Regional Cooperation to Harmonize Recycling Programs - Tools and Tips

THE RECYCLING PARTNERSHIP™

U.S. EPA Sustainable Materials Management (SMM) Web Academy Webinar

October 18, 2018

TOGETHER

Transforming Recycling For Good

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We're all in this bin together

Only half of Americans can recycle at home as easily as they can throw something away.*

Those that can recycle easily are only recycling half of what they could.**

* 2015-16 Centralized Study on Availability of Recycling.
https://recycle.com/spc-recycling-access-study/
** 2016 State of Curbside Report

How?

- Increase access to recycling
- Increase capture of recyclables
- Improve quality of recyclables

OUR WORKING MODEL

INFRASTRUCTURE

Cart grants deliver year over year results and measurable incremental tonnage.

EXPERT ASSISTANCE

Aligning operations and education helps cities deliver better recycling.

TOOLS AND DATA

More than 20K local programs lack resources but determine success.

SYSTEM SOLUTIONS

The system is loosely connected but highly dependent.

Why Does Recycling Matter?

Recycling Creates Jobs, Helps Protect the Environment and Builds Strong Communities

500K+ jobs
direct, indirect
across the US

=

$34B
annual wages,
benefits

10% increase in capture of recyclables in homes that are **already** recycling

=

10% More Materials

10% More Jobs

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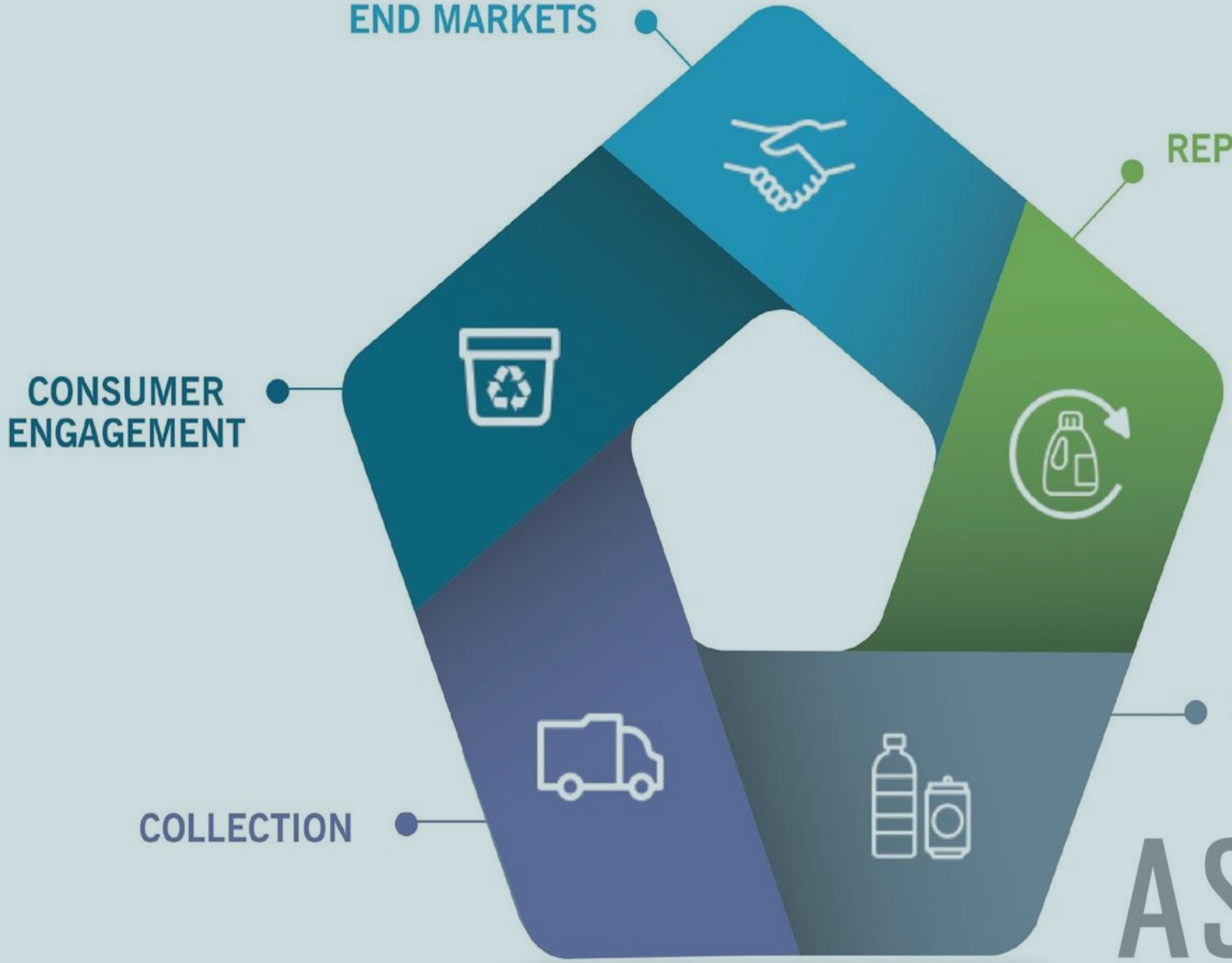
Special Thanks for Grant Support

- EPA – Region 4
- Roy A Hunt Foundation



ASTRX

Applying Systems Thinking to Recycling

SUSTAINABLE PACKAGING COALITION®

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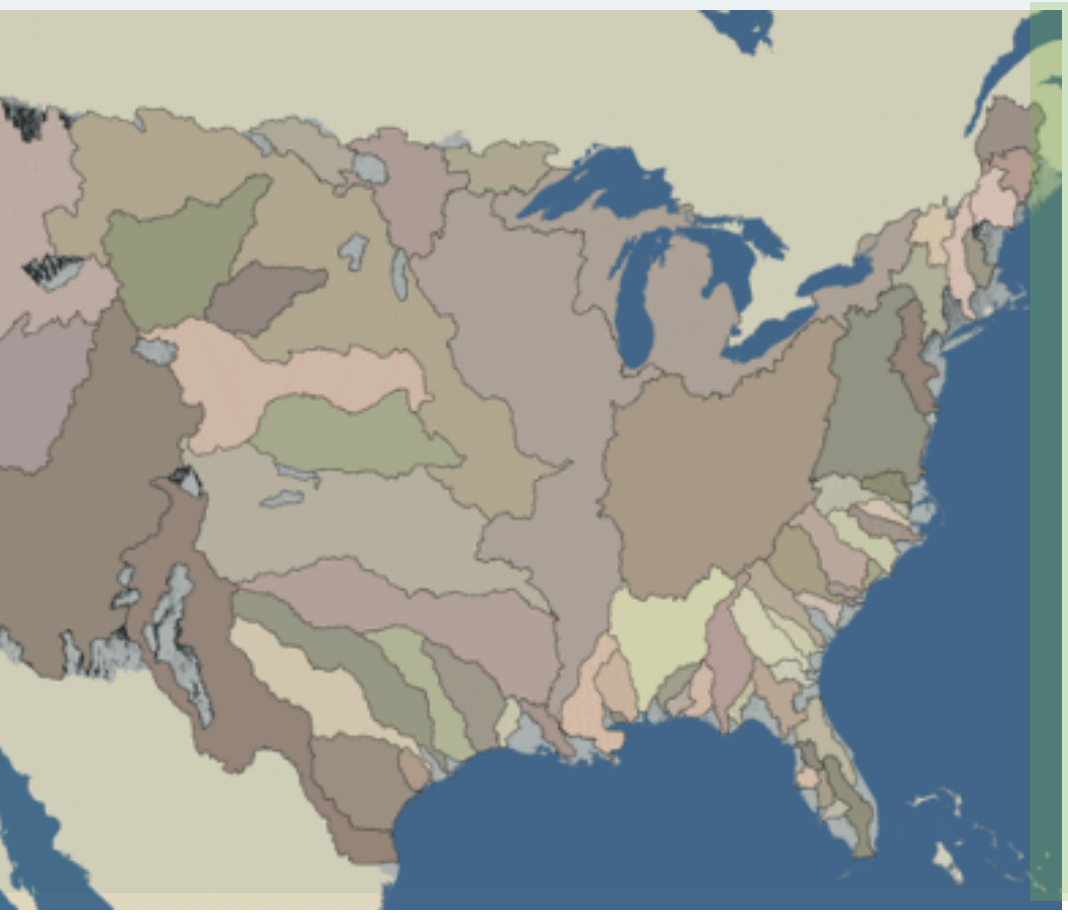
MANUFACTURER DEMAND DRIVES ENVIRONMENTAL GAINS.

The system needs **reliable quantity, quality, and cost** in supply.

ASTRX

RAW MATERIALS

How Can We Improve Recycling Quality Across a Region?



What's a MRF-Shed?

MRF-shed Report

MRF-shed = a group of communities that funnel material into the same MRF

- Supported by EPA Region 5 Grant
- Two MRF-sheds
  (Chicago; Columbus, Ohio)
  representing 1.6M SF HH
- 68 community websites studied

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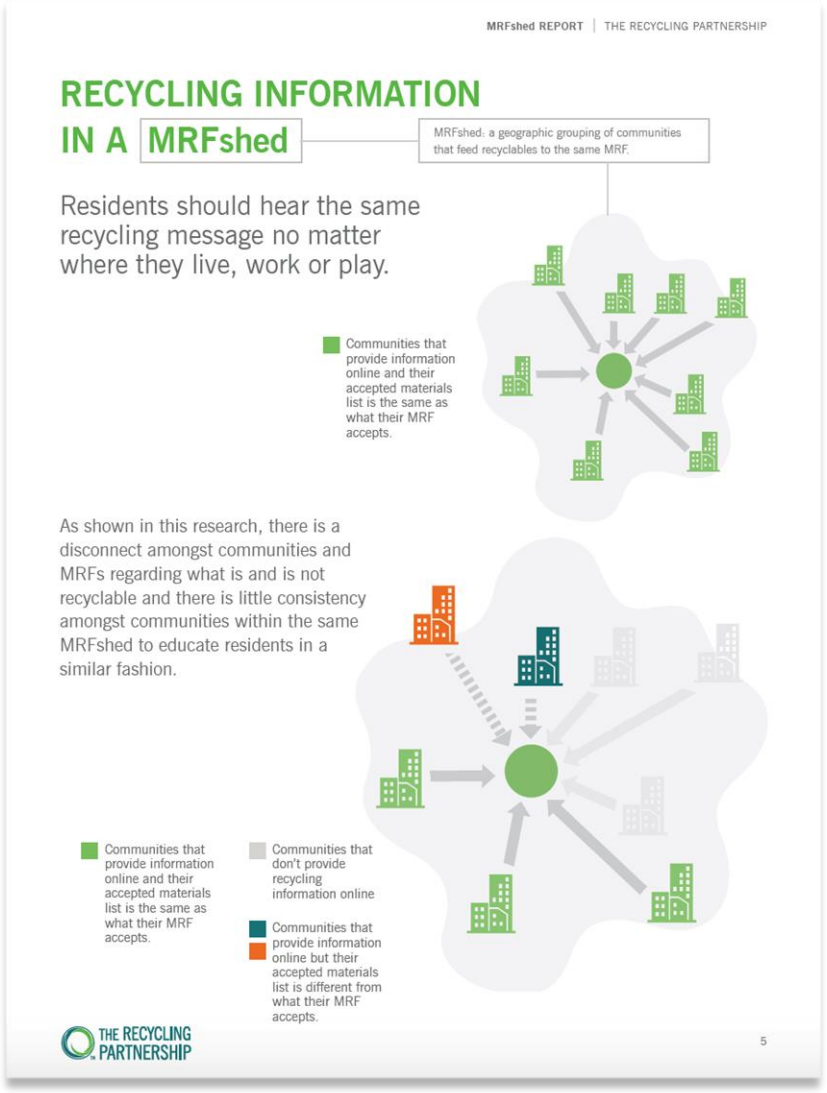
MRF-shed Report



What are we telling residents to recycle?
Do our lists match what we could be recycling?

59%
provided recycling Information online

41%
provided no Information online

Of those with information, only 40%
matched their MRF's acceptable material list

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Welcome Ben!

Rumpke Waste & Recycling Overview

- Founded in 1932
- Grown to become one of nation's largest privately owned waste and recycling companies
- Currently services portions of Ohio, Kentucky, Indiana and West Virginia
- More than 3,000 employees
- Goal to be total waste and recycling service provider

RUMPKE

Rumpke's Cincinnati Recycling Facility

- Opened in Fall 2015
- Machinex single-stream technology, including six optical scanners
- Processes 700 tons daily
- Serves several regions

Importance of MRF-Shed Concept

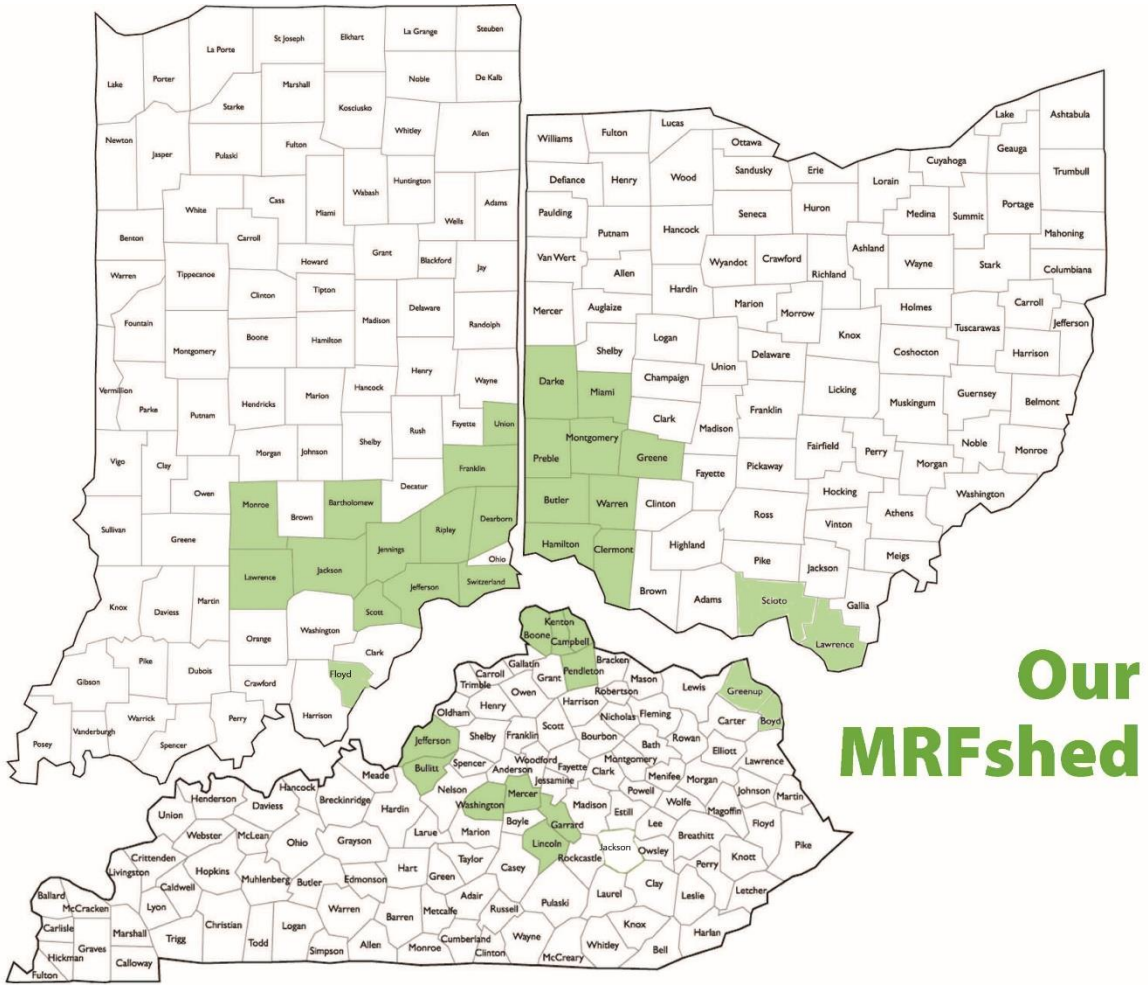
- Newer, regional MRFs can service thousands of households in urban and rural areas in multiple states
- The Recycling Partnership introduced Rumpke to concept of understanding and managing communications within the parameters of the region

Importance of MRF-Shed Concept

- The MRF-Shed clearly identifies the population group serviced by the MRF
- Communication on acceptable materials and issues with contamination is focused
- A cohesive message can be developed for municipalities, third party haulers and solid waste districts on acceptable materials
- Participants receive the same recycling message from the service provider, solid waste district, municipality and MRF processor

RUMPKE

Rumpke's Cincinnati MRF-Shed



RUMPKE

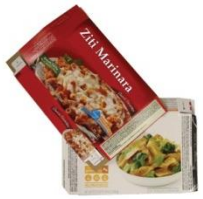
RUMPKE'S LIST OF ACCEPTABLE SINGLE STREAM ITEMS

Plastic Bottles & Jugs

Cartons

Glass Bottles

Cans



Paper

- Magazines, catalogs, phone books
- Office paper, mail, folders
- Newspaper & inserts
- Clean pizza boxes
- Paperboard
- Cardboard

RUMPKE

Welcome Analiese and Rick!

MRF-Shed Harmonization

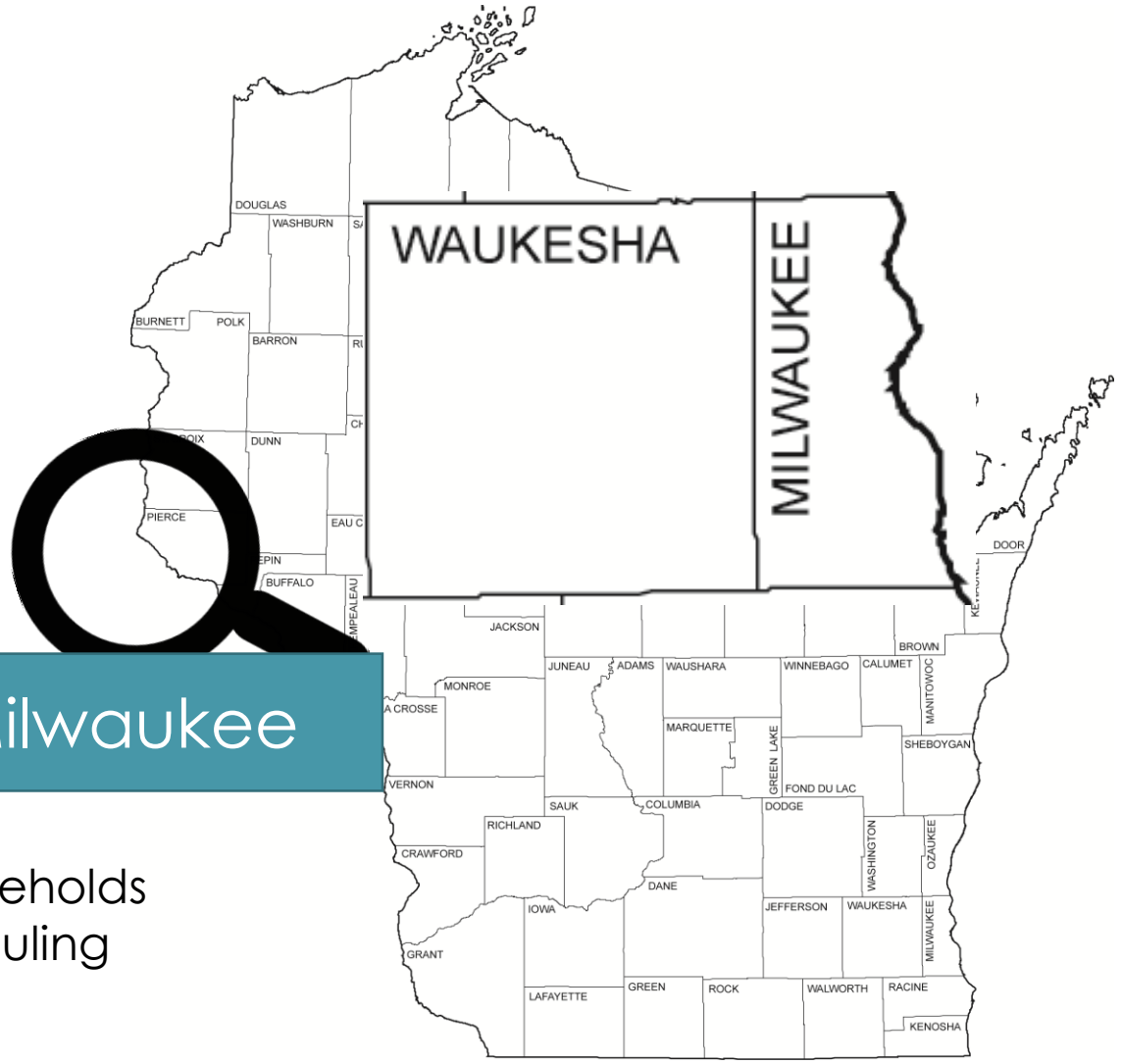
Waukesha County

WaukeshaCounty.gov/recycling

City of Milwaukee

MilwaukeeRecycles.com

MRF-Shed Overview



Waukesha County

- 27 member municipalities
- 110,000 Households
- 2 Private Haulers

City of Milwaukee

- Urban
- 180,000 Households
- Municipal hauling

WAUKESHA COUNTY Recycles
waukeshacounty.gov/recycling

Waukesha County

WaukeshaCounty.gov/recycling

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MRF Overview

- Joint MRF opened in 2015
- 35 tph single residential stream-system
- 70,000 tons/year
- 2 municipal partners plus 3rd party tonnage

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waukeshacounty.gov/recycling

Waukesha County

WaukeshaCounty.gov/recycling

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Separate Educational Materials

- Separate lists that were **similar** but **not exactly the same**
- Additional items included cart tags, annual mailers, websites and social media
- 3rd Party lists varied more

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waukeshacounty.gov/recycling

Waukesha County

WaukeshaCounty.gov/recycling

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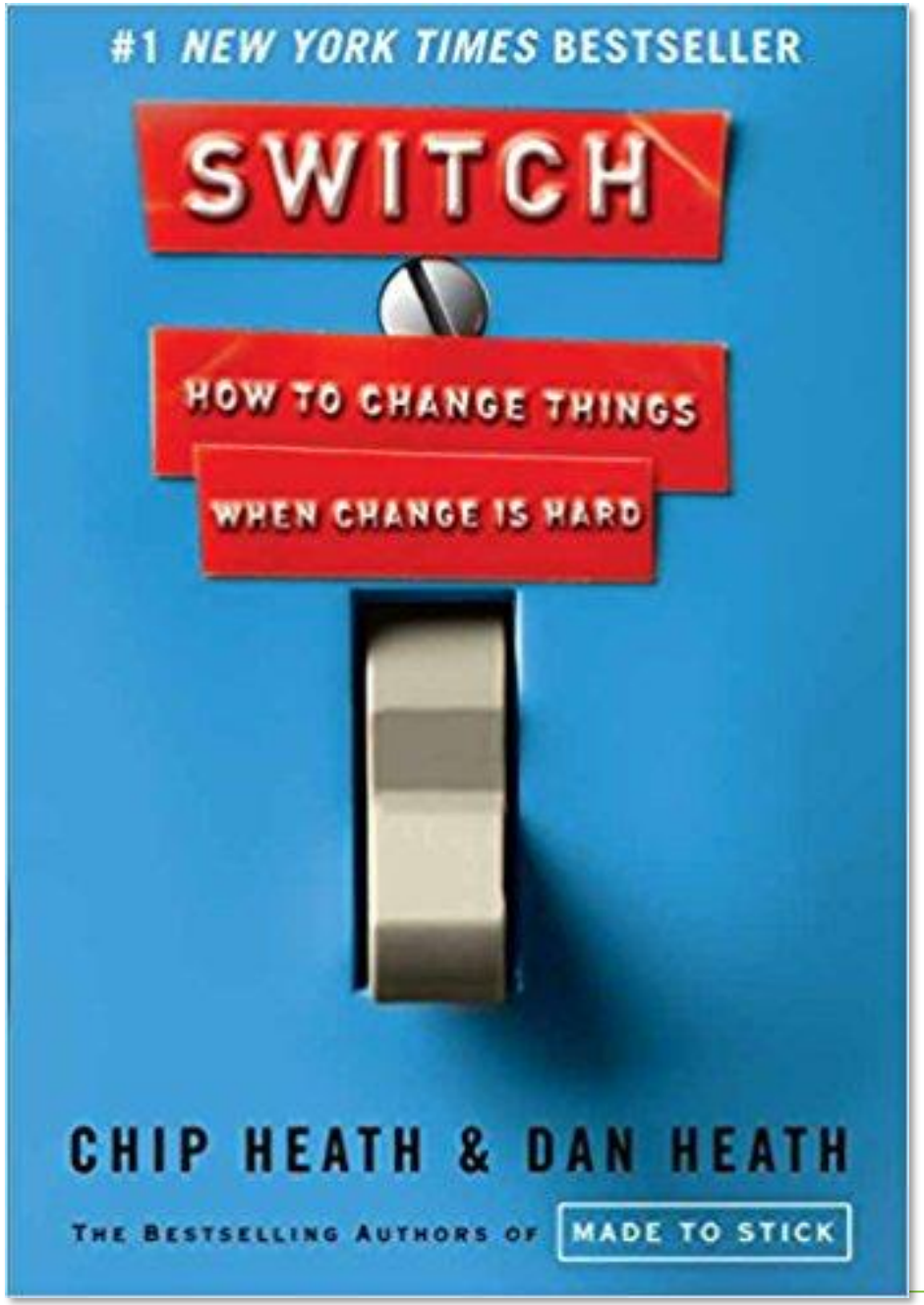
Questions?



Create an emotional case for change, not just an analytical one.

Scale up successes.

Smooth the path to change.

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Act healthier?

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Purchase 1% Milk

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Recycle right

Don’t contaminate

Keep it green

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A Hierarchy of Information

FIRST	1	One simple message Reach the most people.
NEXT	5	Some want more Consider the listening. Help support memory and action.
WHERE APPROPRIATE	50	A few want it all Easy to find, easy to reference, searchable, user-friendly.

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PROVIDE A CRYSTAL CLEAR MESSAGE

Don’t bag your recyclables

Recycle your cans

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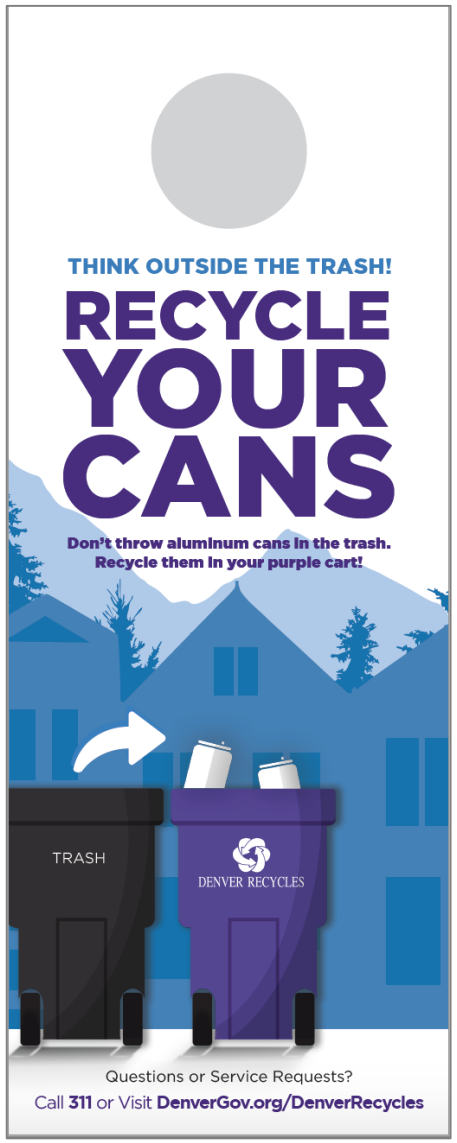
PROVIDE A CRYSTAL CLEAR MESSAGE

BEFORE

AFTER

PROVIDE A CRYSTAL CLEAR MESSAGE

25%



RECYCLING AS SECOND NATURE

WASTE

shape

RE-USE

VALUE

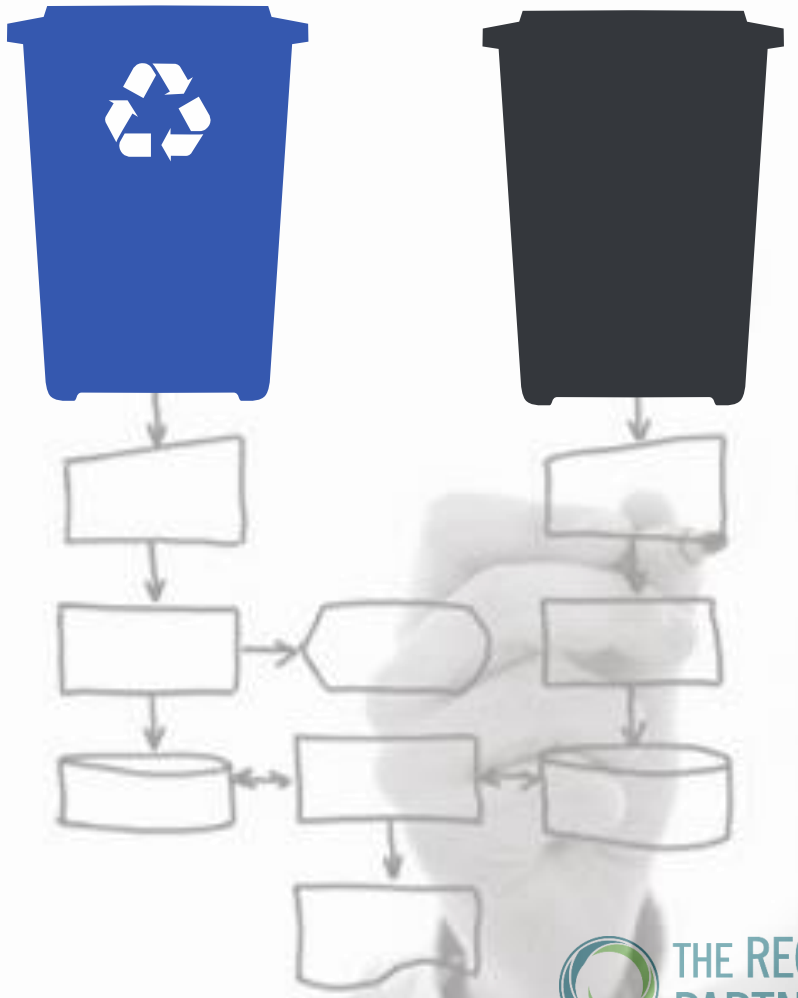
GOOD

OPPORTUNITY

condition

material

convenience



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"What looks like resistance is

often lack of clarity."

-Chip and Dan Heath, *Switch*

Questions?

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Harmonizing Recycling Messaging:

A Play in One Act

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The Actors:

- The City
- The County
- The MRF
- The Recycling Partnership

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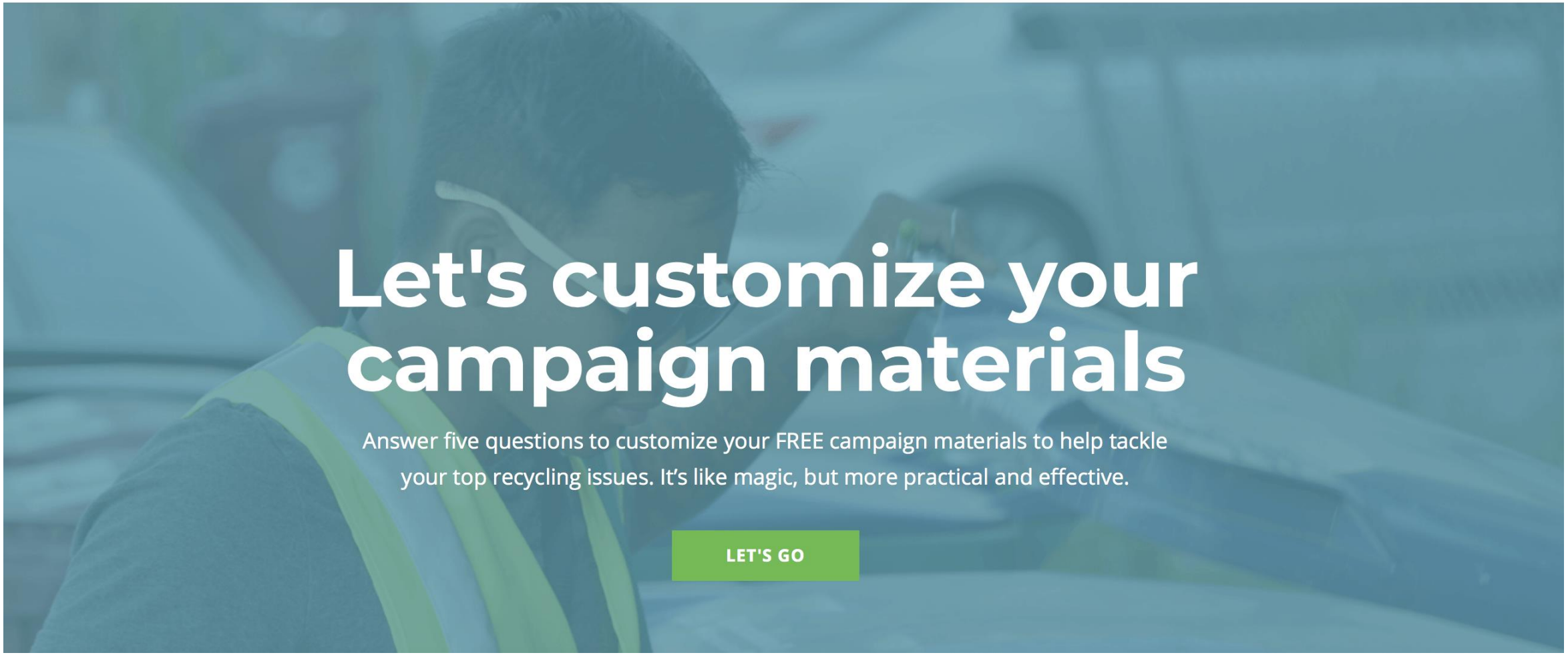
HOME FOR COMMUNITIES FUNDING PARTNERS INFO HUB ABOUT CONTACT



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We'll be customizing the following three pieces.

TOP ISSUE MAILER

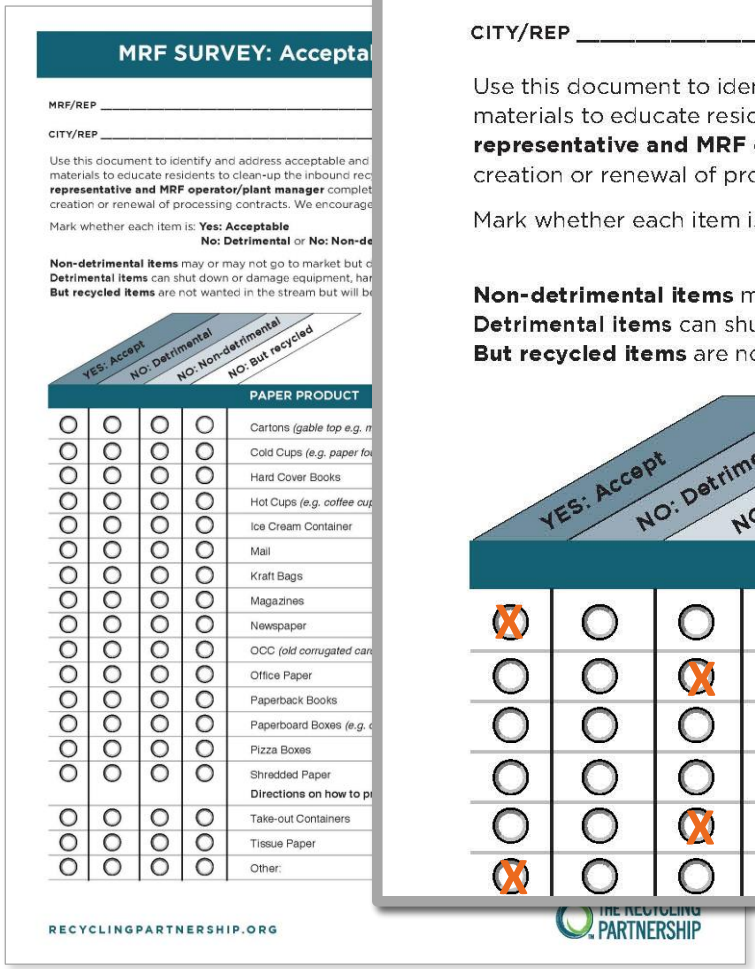
OOPS TAG

ANNUAL INFO CARD

Before we begin, make sure your accepted materials and top contaminants match your MRF's. Our MRF Survey will help you get on the same page as your hauler, which will lead to a more effective campaign.

CONTINUE

First: Review Acceptable Materials with MRF



MRF SURVEY: Acceptable Materials Worksheet

MRF/REP _____ DATE _____

CITY/REP _____

Use this document to identify and address acceptable and problematic materials, inform front line staff, and create materials to educate residents to clean-up the inbound recycling stream. It is recommended that the **local program representative and MRF operator/plant manager** complete this worksheet together every 6 months and during the creation or renewal of processing contracts. We encourage this document be used in the RFP process as well.

Mark whether each item is: **Yes: Acceptable**
No: Detrimental or **No: Non-detrimental** or **No: But recycled**

Non-detrimental items may or may not go to market but do not cause any major problems.
Detrimental items can shut down or damage equipment, harm employees, and/or substantially degrade the value of material.
But recycled items are not wanted in the stream but will be pulled off the sorting line to be recycled if markets exist.

YES: Accept	NO: Detrimental	NO: Non-detrimental	NO: But recycled	PAPER PRODUCT
X				Cartons *(gable top e.g. milk and orange juice, and aseptic e.g. juice boxes and soup)*
		X		Cold Cups *(e.g. paper fountain drink cup)*
			X	Hard Cover Books
			X	Hot Cups *(e.g. coffee cup)*
		X		Ice Cream Container
X				Mail

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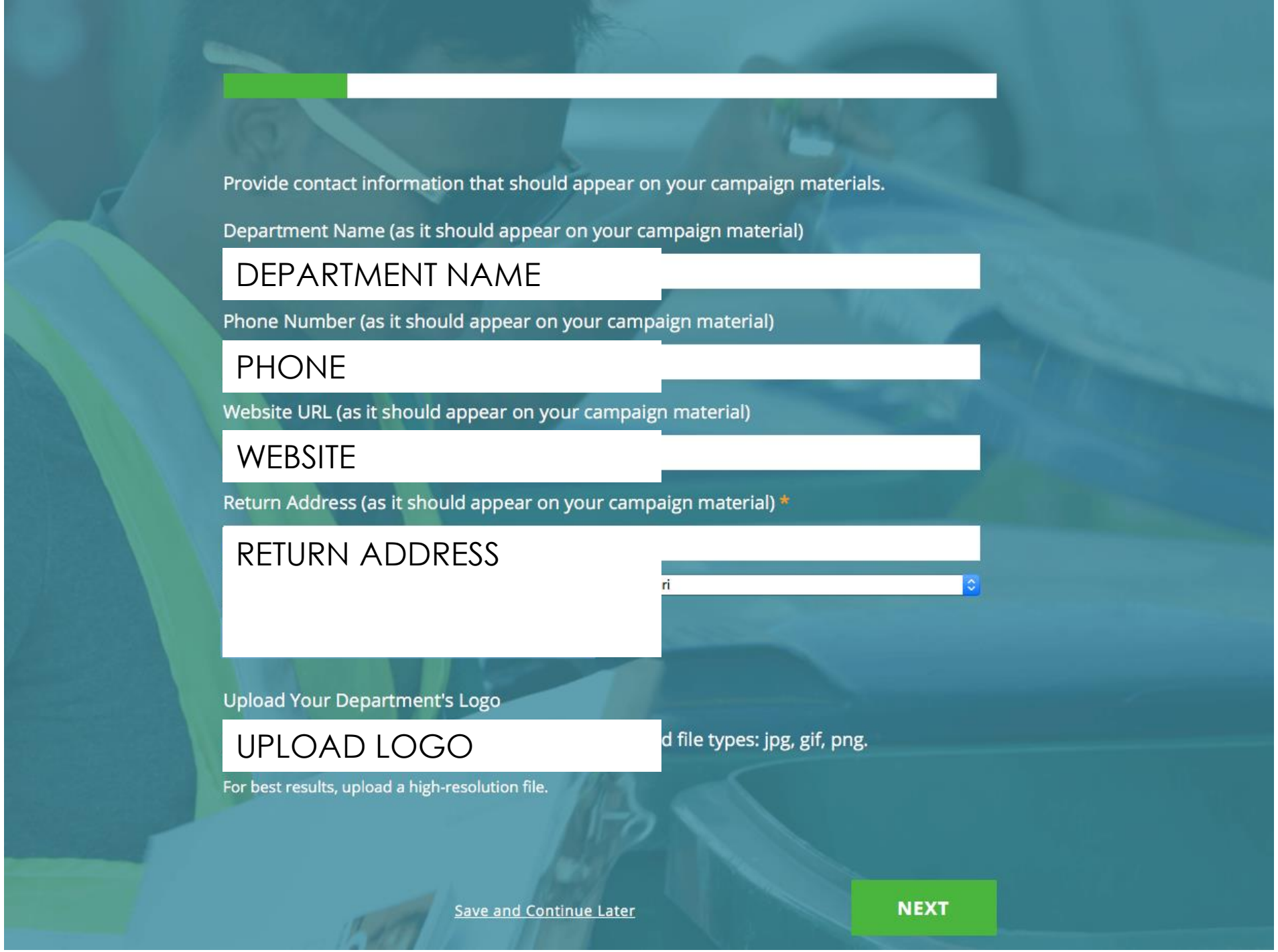
Enter Program Information



Select Biggest Contaminant

SELECT YOUR TOP ISSUE

Your answer here will determine the focus of your Top Issue Postcard and will be featured on the back of your Oops Tag.

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Why? Let's Ask Our MRF!

Select Biggest Contaminant

SELECT YOUR TOP ISSUE

Your answer here will determine the focus of your Top Issue Postcard and will be featured on the back of your Oops Tag.

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Select 4 additional contaminants

SELECT FOUR ADDITIONAL ISSUES

- [ ] Do Not Bag Recyclables
- [x] No Plastic Bags or Plastic Wrap
- [ ] No Needles
- [x] No Tanglers, Cords, Hoses, or Chains
- [ ] No Flammables, Fuel, or Batteries
- [ ] No Bulky Items
- [ ] No Glass
- [ ] No Yard Waste
- [x] No Food or Liquid
- [ ] No Foam
- [x] No Clothing or Linens

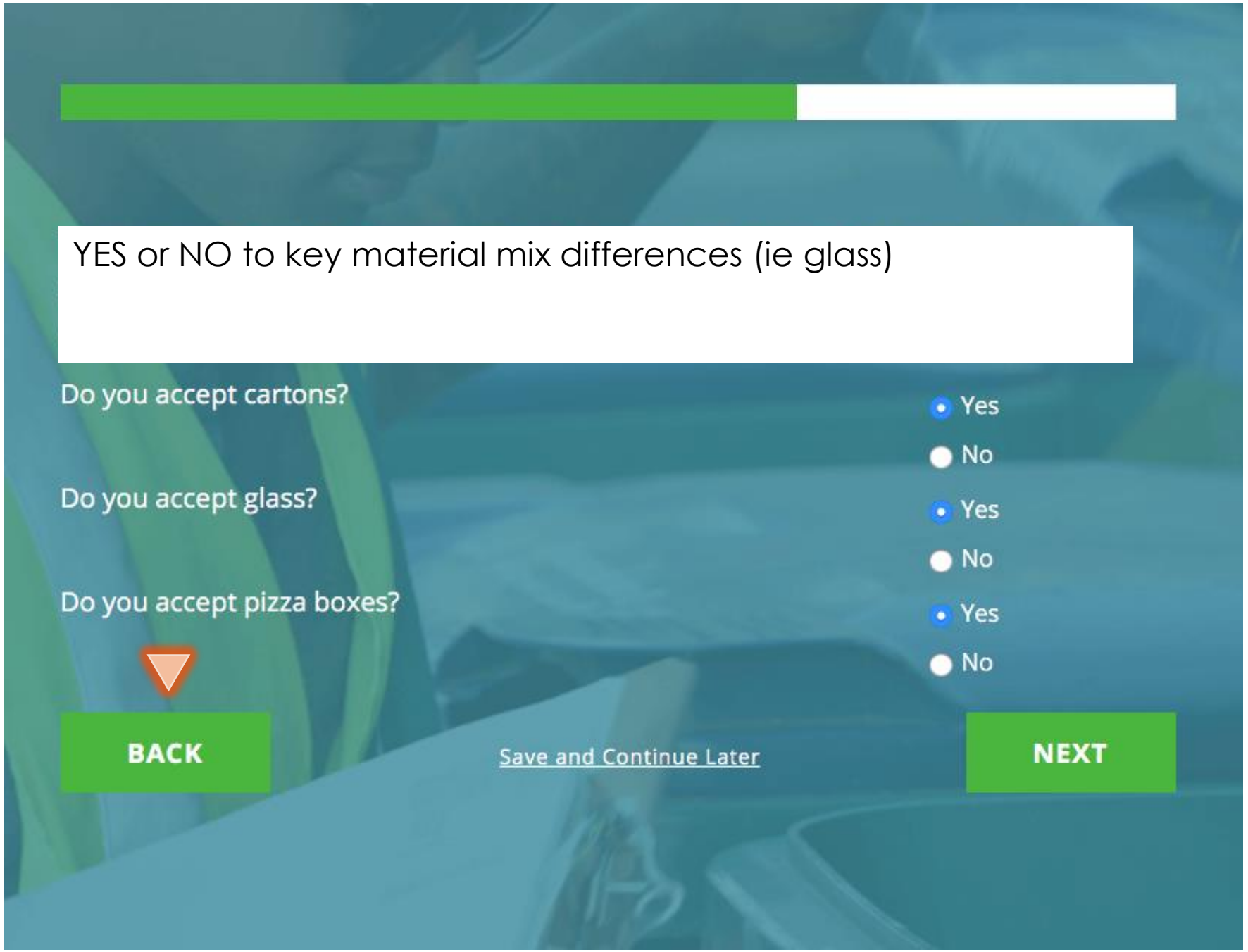
Selections will display as "NO" icons on the Oops Tag and Annual Info Card.

BACK

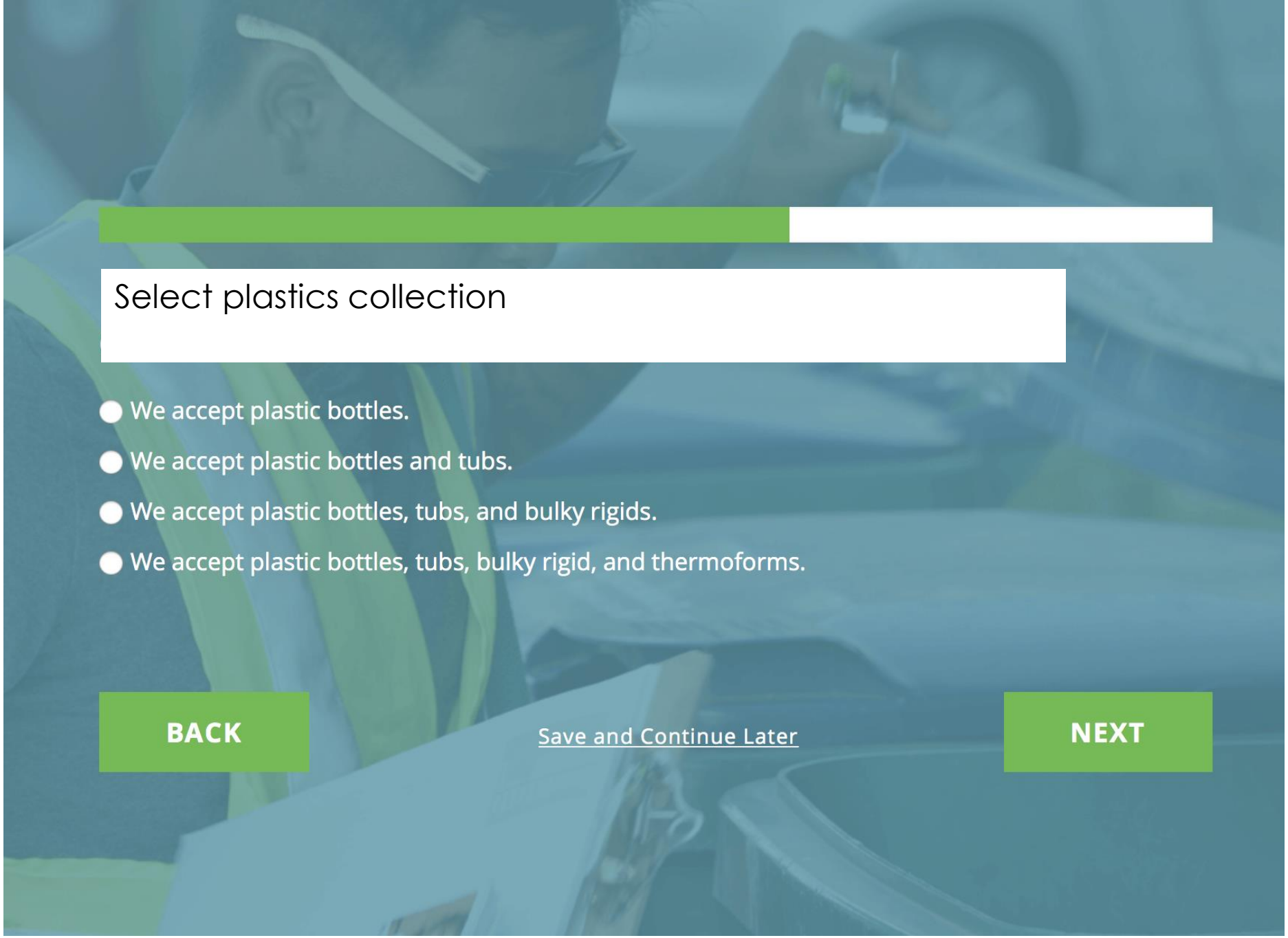
Save and Continue Later

NEXT

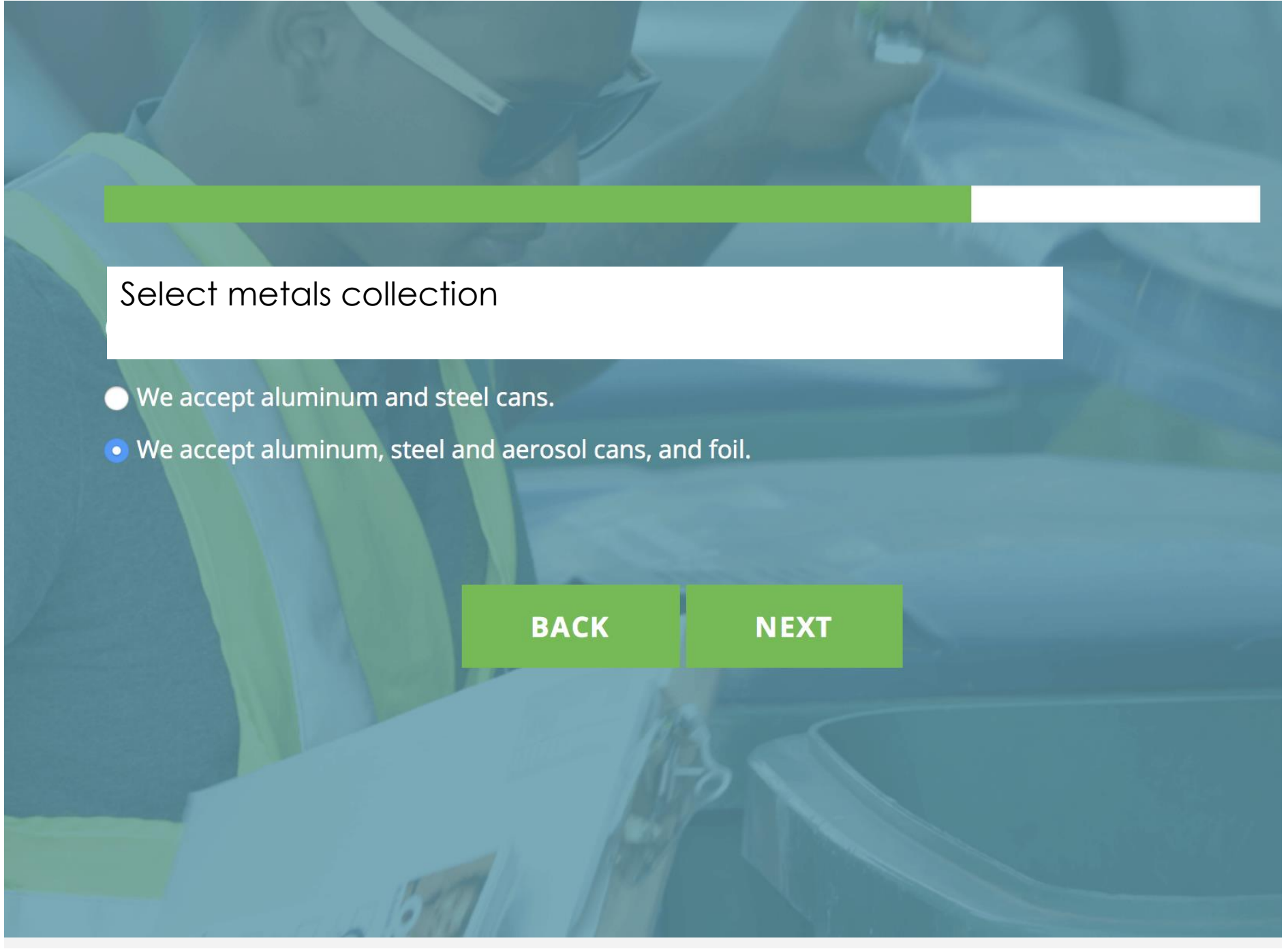
A few additional key pieces of info



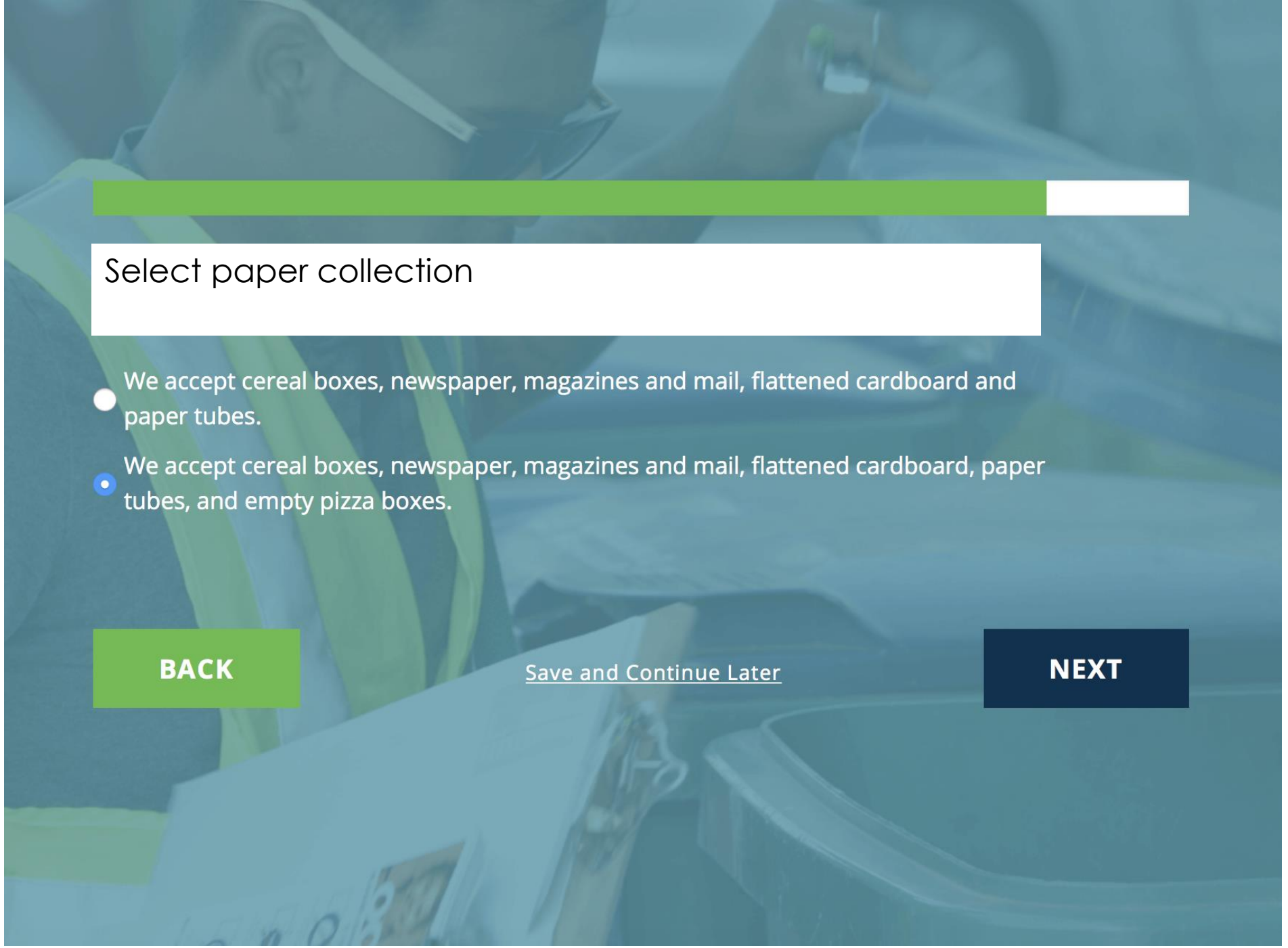
One last bit of information to graphically represent plastics



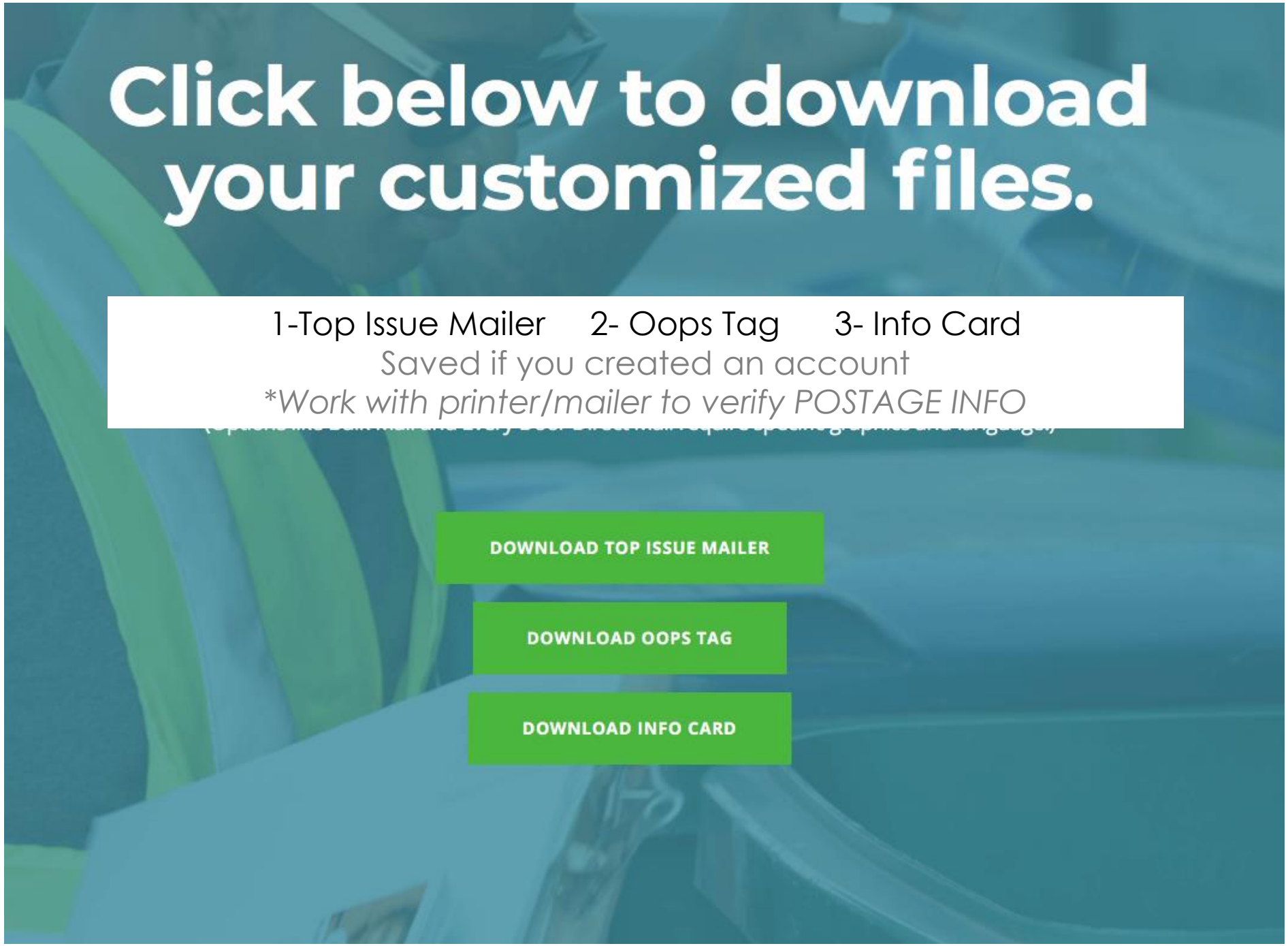
One last bit of information to graphically represent metals



One last bit of information to graphically represent paper



Select your Print-ready files!



Top Issue Mailer

Oops Tag

Info Card

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STEP-BY-STEP KIT

1. Gather Facts
2. Prep Communications
3. Train Staff
4. Deploy
5. Track

TIPS
LINKS TO FILES

Anti-Contamination Recycling Kit

Improving Quality in Your Recycling Program

CURBSIDE

IT'S ALL YOU RECYCLE

If you are looking to clean up your residential recycling stream, this kit might be for you. As you will see, the approach is well tested and the results are both immediate and noteworthy.

This kit has been designed to provide steps, tools, and resources to help you improve the quality of your recycling program. It will require resources, planning, and time on your end, as well as a partnership with your MRF and hauler, but the benefits are many. Increasing the quality of the recycling stream can save on disposal fees, improve resident satisfaction with your program, and ensures the success and sustainability of the recycling system.

To get started, use this ASSESSMENT TOOL to make sure your community is ready to take on this challenge. Before starting this project you'll need to assess your budget, present your case to decision makers, and get buy-in from your city/town officials, your hauler and your MRF. Lastly, take advantage of what others have learned by reviewing this PRO TIPS PAGE.

This toolkit includes:

- ☐ Guidance to help you broach this subject with your MRF and hauler
- ☐ Visual instructions and tools for targeted messages
- ☐ Tips to help you get the best results
- ☐ Tools to help you track and report results

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RECYCLINGPARTNERSHIP.ORG

This Kit was developed in collaboration with Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection

Step 1 Aligning the Lists

PAPER PRODUCT	ACCEPT	DO NOT ACCEPT		DO NOT WANT ON LIST BUT ACCEPT
		NON-DETRIMENTAL	DETRIMENTAL	
Cartons (gable top containers like milk and orange juice, and aseptic containers like juice boxes and soup)	✓			
Cold Cups (e.g. paper fountain drink cup)		✓		
Hard Cover Books		✓		
Hot Cups (e.g. coffee cup)		✓		
Ice Cream Container		✓		
Junk Mail	✓			
Kraft Bags	✓			
Magazines	✓			
Newspaper	✓			
OCC	✓			
Office Paper	✓			
Paperback Books including phone books	✓			
Paperboard Boxes	✓			
Pizza Boxes food and grease free	✓			
Shredded Paper				✓
Directions on how to prepare	Promote community events and more efficient avenues for recycling			
Take-out Containers		✓		
Tissue Paper		✓		
Other:				

- Used in-depth conversations with staff representing the **municipalities**, **MRF operations**, and **material marketing** to ensure everyone was on the same page

- Identified what messages would be clear to those paying attention for
  - 3 seconds
  - 30 seconds
  - 3 minutes

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waukeshacounty.gov/recycling

Waukesha County

WaukeshaCounty.gov/recycling

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Step 2
Educating the Educators

- Drivers
- Call Center staff
- Outreach staff
- Municipal partners

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Waukesha County

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Step 3 Expanding the Audience

MRF-shed Workshop Outcomes:

- Spirit of collaboration
- DNR statewide similar event
- Agreement on the biggest contaminant issues

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waukeshacounty.gov/recycling

Waukesha County

WaukeshaCounty.gov/recycling

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What is Next?

- Implementation for the County and City
  - Overcoming barriers
- Work with partners to incorporate new materials
- Continue the conversation regionally, state-wide, and throughout the industry

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Waukesha County

WaukeshaCounty.gov/recycling

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FOR COMMUNITIES

- Fight Contamination
- Recycle With Carts
- Engage Your Residents
- Campaign Builder

FUNDING PARTNERS INFO HUB ABOUT CONTACT

FIGHT CONTAMINATION →

RECYCLE WITH CARTS →

ENGAGE YOUR RESIDENTS →

Visit **RecyclingPartnership.org** for FREE TOOLS!

TRY THESE TOOLS.
JOIN OUR NETWORK

Let's make recycling more & better!

TOOLS
Online
Library
Starters
BMPs

IDEAS
Webinars
Newsletters
E-Books
Forums

RESOURCES
Grants
Campaigns
Tech
Assistance

TOGETHER

Transforming Recycling For Good

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We're all in this bin together