

2024 Maryland Department of the Environment Statewide Recycling Needs Assessment

OUTREACH AND ENGAGEMENT

Maryland Department of the Environment, State of Maryland



PROJECT DETAILS

DIFFICULTY: Medium

COST: \$60,000

TIMEFRAME: Four (4) Months

DELIVERABLES: A Statewide Recycling Needs Assessment to support the State Legislature's consideration of Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) Program legislation

CORE COMPETENCIES:

- Stakeholder Engagement
- Strategic Planning
- Research and Reporting
- Survey Design/Analysis
- Data Management
- Consensus Building
- Needs Assessment
- Policy Development
- Report Development/QAQC

PROJECT TEAM

Vision Planning and Consulting
HDR Engineering, Inc.

CLIENT CONTACT

Eric Weiss, Solid Waste Planning
Project Manager
HDR Engineering, Inc.
2650 Park Tower Drive, Suite
400
Vienna, VA 22180
Eric.Weiss@hdrinc.com
(703) 342-1465

PROJECT OVERVIEW

VPC provided stakeholder outreach and program evaluation support for the Maryland Department of the Environment's (MDE) Statewide Recycling Needs Assessment, a foundational study to support the state legislature's consideration of Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) Program legislation. VPC's identified and engaged key stakeholders, facilitated and analyzed 10 interviews, and supported survey design and analysis. VPC created an inventory of recycling education and outreach, evaluated MDE's source reduction credit program and reuse initiatives, and provided technical memoranda and QA/QC reviews to inform strategic recommendations for recycling infrastructure and policies in Maryland.

PROJECT SUMMARY

The 2024 Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) Statewide Recycling Needs Assessment, conducted by HDR Inc. with VPC as a key subcontractor, is a 4-month study to support the state legislature's evaluation of Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) Program legislation. This project seeks to assess Maryland's recycling infrastructure, education programs, and reuse initiatives to identify gaps, highlight areas for improvement and areas to build on, and provide strategic recommendations to advance waste diversion and recycling efforts across the State.

VPC was critical in stakeholder engagement and data analysis throughout the project. The team facilitated 10 semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders, including representatives from government agencies, regional organizations, non-profits, and private entities. These interviews provided valuable insights into current recycling practices and challenges municipalities and counties face.

VPC also collaborated on survey design and implementation, ensuring robust data collection through strategies to address non-responses. The survey data was analyzed and subjected to quality assurance/quality control (QA/QC) measures to ensure accuracy and reliability.

In addition to stakeholder outreach, VPC conducted an inventory of existing recycling

education and outreach programs across Maryland to evaluate their effectiveness and identify best practices. The team also assessed MDE's source reduction credit program and reuse initiatives to determine their impact and potential for expansion.

Deliverables included the development of a Statewide Reuse Program/Organization Database, a Database for Maryland Municipal and County Governments summarizing recycling initiatives, ordinances, diversion rates, and compliance efforts, as well as a Detailed Report reviewing over 20 Solid Waste Management Plans with a focus on consumer education strategies. VPC also contributed technical memoranda, performed desktop research, and authored chapters on consumer education/outreach strategies and statewide reuse/refill programs, offering actionable policy recommendations to enhance public awareness and participation in recycling efforts.

By analyzing data from interviews, surveys, and program evaluations, VPC helped identify opportunities for improvement in Maryland's recycling systems while ensuring alignment with the state's sustainability goals. These efforts culminated in strategic recommendations designed to strengthen recycling infrastructure throughout the State, improve program effectiveness, and support future legislative action on EPR policies.