

Needs Assessment Elements

Background: A Needs Assessment is a study conducted by the state (or regionally) to determine baseline information about the current state of materials management. It can provide a snapshot of how different materials are currently managed as well as a look at the existing recycling, compost, and disposal infrastructure, including access to curbside recycling access, rural recycling, state compost standards, and what products are currently not considered recyclable. The recycling system is very complex, often involving major differences between different geographic regions, housing types, facilities that process recyclable materials and waste management companies. Any legislation seeking to make changes to that system should be based on a thorough understanding of the current system so that policies can be targeted to address the largest problems.

1. Who should conduct this assessment

- A. Preference for the state or state agency to fund the needs assessment in collaboration with a third-party consultant rather than it being the responsibility of producers.
- B. State-specific information is likely needed to best understand when a state agency has the appropriate resources to conduct its own study or should hire a third party to conduct the study while under contract to the state agency.

2. Must be transparent and given sufficient time to be thorough

- A. The state agency must conduct a statewide recycling needs assessment, to be completed within two years of the effective date of this section, subject to the following requirements:
 - i. The final scope of the statewide needs assessment must consider comments and recommendations from stakeholders in the recycling system; and
 - ii. Stakeholders must have the opportunity to review and comment on a draft statewide needs assessment prior to its completion.

3. Potential factors to be measured:

- A. an analysis of existing solid waste management data collection, transportation, reporting and analysis mandates and practices, and recommendations for improvements necessary to support efforts to increase the recovery and reuse of recyclable materials.
- B. recent (up to five years) of data on the amount of recyclable material that has been recovered, (including commercial recovery and post-consumer recovery) by permitted facilities, regulated haulers and other entities; the amount of such material that was sold or otherwise diverted to markets, and if sold, the amount of receipts from such sales; and the amount of such materials that was disposed of

and the manner and costs of such disposal on a per ton and aggregate basis. Data should be on a county or regional basis.

- C. a description of existing municipal and private recyclable material collection and management capacity and practices, including a discussion of existing municipal collection efforts; a calculation of the cost of collections and transportation; an assessment of residential and commercial accessibility to curbside collection or transfer stations; a description of the nature, capacity and capabilities of material handling facilities on a facility-specific and regional basis; and a description of recommended improvements in equipment and practices and their projected costs.
- D. a description of the existing statutory and regulatory provisions governing the collection and handling of recyclable materials, and related state assistance programs.
- E. a description of recent (at least five years) state funding for improvements in the recovery, processing and reuse of recyclable materials and recommendations for future categories and levels of state funding.
- F. an assessment of, and projection of future trends for, in-state and regional markets for the use of recovered recyclable materials, by category, including current capacity, prices and other factors, as well as recommendations for incentives to increase in-state re-use capacity.
- G. an assessment of the current recyclability of specific categories of paper products and packaging, an assessment of potential barriers to increasing the recovery and reuse of recovered recyclable materials, and an assessment of recent and emerging technology that can improve the rate of recovery of recyclable materials.
- H. an assessment of how a statewide EPR mandate could address the identified barriers to recovery and recycling of covered products, and the identification and assessment of alternatives to EPR that could address specific covered product barriers, and the costs associated with the deployment of alternatives.
- I. an assessment of consumer awareness and education efforts regarding source separation, recycling, reuse and use reduction issues in general and of current local requirements for source separating materials, and recommendations for improving consumer awareness and practices.
- J. an assessment of current state and national packaging and paper product recovery rates, recycling rates, and post-consumer recycled content rates, by material type.
- K. an assessment of carbon emission impacts of material recovery, recycling and reuse, including the impact of carbon sequestration as a result of covered materials being derived from sustainably managed natural resources.
- L. identify cost factors and other variables that are associated with the collection, processing and marketing of post-consumer materials that could be used to establish a cost basis (on a per ton, per capita, or per unit rate) that is incurred by government agencies and private sector entities. Cost factors and variables to be considered in the base cost elements shall include but not be limited to:
 - a. Population size and density of a local jurisdiction;
 - b. Types of households serviced and collection method used;
 - c. Distance from a local jurisdiction to the nearest recycling facility;

- d. Whether a jurisdiction pays for transportation and sorting of collected materials and whether it receives a commodity value from processed materials;
- e. Geographic location or other variables contributing to regional differences in costs;
- f. Cost increases over time; and
- g. Any other factors as determined to be necessary by the department.