



Recycle Coach Case Studies



BUREAU OF SUSTAINABILITY
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Introduction

New Jersey became a national leader in recycling in 1987 when it enacted mandatory recycling legislation that requires residents to separate recyclable materials from their household trash. Recycling soon thereafter became a way of life in New Jersey and remains so today. In fact, New Jersey has historically achieved some of the highest recycling rates in the nation. While the state's recycling efforts have been quite successful, many residents are still confused about what should or should not be placed in curbside recycling buckets, bins or carts.

To help address this confusion, the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) has made available the Recycle Coach system to municipalities and counties at no cost since 2018. Recycle Coach is a recycling information and education system designed to encourage recycling, reduce confusion about what can be recycled and ultimately reduce recycling contamination. New Jersey was the first state in the country to adopt this program state-wide. The Recycle Coach app can be customized to provide specific recycling information to residents based on their address. The app can be downloaded for free via the App Store as well as on Google Play and can also be embedded within a municipality's website. By having the Recycle Coach app on their cell phone or available through the municipal website, residents can easily look up their local recycling information.

In the five years since the adoption of the state-wide Recycle Coach system, 20 of 21 counties and hundreds of municipalities in New Jersey have signed up for Recycle Coach. In fact, over the last 12 months, 2,000,000+ residents across the state have used Recycle Coach to keep track of their local recycling program requirements. While 364 New Jersey municipalities have activated Recycle Coach and contribute regular updates, many municipalities have not taken advantage of this program. The goal of this educational resource, which highlights municipalities that successfully use the Recycle Coach system, is to encourage non-participating municipalities to sign up for this free recycling educational system.



How to Register Your Municipality or County with Recycle Coach:

- New Jersey municipal or county officials can register with the Recycle Coach recycling information system by contacting Recycle Coach at successgroup@recyclecoach.com or at 855-343-3363.

About Recycle Coach

- Recycle Coach is a recycling information system that can be customized to provide local recycling information to residents.
- Recycle Coach reduces confusion about local recycling requirements and results in less contamination of the curbside recycling stream.
- This program is funded by the DEP and has been made available to municipalities and counties at no cost.
- Register today and advance the cause of recycling in your locality and in New Jersey.



BOROUGH OF MADISON:

Upon enrolling in the Recycle Coach system in 2018, the Borough of Madison (population 16,000) started a rigorous social media campaign on Twitter and Facebook to encourage residents to download or utilize Recycle Coach. The borough continues to promote the system on social media, as well as on the front page of its annual recycling newsletter.

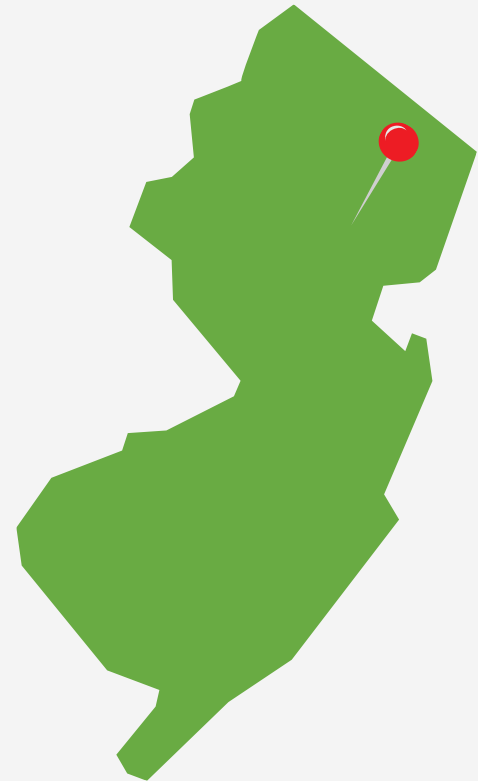
Madison utilizes the Recycle Coach app to send messages to residents about collection delays, collection schedule changes and other program news. The Recycle Coach system not only makes it easy for recycling coordinators to send municipal-wide messages about the local recycling program, but it also allows recycling coordinators to send targeted messages to certain collection areas.

Another benefit of Recycle Coach is that it helps Madison's residents remember the correct dual stream recyclable materials to place at the curb each week.

“Residents love that they can check their schedule, report a missed collection, and can check ‘what-goeswhere,’ which we have seen has decreased phone calls and voicemails to Public Works,” said Michael Pellessier, the Communications Director for Madison.



- Registered with Recycle Coach for over five years
- Over 1,400 residents active on Recycle Coach
- Thousands of monthly municipal website interactions with embedded Recycle Coach program



VILLAGE OF RIDGEWOOD:

Administrators in the Village of Ridgewood (population 26,000) were prepared to pay for another recycling information system, but instead gladly registered with Recycle Coach in 2018 when it was made available by the DEP.

“Recycle Coach has the functions we need to effectively communicate with and educate our residents,” said Johanna Luttrell, the Recycling Program Aide in Ridgewood.

Ridgewood currently uses Recycle Coach to educate residents about its curbside recycling program and other recycling services provided by the village. In addition, Ridgewood’s recycling officials use Recycle Coach to send notifications to residents about collection delays, recycling center closures and special events such as paper shredding days.

Thanks to Recycle Coach, residents have become better informed about those materials that can be placed at the curb. Sean Hamlin, the Recycling Coordinator for Ridgewood, has seen this improvement firsthand as the number of enforcement visits made by recycling staff to homes not complying with recycling program requirements has been reduced significantly.

“Enforcement visits only happen about five times a month now, much less since we started Recycle Coach,” stated Mr. Hamlin. Residents can even send a picture of their uncollected recycling bin to the Department of Public Works, which in turn can send a response to the resident through the app.



- Registered with Recycle Coach for over five years
- Recycle Coach clarifies both the recyclable materials collected at the curb and those accepted at the municipal recycling center
- The use of Recycle Coach has resulted in fewer rejections of curbside recyclables by municipal collection crews



MIDDLETOWN TOWNSHIP:

Recipient of the 2020 DEP Recycling Award in the Government category, Middletown Township (population 67,000) was an early adopter of Recycle Coach. While municipalities that participate in the program are required to compile and provide start-up information, recycling officials in Middletown thought it was well worth it.

“Having this comprehensive app has completely streamlined curbside garbage, recycling and bulk collection information, leaf and brush collection information, emergency collection notifications from the Township, and helped residents better understand what to recycle where,” said Lory Hubbard, Deputy Director for Middletown's Department of Public Works & Engineering. “We often receive positive feedback from residents on social media and see that residents are encouraging fellow community members to get their recycling questions answered by the app.”

Middletown uses its diverse communications platform to promote Recycle Coach to its residents, including placing the logo and information about the program on its mailings to residents and in various publications. The Recycle Coach web app can also be found in multiple places on Middletown's website making it easy for residents to be introduced to and learn about the program. Thanks to these promotional efforts and others, thousands of the township's residents now have local recycling information at the fingertips.



- Over 7,000 of the township's residents have downloaded the Recycle Coach mobile app on their cell phone
- Over 33,000 municipal website interactions with embedded Recycle Coach program
- Uses Recycle Coach to reach residents and to coordinate with collection contractors and the county recycling office



TOMS RIVER TOWNSHIP:

Toms River Township (population 98,000), the recipient of the 2020 DEP Recycling Award in the Outstanding Educator category, uses Recycle Coach to educate both residents and summertime visitors. With eight different recycling areas in the township, seasonally changing collection schedules, and influxes of tourists in the summer season, providing up-to-date recycling information is essential.

The township uses Recycle Coach to send notifications to residents about recycling program requirements, paper shredding events, household hazardous waste collection events and other programs. Recycle Coach even allows the township to send messages to residents in specific collection zones if delays are anticipated. Another benefit of Recycle Coach is that it enables Toms River to provide separate collection calendars for different sections of the township during the summer, thereby ensuring a smooth transition to the new schedule.

Toms River promotes Recycle Coach in many ways, including posting information about the system on its government documents and on the township's social media platforms.

Recycle Coach has been especially helpful in reaching out to summertime visitors who are new to the township's recycling requirements. **"The hardest part is getting tourists to learn the collection schedule,"** said Brian Wennlund, the Recycling Foreman in Toms River. Accordingly, township recycling officials make it a point to direct summertime renters with questions about recycling to Recycle Coach.



- Registered with Recycle Coach since 2019
- 11,000 of the township's residents have downloaded the Recycle Coach mobile app on their cell phone
- Uses Recycle Coach to educate summertime tourists about the township's recycling requirements



BOROUGH OF POINT PLEASANT:

When the DEP announced that it would be providing a free recycling information system for recycling coordinators to use to educate residents about their local recycling program, the Borough of Point Pleasant (population 19,000) jumped on the opportunity. The borough's Department of Public Works soon put the web version of the Recycle Coach program on their home page and started spreading the word about the mobile app.

Among its educational efforts, the Borough of Point Pleasant promotes the Recycle Coach system at community events held for Earth Day, National Night Out and other special occasions. Recycle Coach is also recommended to residents that call the Department of Public Works with questions about recycling or the recycling collection schedule. Borough staff find Recycle Coach to be an especially helpful resource that they can use to quickly address various recycling questions that may arise. While residents are encouraged to download the Recycle Coach mobile app, the web version remains popular with both residents and visitors to the borough.

"It sells itself," stated Joy Edly, Recycling Coordinator for the Borough of Point Pleasant. **"Once people get it on their phones, they're convinced."**

The Borough of Point Pleasant also makes it a point to promote Recycle Coach to those renting beach houses for the summer. Summertime visitors looking for recycling information for the borough simply need to change their address in the Recycle Coach system to the address of the home they are renting in Point Pleasant.



- Strong advocate for use of the Recycle Coach system
- Uses Recycle Coach to educate summertime tourists about the township's recycling requirements
- Promotes Recycle Coach in numerous ways

