

WASTE REDUCTION PILOT

Each year, the United States generates roughly 2.7 billion tons of industrial solid waste and over 290 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 facilitating 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.

What are the Benefits of Participation?

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:

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

What Do Partners Commit To?

DOE is working with partners to establish waste reduction goals, track progress, identify and overcome barriers to reducing waste, and document best practices. Partners have set an appropriate baseline year and waste reduction goal across a portfolio of facilities in coordination with their DOE contact. Going forward, partners share baseline waste data within one year of joining and data showing progress on an annual basis. Using this data, DOE works with partners to develop case studies highlighting their waste reduction accomplishments.

How Will Waste Reduction Be Tracked?

DOE is working with participating partners to establish appropriate metrics to track progress towards their individual goal. Waste and waste reduction metrics may be expressed in terms of waste reduction intensity, absolute waste reduction, diversion, 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 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



A worker from pilot partner Armstrong Flooring's post-consumer On&On Recycling Program.

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

How Can My Organization Participate?

If you are interested in learning more, please contact Bruce Lung (robert.lung@ee.doe.gov) and Hannah Debelius (hannah.debelius@ee.doe.gov) or your Better Buildings, Better Plants Account Manager.

Timing and Next Steps

DOE launched the pilot in 2019 and looks forward to continuing to work with participants to determine how DOE can best support their waste reduction efforts. In addition, DOE is also in the process of establishing technical assistance resources, as well as other tools and case studies. By the end of the pilot, DOE would like to have:

- ▶ Established a community of organizations dedicated to reducing waste and energy;
- ▶ Be able to define leadership in waste reduction;
- ▶ Understand the correlation between waste reduction and energy savings;
- ▶ A future initiative addressing the nexus of waste reduction and energy efficiency.

To learn more about the Waste Reduction Pilot, please visit [our website](#).

Inaugural Pilot Partners

