



# CITY OF BOSTON ZERO WASTE TOOLKIT

## OFFICE BUILDING

### RETHINK

- ❑ Look at what is in your trash - this is known as a waste audit. List the items, estimate their amounts (percent of total trash) and identify where they came from (i.e. supply vendors, in-house production).
- ❑ Look at your outside trash dumpsters. Note who your trash vendor is, and how often the containers are being emptied.
- ❑ Look in the trash receptacles inside the facility. This will give you an idea of employees' and constituents' waste habits. Other generators of waste may be a cafeteria or an outdoor landscaping site.
- ❑ Think about ways you could reduce, reuse, recycle or compost any of the items on your trash list.
- ❑ Be familiar with and comply with Massachusetts [Waste Disposal Bans](#).
- ❑ "[RecyclingWorks](#)" provides free waste reduction technical assistance to businesses, institutions, non-profits, and manufacturers. Call RecyclingWorks Hotline: (888) 254-5525.

### REDESIGN

- ❑ Right size your collection containers and number of pickups for your recyclables, food waste and trash. Haulers of these items can help you. For example, flattening cardboard saves on container space.
- ❑ Create waste stations around the facility and in dining locations; place trash, recycling, and compost bins next to each other along with proper bin labeling.
- ❑ Advise your vendors about your intention to redesign your operations to reduce your waste. See if you can work together on this effort.
- ❑ Are any of the items on your trash list [hazardous](#)? Hazardous products are ignitable, corrosive, reactive or toxic. Product labels will have this information. See about replacing them with non-hazardous products.
- ❑ Use deconstruction methods instead of demolition when renovating.

### REDUCE

- ❑ Reducing means that you are using less of an item. In order to know how to reduce, you need to know how much you are currently using. You can track this information with purchase orders and invoices.
- ❑ Buy in bulk to reduce shipping packaging.

- Reduce packaging. Talk to your vendors to streamline the packaging your business brings in or produces.
- Evaluate periodic demands for office supplies in order to maximize materials
- Go paper free for at least one facet of the business (customer payment, inventorying, communication, etc).
- Set all printers to double sided printing.
- Reduce the amount of single-use items given to customers (receipts, bags, boxes, etc).
- Offer a 'green' coffee machine and porcelain mugs.

## **REUSE**

- Replace single-use with durable goods.
- Create an internal swap area for office supplies (binders, file folders).
- Reuse shipping materials (pallets and boxes).
- Donate old computers to schools or charities.
- Replace paper towels with cloth towels or hand dryers.
- Encourage employees to use reusable cups and dishes.
- "Upcycle" a term used for using an old item in a new way, like making notepads from scrap paper.

## **RECYCLE *and* COMPOST**

- Determine what items can be recycled or composted.
- Find compost and recycling haulers that will accept your items.
- Label recycle bins and place around the office space paired with trash bins.
- Train employees on proper sorting.
- Collect all old cardboard and paper for recycling.
- Recycle glass, metal and plastic containers, bottles and [cans](#).
- Offer a food-scrap bin for lunch scraps, coffee grinds, soiled paper products, etc.
- Contact your recycling hauler to see if they accept [shredded](#) documents.
- Donate, sell, or recycle [electronics](#).

## **CLOSE THE LOOP**

- Buy from vendors that also actively reduce their waste.
- Use [post-consumer recycled](#) paper products.
- Utilize/reuse compost or mulch on site that you make yourself or purchase from a local retailer.

## **EDUCATION**

- Train employees for Zero Waste policy.

- ❑ Post signs and send emails advertising the waste policies of the organization.
- ❑ Clearly label all collection receptacles.
- ❑ Evaluate/track the success rate of waste reduction measures by calculating diversion rates and weighing trash.