

# Solid Waste Management Core Services Model Report

*Protecting Human Health and Our Environment.*

## Proper management of solid waste safeguards a healthy environment, assures equitable access, and supports a strong economy.

Washington's systems for collection, disposal, and recycling are managed through a structure that includes governmental services and oversight, and services provided by private companies. Washington residents need a modern solid waste management system that is accessible by all, affordable, and advances positive environmental goals.



## The Problem

### Baseline waste disposal and recycling services in Washington are not uniform statewide.

State residents can easily dispose of or recycle certain wastes in some communities and not in others. High costs for some of these services in certain parts of the state can be burdensome. These higher costs can also discourage proper handling, reduce the services available, and increase illegal dumping.

### This lack of consistency in programs and services and higher prices in some areas is confusing to residents, creates disparities between communities, and results in poor environmental outcomes.

According to state law, counties have the primary responsibility for managing solid waste systems. But, counties are not required to provide the same exact solid waste programming across the state. There is good reason for this flexibility. However, it also makes sense that certain core services be available to every resident, everywhere.

Significant imbalances exist between counties in funding levels, demand levels, affordable access to end markets for certain products, and operational costs. Some essential services, like

household garbage disposal, are widely available. However, the imbalances cause significant variations in other services, like recycling, which leads to confusion and frustration for residents, private providers, and governments.

Hazardous materials which require proper disposal after use or if no longer needed (motor oil, solvents, electronics, pesticides, etc.) are common and widely used. Still, adequate disposal facilities do not exist in some areas. Even if facilities exist, some residents must travel long distances to access them.

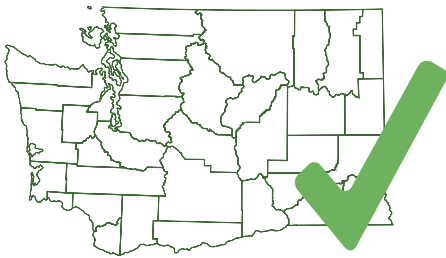
Regionalization of landfilling and the required shipping to those regional sites has resulted in higher disposal costs in some counties, creating a disproportionate burden on area residents. High prices can create more temptation for illegal dumping, leading to even more cost increases for local programs.

Some regions have low populations and correspondingly low disposal demands. Rates for some services in these areas may also be low as the average household income is typically not as high as in more densely populated regions. While low demand and low rates may seem like a good thing, it creates a problem generating adequate revenue to maintain necessary services.

State funding support for county solid waste services has decreased over 62% since 2013, not counting inflation. Local programs have attempted to compensate for the reduced state support by increasing fees and cutting programs and services.

## The Solution

Improve the solid waste management system in Washington by assuring a set of core programs and services are operating in every county and available to most residents, regardless of where they live, at a reasonable cost.



**A minimum standard for disposal and recycling programs and services should be available to every resident in Washington State.**

Such a measure will reduce confusion and improve the willingness to dispose of hazardous materials properly. It will also increase recycling rates while reducing contamination.



**Services should be relatively convenient to access.**

Most residents should have access to all core solid waste management services within a reasonable distance. Rates for disposal and recycling should be affordable for all core services for all residents.



**Adequate funding should be available to local solid waste programs to achieve these outcomes.**

**While WACSWM members support this core services model, the model represents the baseline that should be available in every county.**

All local programs should maintain their ability to add/require additional programs and services. Enforcement of illegal dumping, illegal and improper storage, and unlawful processing of solid waste materials should be robust and uniform.

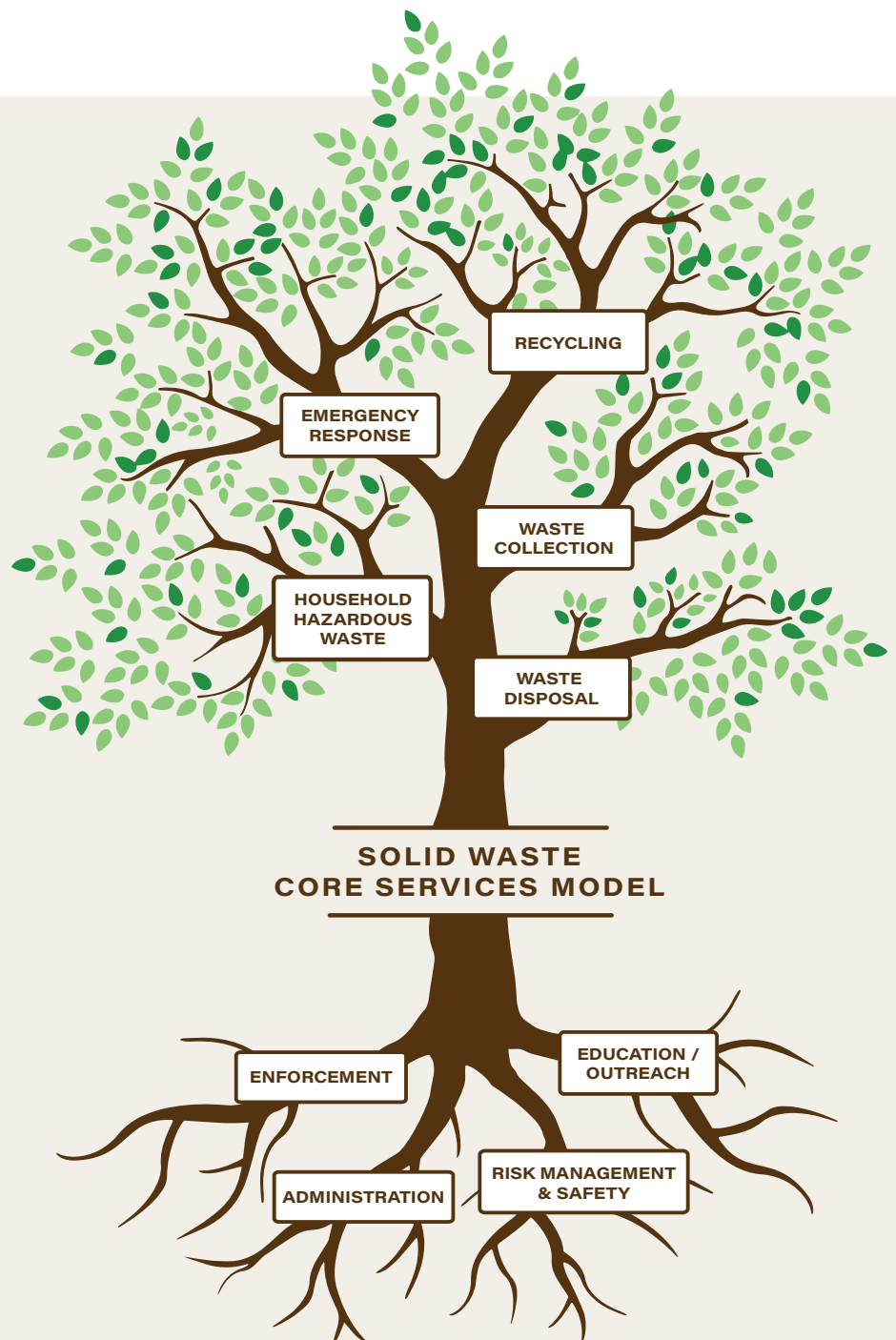
## Core Services Model

When considering a core set of solid waste management programs and services in every county across the state, it is critical to evaluate Washington's various regions' diverse cultures and populations. Service levels are not the same in urban areas as suburban and rural areas, even in the same county. Expectations by residents and governments regarding what

needs to be provided are typically different in Eastern Washington and Western Washington and within more rural and urban areas. The recommendations presented here reflect those considerations while also meeting the need for a more consistent level of solid waste management programming statewide.

### The Model

The model is organized under nine distinct program categories, each of which is a critical component of a modern solid waste management system. The most visible programs to residents, and the programs with which residents frequently interact, are waste collection, waste disposal, recycling, household hazardous waste, and emergency response. Several other programs that are less visible to the public function as the foundation, or roots, of the system. They include administration, outreach and education, risk management and safety, and enforcement, and they are crucial to the system's overall success. Every county solid waste management program must have the capacity and resources to develop and operate these nine core programs.



# Solid Waste Management Systems Core Programs Summary

PROGRAM	DESCRIPTION
<b>Waste Collection</b>	The collection and transport of waste to the place of treatment or discharge.
<b>Waste Disposal</b>	Removing and destroying or storing damaged, used or other unwanted products and substances. Disposal may include burning, burial at landfill sites, composting, and recycling.
<b>Recycling</b>	Recycling means any recovery operation by which waste materials are collected for reprocessing into other products, materials or substances.
<b>Household Hazardous Waste</b>	The collection and safe handling of common everyday items that are easily obtained and regularly used, but may be harmful to the environment or human health. Includes items like paints, stains, cleaning chemicals, pesticides, automobile products, etc.
<b>Emergency Response</b>	Responding to large-scale events which may result in high volumes of waste. Such events may include earthquakes, landslides, large-scale fires including wildfires, and tsunamis.
<b>Administration</b>	Solid waste management programs require professional oversight and technical expertise. Administrative and operations staff need regular training and certification updates. Planning for the future needs of the community and the program are critical. Administration also requires financial and contract management.
<b>Enforcement</b>	Includes monitoring and permitting active solid waste management facilities, both public and private, to ensure compliance with state and local environmental regulations. Enforcement also includes actively investigating alleged violations and taking enforcement actions.
<b>Education &amp; Outreach</b>	Residents need to know clearly what they need to do and why. Education reduces risks and improves outcomes and program support. Additional outreach activities may also assist in reducing overall waste through programs on composting, proper recycling, and smart shopping.
<b>Risk Management &amp; Safety</b>	Wastes need to be collected, treated, and disposed of in a manner that minimizes risk to public health and the environment. Staff needs to be trained in proper handling and personal protection. Legacy solid waste sites need monitoring to protect air and water quality and reduce other hazards.

Certain services must be provided within each program to ensure a baseline uniform and equitable system. Washington residents should expect that common commodities like plastic bottles, envelopes, and cereal boxes can be easily recycled everywhere. Unfortunately, in today's systems, they cannot.

Environmental health offices in every county should enforce state and local environmental health laws and protect the public by assuring illegal dumping is prevented, and hazardous sites are cleaned up. Again, that standard is not being implemented as resources are lacking in many regions.

# Solid Waste Management Systems Core Services Categorization

## Direct Programs

It is also necessary to precisely determine which services should be provided for some programs. The chart below displays recommended services within each program category for those with which residents are most likely to interact directly. The chart is organized by program, recommended

services, and population area types. It provides the minimum list of services and service levels that should be delivered in each county to assure a more uniform baseline system of solid waste management across the state.

		URBAN	SUBURBAN	RURAL
Waste Collection	<b><u>CURBSIDE</u></b>			
	MSW	X	X	X
	Recyclables	X	X	
	Yard Debris	X	X	
	Commercial	X	X	X
	<b><u>SELF HAUL</u></b>			
	MSW	X	X	X
	Recyclables	X	X	X
	Yard Debris	X	X	X
	Commercial	X	X	X
	C&D	X	X	X
	Hazardous Wastes	X	X	X
	<b><u>COMMERCIAL CONTAINER</u></b>			
	MSW	X	X	X
	Recyclables	X	X	X
C&D	X	X	X	
Waste Disposal	Transfer stations/drop boxes/landfill site	X	X	X
Household Hazardous Waste (HHW)	<b><u>HHW COMMODITIES**</u></b>			
	Residential consumers	X	X	X
	Small quantity generators	X	X	X
	Fixed facility	X	X	X
Events	X	X	X	
Recycling	Consumer commodities*	X	X	X
	Yard debris composting	X	X	X
	Food waste composting			
	White Goods/Scrap Metal	X	X	X
Emergency Response	<b><u>DEBRIS MANAGEMENT PLAN</u></b>	X	X	X
	Collection Points	X	X	X
	Disposal Sites	X	X	X
	Resource Sharing Agreements	X	X	X
	Multijurisdictional/Multiagency Collaboration	X	X	X
	Contracting	X	X	X
	Fee Flexibility Authorizations	X	X	X
Continuity of Operations Plan	X	X	X	

\*See WSAC Commingled Recycling Guidance for list of recommended consumer commodities

\*\*See WSAC Household Hazardous Waste Guidance for list of recommended HHW items

## Conclusion

**A core services model for solid waste management services should be in place in every county.** By providing these services to all residents in Washington, we will limit confusion, reduce contamination, and reduce overall costs. We will also be improving our ability to protect the environment, address equity concerns, and improve health outcomes.

Unfortunately, several barriers and challenges exist that prevent many county programs from implementing this standard. These include geographic, cultural, and density issues and funding, access, and infrastructure. Many programs cannot implement this core services model today.

**More work is needed. Understanding the costs of providing the core services and the funding support needed for implementation is critical. Assessing the difference between this standard and what is currently available is also essential. Performing these analyses will inform solutions for implementing the core services model in every county in Washington.**

## Glossary

### Curbside

A service provided to households and businesses for the disposal of refuse or recycling.

### C & D

Refers to construction and demolition debris and means those materials resulting from the alteration, construction, rehabilitation, or repair of any human-made structure, including houses, buildings, industrial or commercial facilities, and roadways.

### Drop box

A receptacle at a fixed location into which refuse or recycling can be deposited.

### Food waste

Refers to food appropriate for human consumption being discarded.

### HHW

Refers to household hazardous waste. Includes any item that may harm the environment or human health like paints, stains, cleaning chemicals, pesticides, automobile products, etc.

### MSW

Refers to municipal solid waste, commonly known as trash or garbage. It includes non-hazardous disposable materials.

### Recyclables

Materials or products that can be used again after being treated or processed.

### Rural

Areas outside cities/towns with low population density and small settlements. Agricultural areas and forested areas are commonly rural.

### Self-haul

Refers to waste that is hauled to a transfer or disposal facility by someone other than a private waste hauling company or by someone whose primary business is not waste hauling.

### Small Quantity Generators

These are businesses that generate less than 220 pounds of dangerous waste in any month.

### Suburban

A mixed-use or residential area existing either as part of a city/town or outside of a city/town but within commuting distance, usually surrounding urban areas. Less densely populated than urban areas but significantly more so than rural areas.

### Transfer station

A site where recyclables and refuse are collected and sorted in preparation for processing or landfill.

### Urban

Heavily developed areas with a density of human structures such as houses, commercial buildings, roads, bridges, and railways. Can refer to cities, towns, and surrounding areas.

### White goods

Large home appliances such as refrigerators and washing machines, typically white in color.

### Yard waste

Decomposable waste materials generated by yard and lawn care and includes leaves, grass trimmings, brush, wood chips, and shrubs.