How to Recycle at Your Agency

Recycling reduces trash disposal costs, saves energy and reduces greenhouse gas emissions. Mandatory state agency recycling programs have grown over the year and many state agencies now routinely recycle through the Department of General Services and through individual collection contracts for items such as paper, magazines, books, plastic beverage containers, toner cartridges, and metal. In the past Virginia state agencies have reported an average recycling rate of 30 percent.

Code of Virginia § 10.1-1425.6. Recycling programs of state agencies.
It shall be the duty of each baccalaureate public institution of higher education in the Commonwealth and state agency of the Commonwealth, including the General Assembly, to establish programs for the use of recycled materials and for the collection, to the extent feasible, of all recyclable materials used or generated by such entities, including, at a minimum, used motor oil, glass, aluminum, office paper and corrugated paper.

Recycle Right	☑ No Action Needed	☑ In Progress	☑ Completed
Ask your building manager about current services provided by waste/recycling hauler. Is single stream recycling available? Make sure the loading dock can accommodate pickup of recyclables.	☐	☐	☐
Work with the building manager and your facilities manager to ensure they have arranged for recycling services and communicated to the cleaning staff where recyclables and trash are to be collected.	☐	☐	☐
Get the other employees on board, including top management. It is important for employees to be encouraged to recycle from top management.	☐	☐	☐
Set up boldly marked containers for recycling with signs that specify the appropriate recyclable materials. Place recycling bins next to trash bins in easily accessible common areas so sorting is easy. Also include bins in areas that the public would pass through, like the lobby and conference rooms.	☐	☐	☐
Ideally each employee should have a desk-side bin for recycling that can be emptied by the cleaning staff or the employee into the common area recycling bins. Consider repurposing boxes you have before purchasing new and make sure all bins have signage.	☐	☐	☐
Find out what recyclables are in the trash by looking in break room and office trash containers. Target educational efforts based on your findings.	☐	☐	☐
Regularly educate and remind employees to recycle. Include this information at new employee orientation and provide it to contractors as well.	☐	☐	☐

Next Steps
- Make recycling signage at http://www.readysetrecycle.org/sign-maker/
- Regularly check if recyclables end up in the trash and vice versa.
  - Are bins in the best locations for easy access?
  - Is signage adequate?
- If you are in a building that is shared by other Agencies, work with the building manager to include others in the program.
- Ask your recycling hauler for reports with weights recycled.
- Continually educate employees on the program.

Going Above and Beyond
- Share your success! Let employees know how the program is going.
- Set up programs to recycle additional items like printer/toner cartridges, batteries, CDs, etc.
- Reduce paper waste by setting defaults on copiers and printers for double-sided. Remind employees about best practices like avoiding printing emails or other unnecessary documents.
- Encourage the use of reusable coffee mugs, dishes, water bottles and lunch bags.
- Designate a "Reuse Room" where employees bring unused office supplies for others to use.

Recycling in common areas is most effective when it is placed next to trash cans.

Deskside recycling bins are a good idea to reduce recyclables in the trash. Providing employees with a large desk-side recycling bin and a smaller trash bin increase recycling 20%.

Ensure the containers are identifiable and have signs that specify what is appropriate to recycle. You can also include information on what isn't appropriate for the recycling bin.