



## Opportunity Is Around the Corner

AMERIPEN surveyed the largest 100 cities in the U.S. for their adoption rate of best practices and their effectiveness and efficiency of recovering used packaging materials. This two-year research effort has made it clear that there are areas of opportunity for standardization and best practice adoption that could effectively move the needle on increasing recovery of used packaging in the United States.

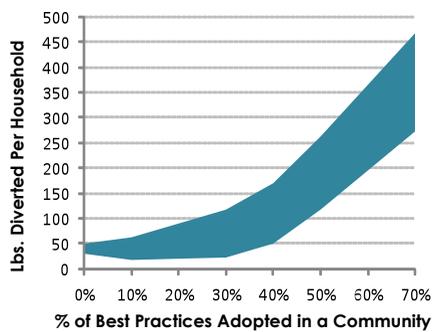


One of the most important insights from this work is that certain policies and programs affect the recycling success in cities across the U.S. **Through the implementation of best practices, the recycling system in the United States has the potential to efficiently recover more material than it does today.** AMERIPEN is devoting significant resources and is working with a number of groups and organizations to identify actions and policies that have demonstrated improved results in curbside recycling.

## A Solid Foundation: Survey Finds Best Practices Increase Success

In 2013, an AMERIPEN working group completed a study that examined best practices for recovery of used packaging across the nation's 100 largest cities and their correlation to the efficiency and effectiveness of existing curbside recycling systems. A key finding is that successful recovery of used packaging is rooted in the uptake and implementation of a variety of tools and policies that fall within five common best practice areas. (See Policy and Education section on next page.) A second key finding, depicted to the left, is that higher adoption of best practices and policies leads to greater recovery of used packaging materials.

Adoption Rate vs. Recovery Rate of Used Packaging



Incentives & Education	Policies & Education	Collection	Processing
Sustained incentive-type programs	Unit based pricing programs (PAYT)	Expanded access with rolling carts	Leverage hub & spoke models to drive supply
Targeted community based social marketing/incentives	Mandated recycling goals	Maximize types of pkg. materials collected	MRF utilization and technology
State partnerships, CVP, KAB and Earth 911	State level landfills bans		
Funding levels >\$1 per household	Local recycling ordinances		

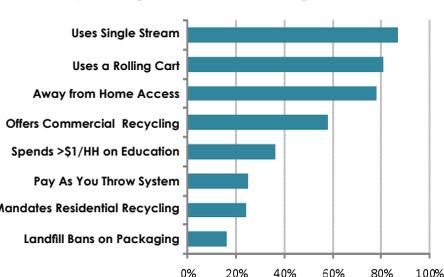
## Best Practices Surveyed

No one program in isolation can maximize recovery of used packaging materials in a community. Our research proves that it takes a suite of best practices identified and validated through survey results, tailored for the community, to increase the recovery of used packaging materials and to create an economically viable system.

## System Findings

The survey results confirm inconsistency in adoption of best practices across the 100 cities. There is a significant opportunity to expand best practices identified through our research, some practices being utilized by less than 40% of communities. Many of the best practices depicted are focused on improving the utilization of existing infrastructure through education as well as local and state policy.

% of Responding Communities Using Best Practices



## Best Practices Drive Waste Diversion

### Policy and Education

This research shows that Pay As You Throw (PAYT) unit-based trash pricing mechanisms, mandatory recycling, and disposal bans have the potential to drive consumer behavior towards recycling and improve the recovery rates of used packaging. By setting recycling goals, communities have additional support to drive new programs and improve performance. These programs, coupled with state-level recycling goals and municipal efforts to educate and incentivize consumers, can have significant impact on diverting material from landfills. However, it is important that attention is paid to infrastructure support and development of markets for recovered materials.

### Incentives and Education

Sound policy can drive consumer behaviors, which can then be complemented with an incentivized collection program. Studies have shown that a 20% material collection increase is possible with well-designed and managed programs that are effectively communicated to residents in the communities. Communities may want to investigate the return on investment of education programs such as the Curbside Value Partnership. (Learn more at [www.recyclecurbside.org](http://www.recyclecurbside.org).)

### Carts and Education

When education, policy, incentives, and new infrastructure, such as rolling carts, are combined, consumers take notice. Deploying carts can grow curbside collection by as much as 60%. Through effective education programs, consumers learn what materials can and should be recycled, helping to maintain product quality and commodity value. Though many of the 100 cities have transitioned to carts, overall performance may be limited by insufficient or missing education programs that are keeping systems from performing at their peak.

## Gaining Speed: Next Steps for Best in Class

By applying proven approaches, communities can take average programs and transform them into best-in-class performers. Depending on the community, this could improve efficiency, increase revenue from commodities, decrease waste disposal costs, and more fully utilize the existing system for curbside recycling in the United States. AMERIPEN's goal is to cooperate with communities and states to expand the adoption of best practices with the whole industry value chain, in order to assist communities in evaluating the costs and benefits of best practices adoption.

### Best Practice:

A national scope strategy with a focus on policy initiatives in targeted areas has the potential to dramatically affect the framework for packaging recovery across the country.



Policy initiatives include local recycling ordinances, state landfills bans, PAYT programs, and other similar local and state participation strategies.

### Best Practice:

Incentivized collection systems increase participation, material recovery, and program performance.



15% Increase in Participation      20% Increase in Material Collection

There are a host of incentive programs that have historically been shown to increase recovery. These include short-term, long-term, as well as PAYT systems, and targeted outreach programs.

### Best Practice:

Strategic investment in rolling carts:



Increases curbside participation.      Raises participation rates and pounds per HH recovered.      Optimizes collection cost efficiency and material recovery rates.

Cart systems help put recycling more on par with garbage collection, and can dramatically improve collection economics. A well-planned collection system can be popular to residents, safe to collectors, and provide a quality product mix for processors.





To learn more...

Go to [www.ameripen.org](http://www.ameripen.org).



The power of packaging in balance.®

[www.ameripen.org](http://www.ameripen.org)

Published September 2013. The data, insights and conclusions in this document are based on primary research conducted by Resource Recycling Systems on behalf of AMERIPEN. To learn more, please contact us at [info@ameripen.org](mailto:info@ameripen.org).

AMERIPEN, the AMERIPEN logo, and The Power of Packaging in Balance are registered trademarks of the American Institute for Packaging and the Environment. All rights reserved. All other mentioned names of companies, products, and/or organizations may be trademarks or registered trademarks of their respective holders.

**DISCLAIMER:** This report was developed by an AMERIPEN working team consisting of packaging and materials management experts from across the public and private sectors. The conclusions and views expressed in this document do not necessarily reflect the views of every AMERIPEN member company or affiliate.

© 2013, American Institute for Packaging and the Environment. All rights reserved.

