New York State Department of Environmental Conservation
Division of Solid & Hazardous Materials
Bureau of Solid Waste Reduction & Recycling

How to Develop a

Reuse Center

Reduce &
Eliminate
Unnecessary
State
Expenses

For State Agencies

printed on 100% post-consumer recycled paper

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Why A Reuse Center?

Saving natural resources, energy and money; extending the life of our landfills and promoting environmental awareness are important reasons to develop a reuse center. This booklet provides the general information you need to get started. Look for helpful hints in the text blocks.

Let's get started!

Basic Steps

The basic steps in setting up a reuse center in your agency are:

1. Appoint a responsible staff member(s) to run the program.
2. Decide what types of materials you generate and, therefore, want to reuse.
3. Decide on either a permanent Reuse Center or a "Waste Exchange."
4. Evaluate costs.
5. Develop an educational program.
6. Trouble shooting and record keeping.

1. Responsible Staff

You need to have a staff member (s) responsible for the operation of the reuse center. This is very important! This person(s) (probably you) will be responsible for:

- Researching what is currently being disposed or recycled.
- Determining what materials will be collected.
- Deciding on the type of program your agency needs.
- Submitting a report to the appropriate management official for final approval to proceed.
- Developing an educational program.
- Dealing with the paperwork (reporting numbers for Executive Order #142).
- Answering staff questions.

2. Types of Materials

Your program should be designed to accept only office-type materials generated from activities at your agency. It is not the intent of this program to accept materials from home.   There are many programs available to staff for reusable home items. The

Salvation Army, Shelters, Church Groups, etc. will gladly accept home generated reusable items.

3. Type of Reuse Program

There are several options in developing and implementing a reuse program for your agency. Two types will be discussed; a permanent reuse center and a waste exchange. The pros and cons for each types will be discussed.

Types of Materials to Start With

Ring Binders	*In/Out Boxes*
Pocket Folders	*Mailing Tubes*
Manila Folders	*Paper*
Hanging File Holders	

Permanent Reuse Center

A permanent reuse center will have one central location for the collection of reusable office materials. You will need to provide space and equipment and operate an inventory of materials going in and out of the program.

Space and Equipment Requirements

- A designated room, that locks, needs to be made available for drop-off and pickup of materials. A room approximately 10' x 12' (depending on the size of the agency) should be sufficient for the Reuse Center. This room should have immediate entry to the hall. Having the Reuse Center located at the back of an office, will create distractions for those working in the office. If you have a supply room for your agency, that would be a perfect location to set up the Reuse Center.

- A computer and data management software (i.e. Fox Pro, dBASE) can be used to inventory the materials.

- Several bookcases and a storage cabinets will need to be acquired. At the DEC, bookcases and cabinets that were going to be surplused were used.

Agency Staff Responsibilities

- Agency staff will check first with the Reuse Center before making office supply purchases.

- Agency staff fill out the material drop-off and pickup forms. See Appendix 1. The time required for staff utilizing the Reuse Center will be minimal. The Reuse Center room will be organized so that staff depositing materials will place them on labeled shelves.

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- Staff in charge of the Reuse Center will collect the inventory forms and process the information into the data base. Bimonthly, this information will be sent out to Agency staff via GroupWise or posted on the bulletin boards (for those not on GroupWise). This bimonthly publication will provide Agency staff with information on what is available.

PROS - The pros to this proposal are:
- Higher participation and reuse rates, since your work units would not have to store materials.
- Better quality materials used more often since the materials could be viewed.

CONS - The cons to this proposal are:
- Agency staff time dedicated to the operation. Staff will need to fill out forms and the person in charge of the program will have to enter this information into the computer.
- Use of a dedicated room.

Waste Exchange

The Waste Exchange would be just that - an exchange. It would require agency staff to complete forms of materials available for reuse and e-mailing or posting this information to the rest of the agency. It is probably best to e-mail or post this information on a monthly basis. The Unit that has the material(s) for reuse would store the materials in their office until a request is received. The Division using the material(s) would then complete a form and sent it to the person in charge of the Waste Exchange for record keeping purposes.

This proposal would use the same forms for material deposit and withdrawal as were developed for the Reuse Center.

PROS - The pros to this proposal are:
- Less staff time needed to run the reuse center.
- No dedicated room.

CONS - The cons to this proposal are:
- Lower participation since Units will need to store materials.
- More work by other Units as opposed to dedicated staff running the Reuse Center.

4. Costs

Operational costs for developing and implementing the Reuse Center should be minimal, but need to be determined.

These costs include:

  - Staff time, once the program is established should be less than ten hours per month.

  - Equipment to furnish the Center will need to be acquired; equipment should be obtained from used, surplus equipment.

  - The cost for the room space is dependent on the cost per foot in your specific Agency.

Costs for developing and implementing the Waste Exchange would also be minimal.

  - Staff time, once the program is established, will be approximately three to five hours per month.

  - There should be no room costs since each Department/Unit would be responsible for keeping the materials until the exchange is made..

The general cost savings of this program have been calculated for evaluation. Table 1 – Estimated Cost Savings shows approximately how much money can be saved from reusing several frequently discarded office items.

TABLE 1 – ESTIMATED COST SAVINGS

ITEM	COST	ESTIMATED NUMBER REUSED	ESTIMATED SAVINGS
Ring Binders - 2"	$2.00- $3.00	500	$1000 - $1500
Hanging Folders - Legal	$20.00/25	500	$400.00
Manila Folders - Legal	$5.25/24	500	$100.00

5. Educational Program

Once the initial planning is completed, the next step is to devise an educational program that will fit your needs and the needs of your employees. The success of your program will depend on how well informed (and motivated) your employees are to the hows and whys of the reuse program. A vigorous educational program will assure a successful recycling program.

An educational program has to be well thought out and informative, but not necessarily serious. A program that is entertaining and fun will have a lasting impression and will not seem as tedious. The elements to consider when you are developing an educational program for your employees are discussed below:

The Kick-Off Memo - The most common approach is a kick-off memo from as high up in the agency as possible. If everyone knows that upper management is behind your reuse program, you'll have better participation - "If the boss can do it, I can do it." Include reasons for implementing this program as well as environmental and economic benefits. Describe the procedures and keep them simple. A complicated program will not benefit anyone. Indicate what materials are and are not accepted and explain why. Especially important, and often overlooked, is to include the contact person's name and telephone number in case anyone has questions.

More Promotion - When you first kick off the reuse program, reminders should be prominently posted throughout the building.

Slogans & Logos - You may want to develop a slogan or agency logo for your reuse program. Your employees will be able to identify with it and interest will be stimulated.

Educational Pamphlets - In addition to the kick-off memo, you may want to develop an educational pamphlet. Given to all employees, it can be a useful reminder.

Publicity – Your reuse program may be of interest to your community. Contact local TV, radio stations and newspapers. They may like an opportunity to report on your reuse efforts.

Status Reports - Status reports on your overall recycling program and your reuse program should be done on a regular basis to your employees. Everyone likes feedback on how they are doing. Follow-up on your educational program with memos on the status of your program. Let employees know how much office materials have been reused and the

environmental and economic benefits.   An agency newsletter is a good forum for program updates.

6. Trouble Shooting

Troubleshooting problems at the beginning of your reuse program can mean the difference between success and failure. Typical problems include:

Poor participation- Problems can be minimized through an effective educational program. Ask several employees if the educational program is effective. If not, you may need to distribute new information.

Change in collection - Alert staff to any changes in the collection and handling procedures and issue frequent reminders. (E-mail is great for that.)

Contamination - If you are finding the wrong types of office materials are being left for reuse, make sure your educational efforts are clear and direct.

7. Record Keeping

Record Keeping is helpful for the following reasons:

- Completes the Executive Order #142 Reporting Requirements.
- Lets you see how well your program is running.
- Lets the Executive Office see how well you are running the program.

Summary
In conclusion, you will need to:

- Assign a responsible staff member.
- Decide what you are going to collect for reuse.
- Decide on the type of reuse program - Reuse Center or "Waste Exchange."
- Educate the staff.
- Keep records!

Good Luck!
If you have any questions, call (518) 402-8705.

MATERIAL DEPOSIT

Division/Unit_____ Date:_____

Contact Name:_____Telephone Number:_____

ITEM TYPE   SIZE   QUANTITY

[ ] 3 Ring Binders   _____   _____

[ ] Pocket Folders   _____   _____

[ ] Manila Folders   _____   _____

[ ] In/Out Boxes   _____   _____

[ ] Mailing Tubes   _____   _____

[ ] Hanging File Holders   _____   _____

[ ] Computer Paper   _____   _____

[ ] Office Paper   _____   _____

Other Material
Type:_____

Size:_____

Quantity:_____

Other Material Type:_____

Size:_____

Quantity:_____

MATERIAL WITHDRAWAL

Division/Unit_____ Date:_____

Contact Name:_____Telephone Number:_____

ITEM TYPE   SIZE   QUANTITY

[ ] 3 Ring Binders   _____   _____

[ ] Pocket Folders   _____   _____

[ ] Manila Folders   _____   _____

[ ] In/Out Boxes   _____   _____

[ ] Mailing Tubes   _____   _____

[ ] Hanging File Holders   _____   _____

[ ] Computer Paper   _____   _____

[   ] Office Paper   _____   _____

Other Material Type:_____

Size:_____

Quantity:_____

Other Material Type:_____

Size:_____

Quantity:_____