

The Massachusetts Recycling Economy

This fact sheet highlights some of the economic benefits of recycling and recycling's contribution to the Commonwealth's economy. It is generally written for public officials and private financiers who make funding and investment decisions but is worth sharing with everyone!

• What are the economic benefits of the recycling economy?

By converting raw materials into products, recycling (including reuse and remanufacturing) creates jobs, builds more competitive manufacturing industries and adds significantly to the Massachusetts economy.

Direct Impacts:

- 1,437 recycling businesses and organizations
- 19,500 recycling jobs
- \$557 million annual payroll
- \$3.5 billion receipts

Indirect impacts of recycling businesses include their interaction with a wide variety of service-based businesses (e.g., equipment manufacturers, consultants, brokers, transporters, accounting firms, office supply companies) and provide an additional 11,452 jobs, \$470 million payroll and \$1.6 billion in receipts.

Recycling businesses also generate roughly \$64 million in state tax revenues.

(Source: U.S. Recycling Economic Information Study, R.W. Beck, July 2006)

• How significant are recycling jobs?

Recycling is a major employer. More than 3 percent of the Massachusetts workforce works in recycling related fields. Recycling employs as many people in Massachusetts as child care services, the accounting and bookkeeping sector, or the electric utilities industry.

Employment in the Massachusetts recycling industry ranks higher per capita than California, New York and Florida.

Job creation from recycling far outweighs disposal on a per ton basis. Jobs and wages increase the more recyclable materials move from collection to processing to manufacturing. Sorting and processing recyclables provides 10 times more jobs than if the same materials were thrown away.

Manufacturers that use recyclable materials to make new products employ even more people, and at higher wages, than sorting and processing companies. For instance, some recycling-based paper mills and plastic product manufacturers, employ 60 times more workers than do landfills on a per-ton basis.

(Source: Institute for Local Self Reliance)

- **What are examples of Massachusetts recycling businesses?**

Massachusetts has a long and proud history of businesses and non-profit organizations that recycle raw materials that would otherwise be disposed. Some examples include:

Reuse: The Building Materials Resource Center of

Roxbury collects and sells used building materials such as kitchen cabinets, windows, and appliances. Everyone benefits, as contractors save on disposal costs, building owners get a tax deduction, and low-income customers purchase products at discount prices.



Remanufacturing: LaserTone of Littleton collects and

remanufactures computer printer toner cartridges from commercial businesses, diverting 200 tons of metal and plastic from disposal each year.



Collection: E.L. Harvey & Sons of Westborough provides

collection services for municipalities and businesses that generate recyclable paper and cardboard, bottles and cans and construction and demolition debris. E.L. Harvey sorts materials and sells them to manufacturers who use the raw materials to make recycled-content products.



Processing: Pro Pel PlasTech of Deerfield recycles scrap plastics by regrinding and selling them to manufacturers that use the plastics in their products.



Manufacturing: Newark Atlantic Paperboard Corporation collects, processes and manufactures recycled paper products. Newark's mills in Fitchburg, Haverhill and Natick use recycled newspaper, magazines and office paper collected from cities and towns to make a number of products, including 100% recycled-content paperboard for packaging cereal and many other consumer products.

