

Each year, the United States generates 2.7 billion tons of industrial solid waste and over 260 million tons of municipal solid waste. Manufacturers, companies, schools and governments across the country are looking to strengthen their competitiveness and sustainability by setting and realizing ambitious waste reduction goals. By reducing waste, these organizations also save energy. For example, in manufacturing plants, waste reduction can improve the efficiency of manufacturing plants, thereby reducing embodied energy flows in materials. More efficient use of materials and higher recycling rates in homes and buildings also reduce the amount of energy needed to transport and treat waste.

The Department of Energy (DOE) Better Buildings, Better Plants program is starting a Waste Reduction Pilot to help partners reduce waste and improve energy performance. DOE will work with interested partners to collectively set, track, and meet waste reduction goals.

Why Should Partners Join?

In addition to improving their sustainability profile, organizations that reduce waste can save on operating costs associated with waste disposal, energy use, and raw material purchases. The Better Buildings, Better Plants Waste Reduction Pilot gives partners the opportunity to:

- ▶ Formalize their commitment to waste reduction by setting a public goal in partnership with DOE.
- ▶ Network with peers to share waste reduction solutions through webinars, national conferences, and other convenings.
- ▶ Receive guidance from DOE and other organizations on issues such as waste data tracking and waste management best practices.
- ▶ Earn recognition for the progress they make in reducing waste and associated energy consumption.

Like the [Water Savings Pilot](#), which collected data and best practices on water efficiency, this Waste Reduction Pilot will provide a platform for industry leaders to demonstrate what is achievable in waste reduction. Additionally, understanding real world barriers and details of successful strategies will enable DOE to help other organizations improve or develop their own waste reduction programs, as well as to develop new technical assistance resources.

What Do Partners Commit To?

DOE will work with partners to establish waste reduction goals, track progress, identify and overcome barriers to reducing waste, and document best practices. Partners will set a waste reduction goal across a portfolio of facilities, and will set an appropriate baseline year in coordination with their DOE contact. Partners will share baseline waste data within 6 months of joining, and will share data showing progress on an annual basis. DOE will help partners develop a case study highlighting their waste reduction accomplishments.

How Will Waste Reduction Be Tracked?

DOE will work with participating partners to establish appropriate metrics to track progress towards their goal. Waste and waste reduction metrics may be expressed in terms of waste reduction intensity, absolute waste reduction, or other meaningful metrics. Metrics may focus on reduction of waste, reuse of materials, and/or recycling and diversion from landfills. Metrics can vary by organization or even for different facility types within an organization. Common metrics include:

- ▶ Corporate/facility waste to landfill diversion rate (WTL)
- ▶ Corporate/facility recycling rate
- ▶ Waste generation per employee
- ▶ Waste generation per unit revenue
- ▶ Waste generation per unit product
- ▶ Reduction in embodied energy flows in processes and/or products

Partners may utilize different means of tracking progress on waste metrics, including invoice accounting systems, waste audit reports and tracking spreadsheets, detailed mass or material balance assessments for manufacturing facilities, and ENERGY STAR® Portfolio Manager. DOE will work with participating partners to develop a process to report progress on their waste goals.

How Can My Organization Join?

DOE welcomes any partner to the waste reduction pilot that has completed one year of energy data reporting and are in regular contact with their DOE contact. To join, partners can email their Better Buildings, Better Plants contact with details on their goal, baseline year, and square footage or number of plants committed.

For more information, please contact Bruce Lung (robert.lung@ee.doe.gov) or your Better Buildings, Better Plants account manager.

Timing and Next Steps

DOE is launching the pilot now and looks forward to working with an initial group of partners over the next 1-2 years to determine the best way DOE can work with partners to support their waste reduction efforts.