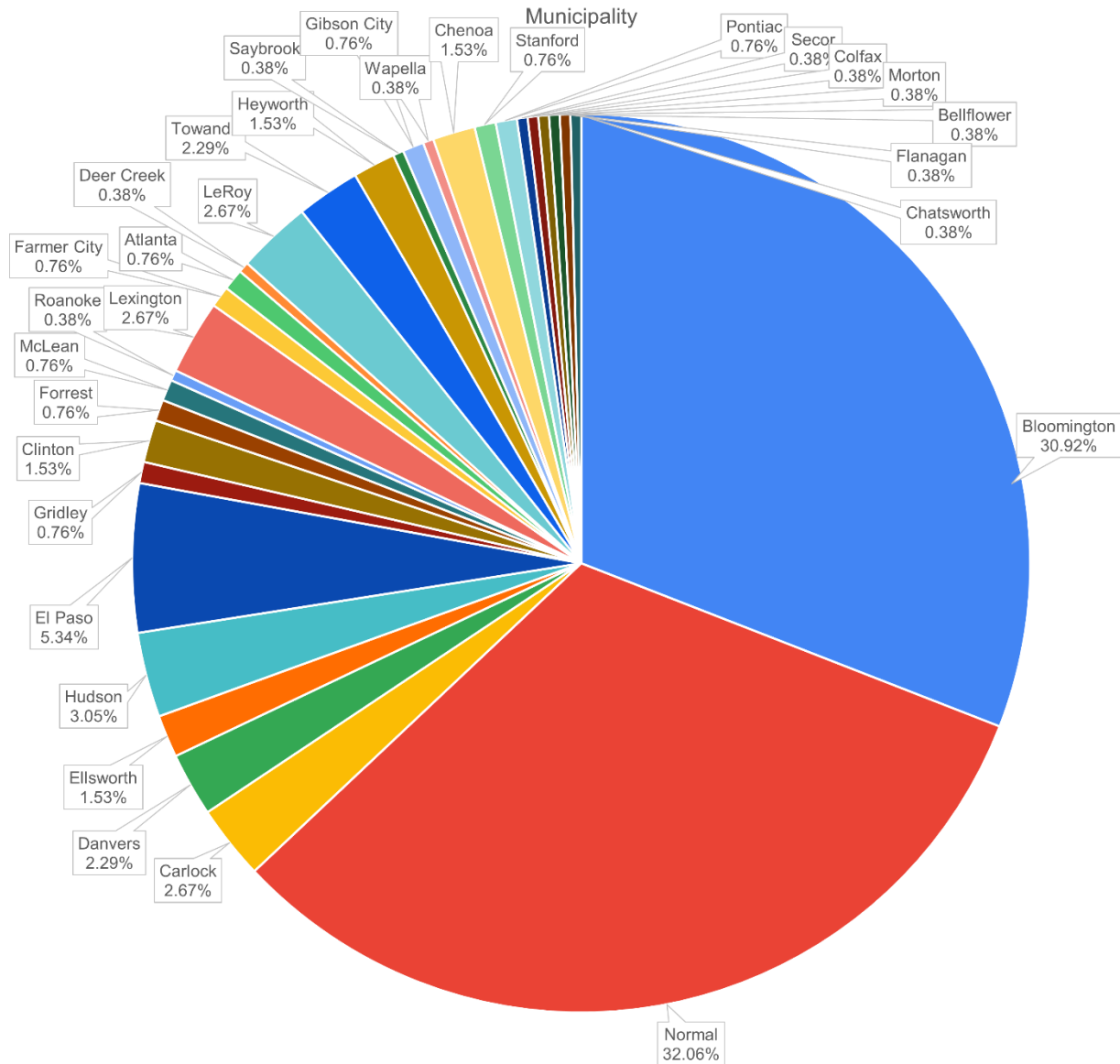
Utilize Curbside



■ Yes ■ No ■ Unanswered

Dropbox Users that Utilize Available Curbside

- Yes – 85
- No – 28
- Unanswered - 3

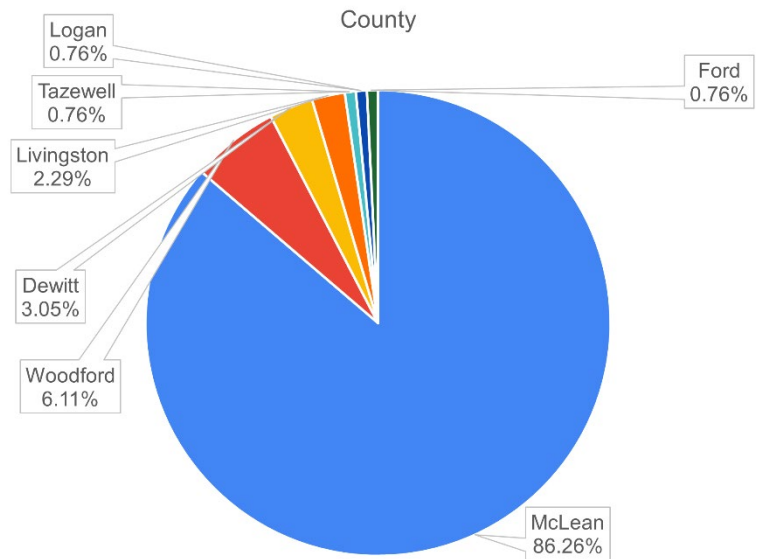


Dropbox Usage by Municipality

- Normal – 84
- Bloomington – 81
- Carlock – 7
- Danvers – 6
- Ellsworth – 4
- Hudson – 8
- El Paso – 14
- Gridley – 2
- Clinton – 4
- Forrest – 2
- McLean – 2
- Roanoke – 1
- Lexington – 7
- Farmer City – 2
- Atlanta – 2
- Deer Creek – 1
- LeRoy – 7
- Towanda – 6
- Heyworth – 4
- Saybrook – 1
- Gibson City – 2
- Wapella – 1
- Chenoa – 4
- Stanford – 2
- Pontiac – 2
- Secor – 1
- Colfax – 1
- Morton – 1
- Bellflower – 1
- Flanagan – 1
- Chatsworth – 1

Dropbox Usage by County

- McLean – 226
- Woodford – 16
- Dewitt – 8
- Livingston – 6
- Tazewell – 2
- Logan – 2
- Ford – 2

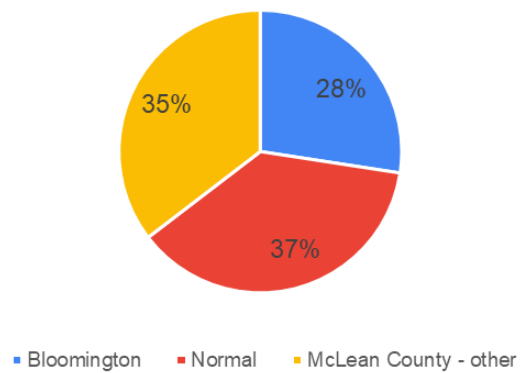


Dropbox Usage by McLean County

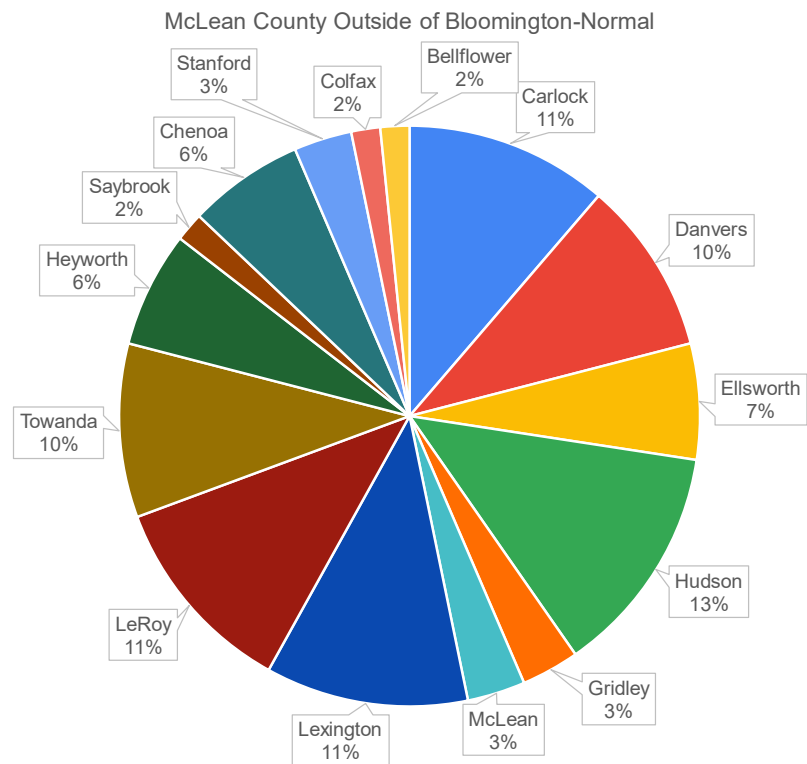
- Incorporated Bloomington – 62
- Incorporated Normal – 84
- McLean County – other – 80*

*this includes unincorporated areas of Bloomington-Normal (zip code 61705) and other McLean County municipalities

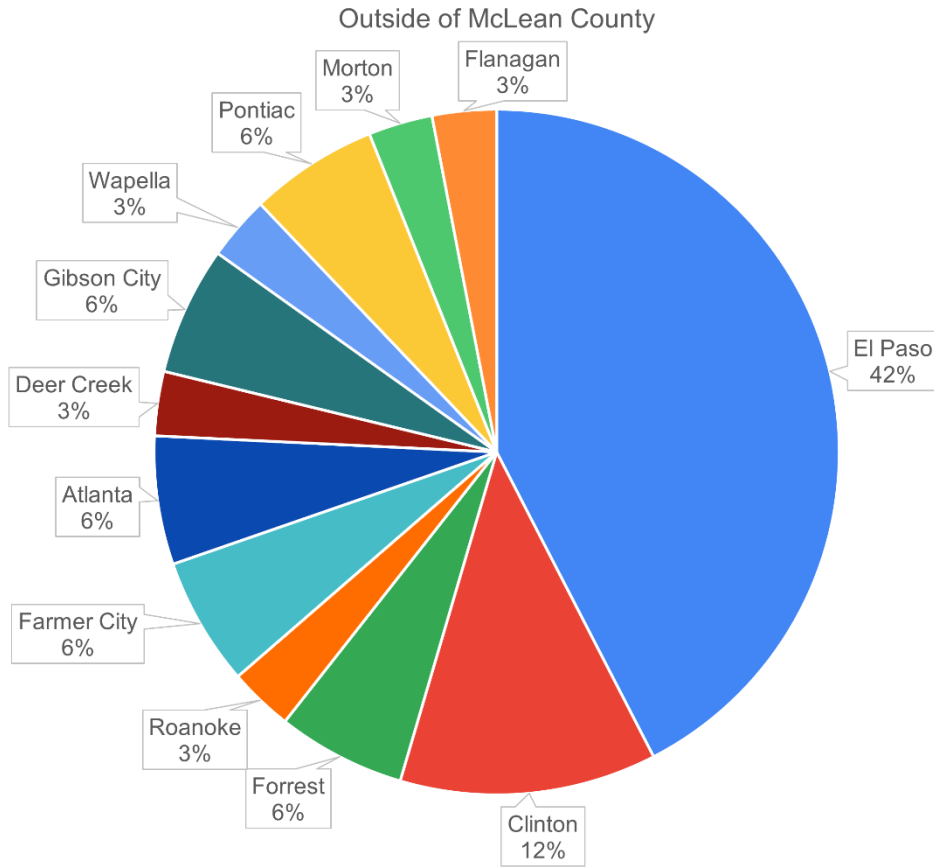
McLean County Usage



Dropbox Usage by McLean County Municipalities Outside of Bloomington Normal

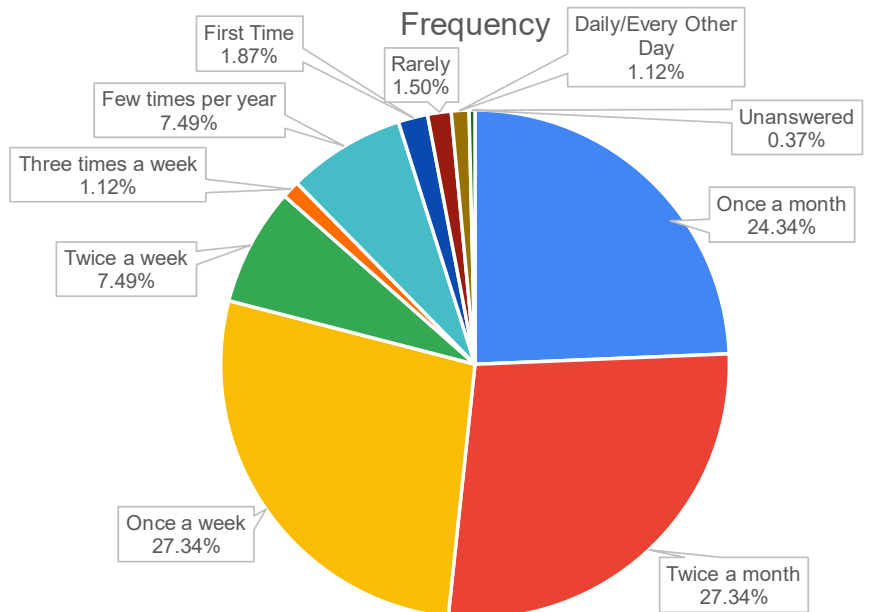


Dropbox Usage by Municipalities Outside of McLean County



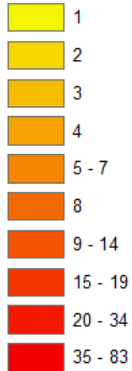
Dropbox Usage by Frequency

- Once a month – 65
- Twice a month – 73
- Once a week – 73
- Twice a week – 20
- Three times a week – 3
- Few times a year – 20
- First time – 5
- Rarely – 4
- Daily or every other day – 3
- Unanswered – 1



Illinois Counties

Count

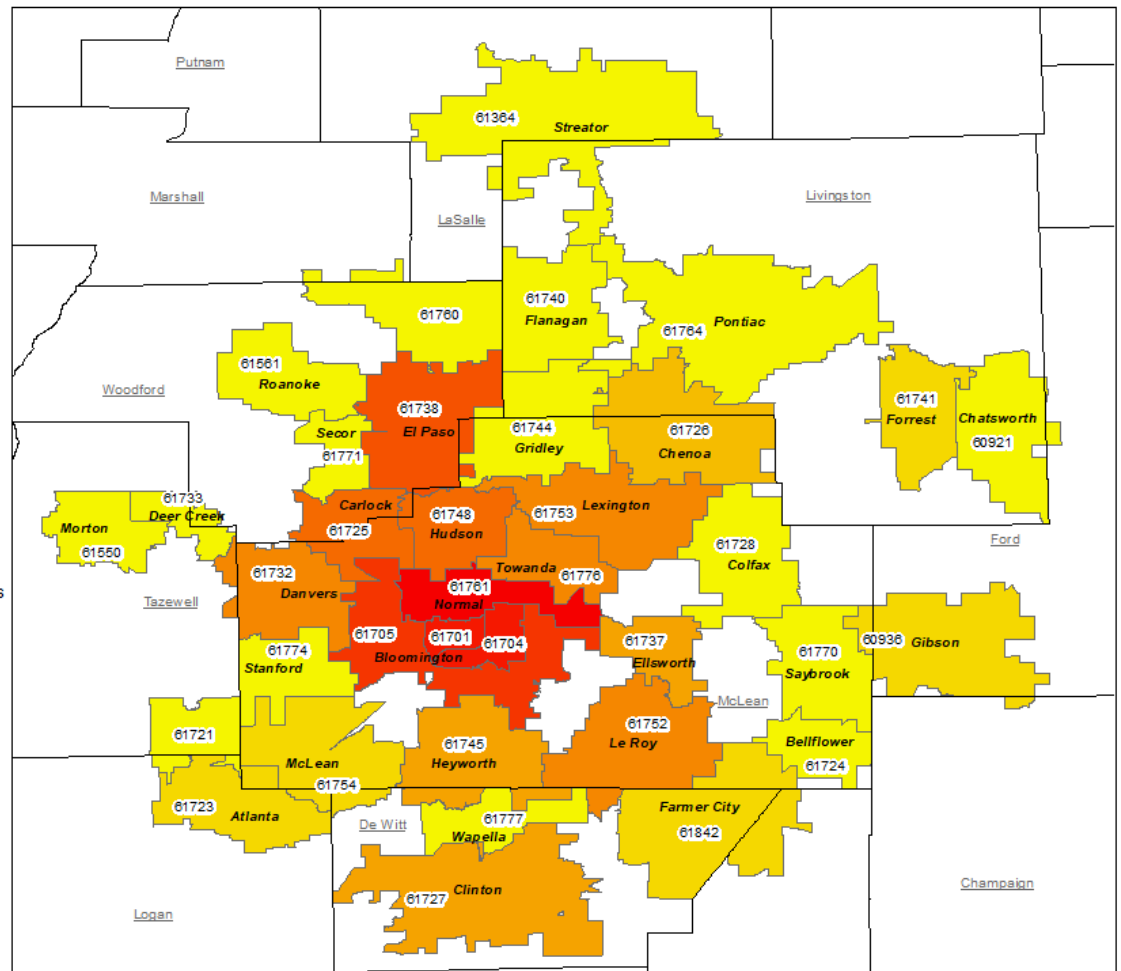


A horizontal number line representing distance in miles. It starts at 0 on the left and ends at 20 Miles on the right. There are major tick marks at 0, 5, 10, and 20. Between these major marks, there are four smaller tick marks, dividing each 5-mile segment into five 1-mile segments. This means there are tick marks every 1 mile from 0 to 20.



ECOLOGY
ACTION CENTER

2023 Dropbox Survey
Data Collected by the
Ecology Action Center in
October, 2023

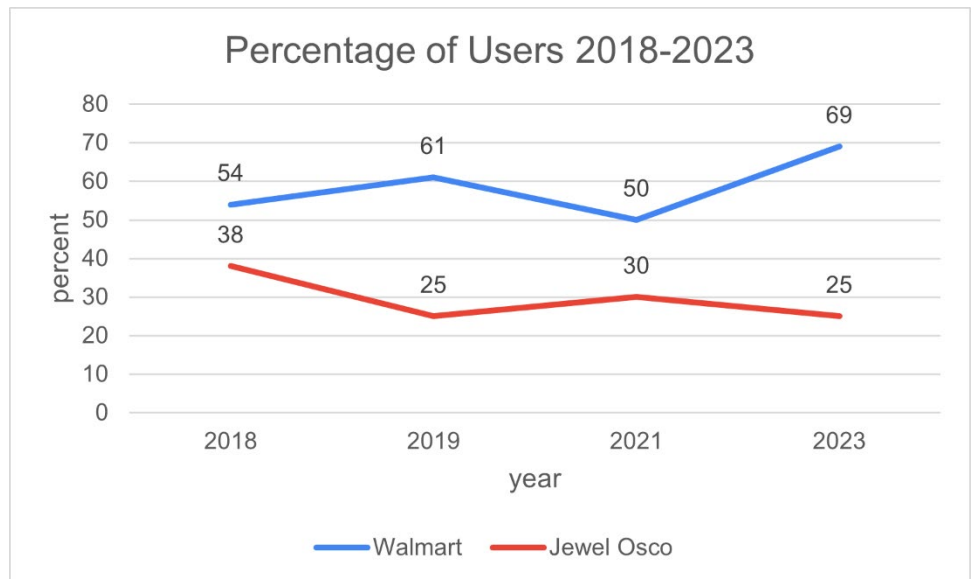


Analysis

The Ecology Action Center previously conducted dropbox surveys in 2018, 2019, and 2021. Comparisons from previous years have been made with available data. Over the years some of the survey questions have been updated and the number of users over the years should also be noted. In 2018, 50 users were surveyed, 2019 had 85 users, 2021 had 100 users, and 2023 had the most users with 267.

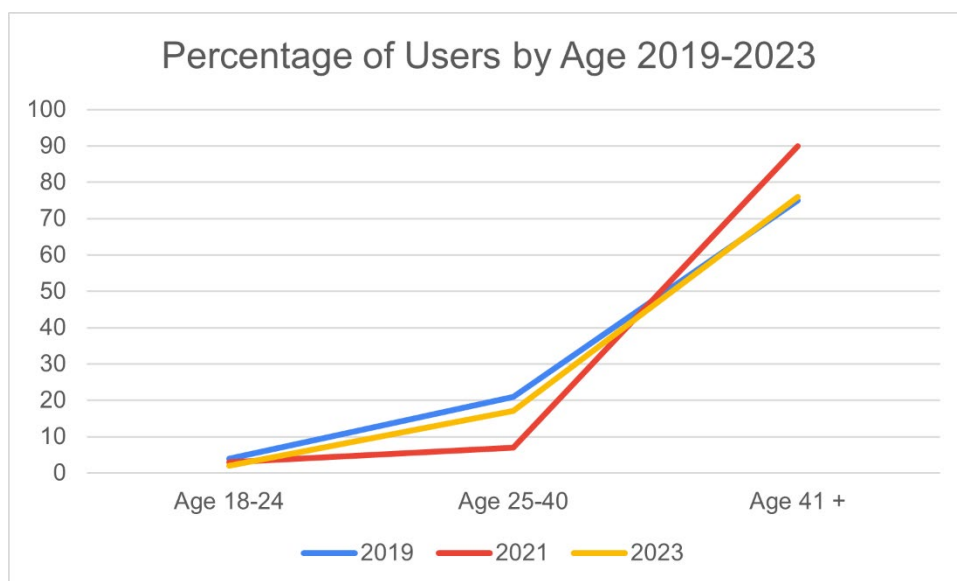
1. Location

Over the years Walmart continues to be the most visited dropbox site followed by Jewel Osco. Since 2018, two of the sites have been relocated so their comparisons are not included here. The University Alumni center was relocated to Heartland Community College in the fall of 2022. In July of 2023, the Chiddix Jr High site was relocated to the Crossroads Center which may account for the low turnout at that location during this year's survey.



2. Age

Dropbox users by age group has remained consistent over the years with users over the age of 40 being the most represented age group. 2018 data did not include age group.

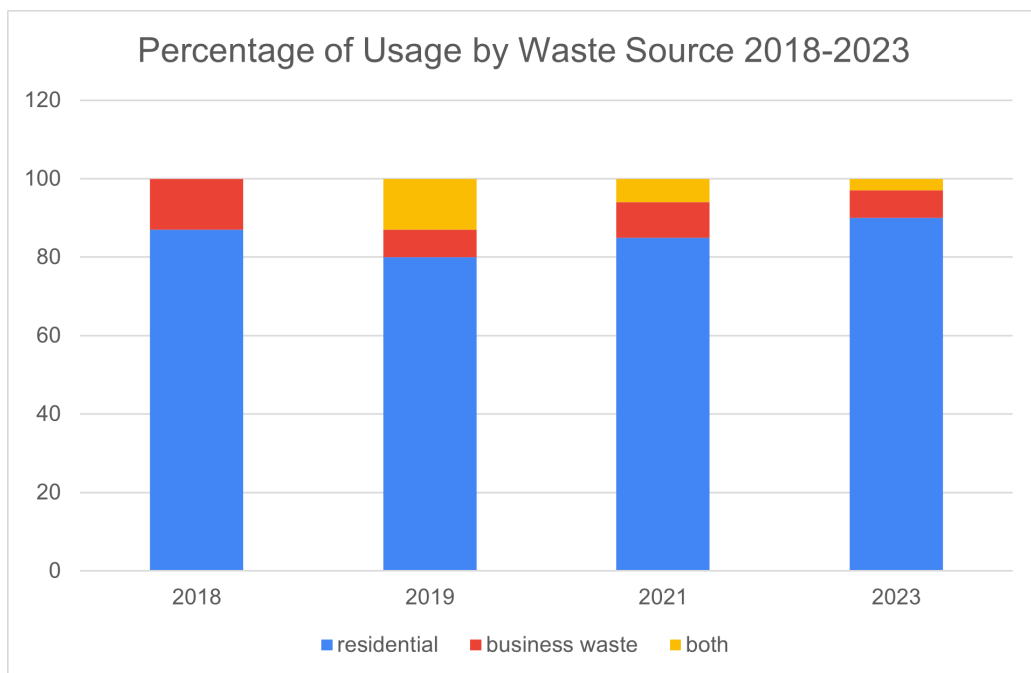


3. Reason for trip

Based on the 2021 Dropbox Survey Report, the “reason for trip” question may have been asked differently over the years. In the past, users were asked if they were there to drop off recycling, go grocery shopping, or complete school related errands. This year, with the relocation of the Chiddix Jr. High dropbox, the question was rephrased to ask simply if the user was “multitasking” or “strictly recycling.” This year, 63% of users were multitasking while 37% were strictly recycling. Since 2018, with the percentage of users continually frequenting the 2 dropbox locations that are located at grocery stores, it can be assumed that most users are multitasking by grocery shopping while dropping off their recycling.

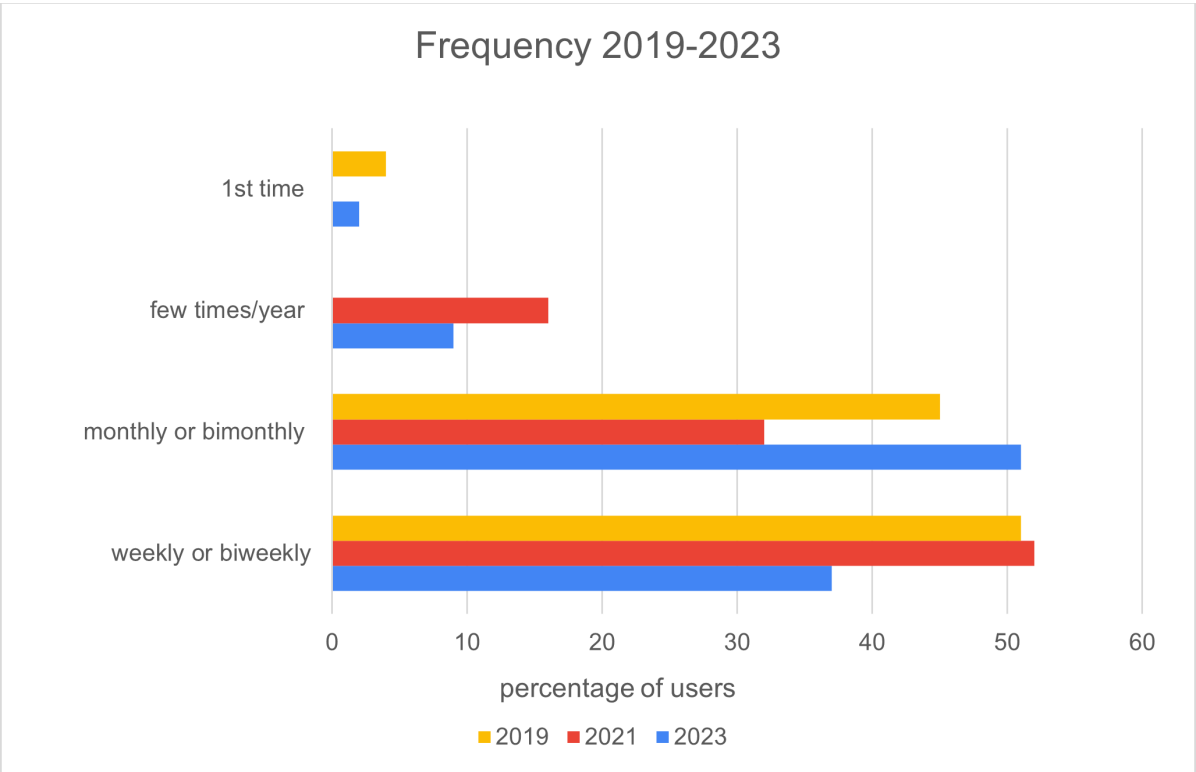
4. Waste Source

The percentage of users based on waste source has remained consistent since 2018. A majority of recycling comes from residential sources. The dropboxes are intended for residential use, however there are no barriers or enforcements to businesses utilizing them.



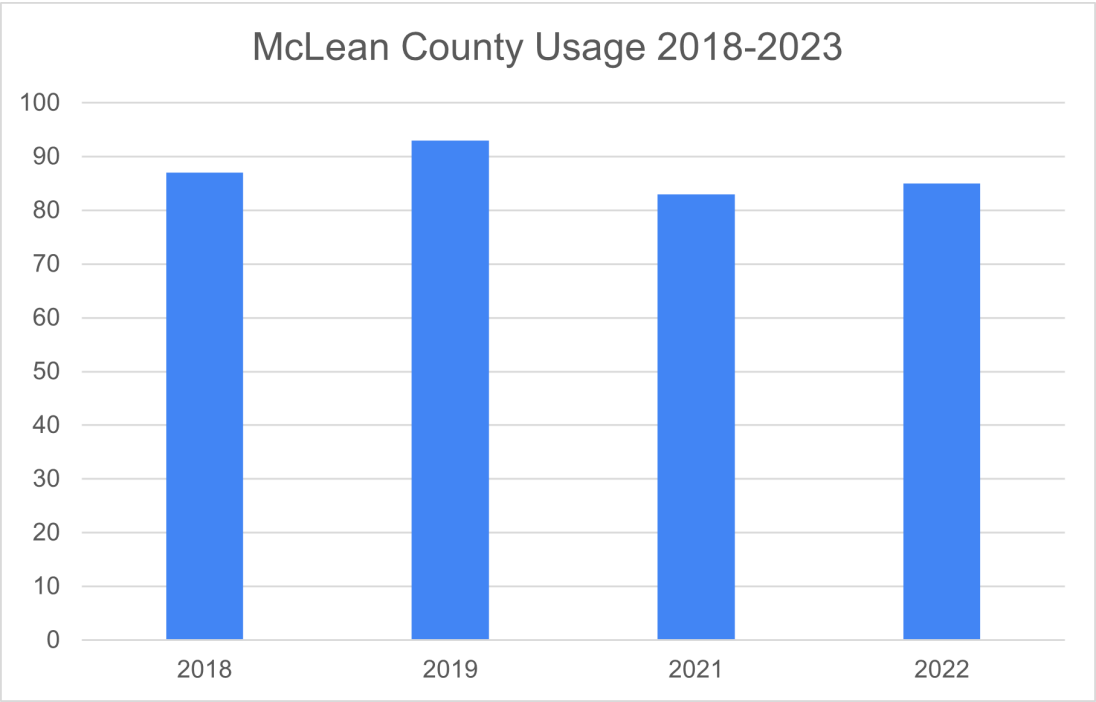
5. Frequency

The frequency of use remained relatively consistent from 2019-2023. Frequency of use data was not taken in 2018. In 2023, more users are frequenting the dropboxes monthly or bimonthly rather than weekly or biweekly.

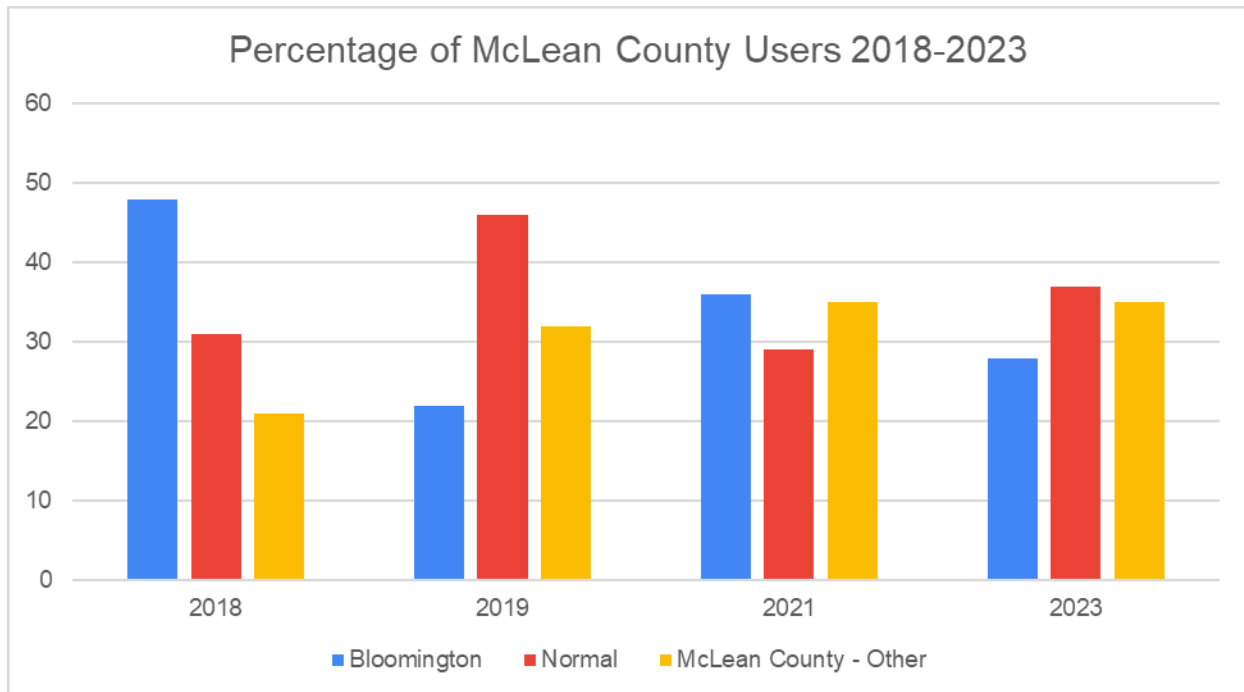


6. Geography

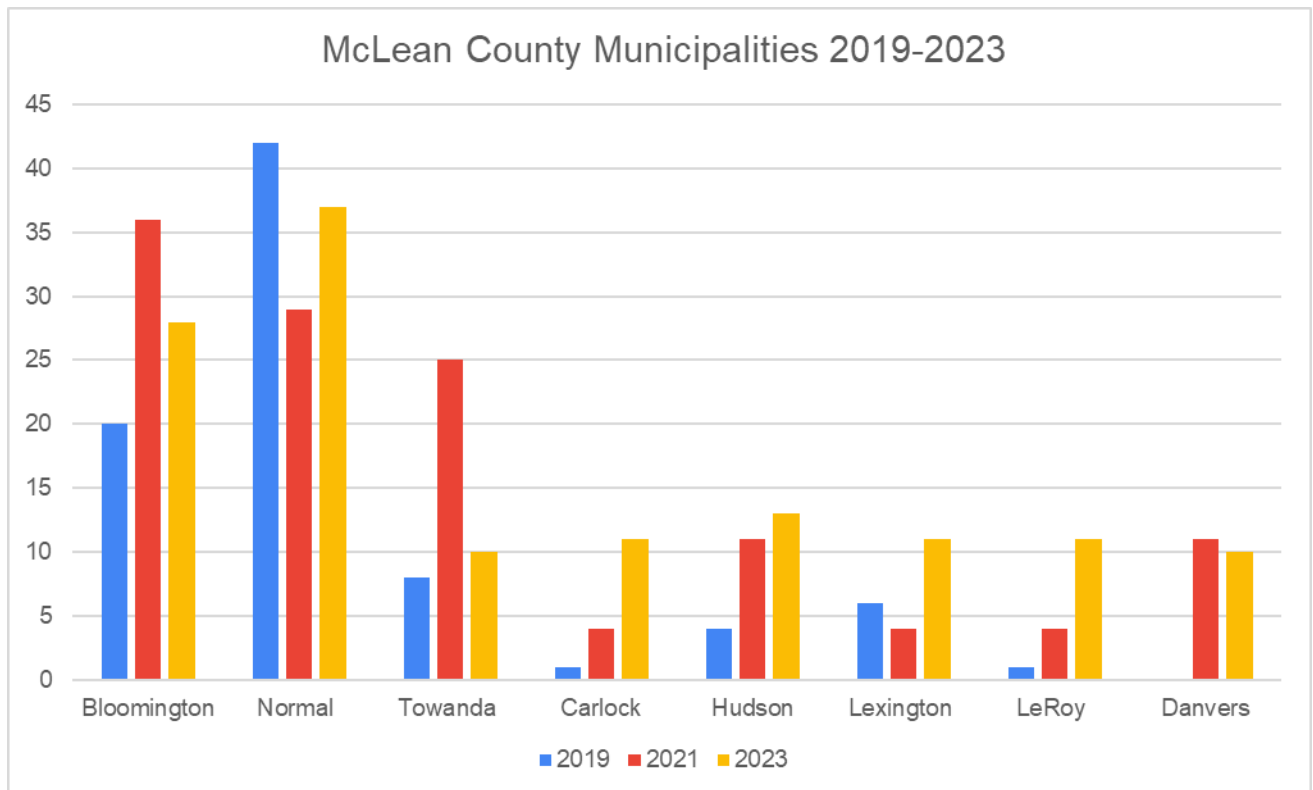
Dropbox usage by McLean County residents remains above 80% of all users.



In 2023 usages was pretty evenly split between Normal and other areas of McLean County. Usage by Bloomington residents decreased from 2021 to 2023.



Usage among those other McLean County municipalities remains consistent.



Similarly, outside of McLean County the dropbox usage remains relatively consistent from surrounding counties where data is available.

