



Roadmap to WRAP

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A guide to help promote plastic film recycling for municipalities, states, community organizers, and business stakeholders.

OVERVIEW

Traditional community recycling efforts like curbside collection don't work well for plastic film recycling. When recycling facilities process materials collected from curbside bins, plastic film often gets stuck in machines and requires shutting down a facility to clean out their gears.

Returning plastic film to retailers helps recycling be more efficient, leading to higher adoption rates, happier partnerships, and cleaner communities.

The Wrap Recycling Action Program (WRAP) facilitates plastic film recycling through consumer education and expands access to film recycling for businesses. By forming partnerships with schools, businesses, haulers, nonprofits, and agencies we can reduce the plastic film sent to landfills.

While the WRAP program cannot provide collection bins and services, WRAP supplies tools and technical assistance to help you successfully navigate the landscape of plastic film recycling.

This six-step guide provides the information to help you get started including: how to find community partners, resources and tools for residential education, and how to begin working with business partners to facilitate film collection.

WHO WILL THIS GUIDE BENEFIT?

Anyone involved in the life cycle of a recycling program, including:

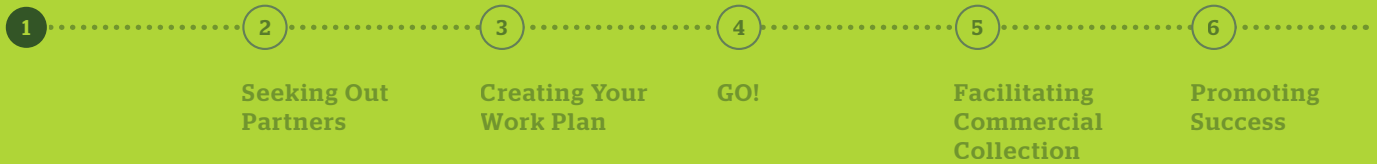
- o Municipal and State Governments and Municipal Agencies
- o Material Recovery Facilities (MRFs), Recycling Facilities, and Collectors
- o Retail Businesses and Community Organizers
- o Recycling Awareness and Environmental Education Groups
- o Citizens with an interest in recycling



i *What is Plastic Film?*

Go to the **WRAP QUICK REFERENCE** at the back to learn more.

Understanding Local Needs and Opportunities



As you begin your plastic film recycling journey, take some time to list challenges, needs, and opportunities affecting your community. Consider some of the following:

- o What sustainability or waste diversion targets exist in your community?
- o Are you aware of MRF contamination issues related to plastic bags/film? [See what can happen >](#)
- o How will you raise awareness about how and where to recycle plastic film?
- o What support will local businesses need to improve/expand their film recycling program?
- o Does your community provide funding for consumer outreach?
- o What partnerships could help the plastic film recycling initiative succeed?
- o Will local media outlets share information about your initiative?

Remember: WRAP focuses on using existing infrastructure, so there is no requirement to start municipal or county-wide collection programs to participate in the program! This makes it easy to implement and quickly see results.

FACT

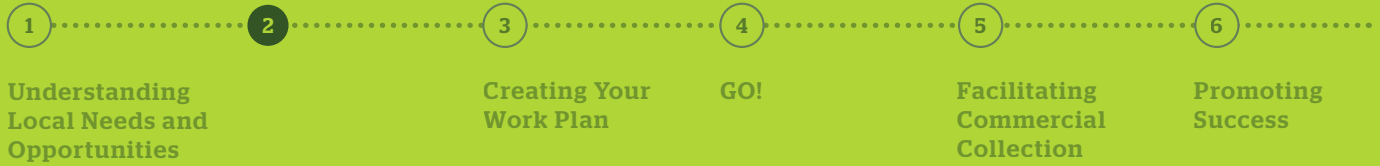
More than 90% of Americans have access to plastic bag and film recycling, primarily at over 18,000 major grocery and retail chain locations.



RESOURCES

- > [Plastic film Drop-off Directory](#)
- > [Learn what types of film to recycle](#)
- > [Community Campaign Reports:](#)
[Milwaukee, WI](#)
[Vancouver, WA](#)
- > [WRAP FAQs](#)

Seeking Out Partners



Many organizations in your state, city, and community support recycling and can make great partners. Retailers like grocery and department stores make valuable partners. Many collect plastic film already and even participate with WRAP at the corporate level. Engaging a local retail partner can help your campaign, not just with a primary collection location, but also collection data and additional in-store consumer education. As you seek partners, consider the following:

- o To increase outreach to residents and businesses, contact state or local agencies like Solid Waste & Recycling departments, Chambers of Commerce, economic development groups, and nonprofits or government extensions.
- o When you seek sponsorship, remind organizations that they can provide funding or ‘in kind’ services such as volunteer time and marketing, advertising, and promotion services.
- o Dedicated volunteers can support you! Organizations such as Keep America Beautiful, local schools, religious groups, community service groups, and even neighborhoods have helped other communities establish thriving recycling programs.
- o When you seek retail partners, take the time to communicate the benefits they can receive. Need help? See the grocer Wegmans case study at the end.

TIPS

1. Since the key tenet of WRAP outreach is “return-to-retail,” a strong retail partner plays a critical role in collecting the material.
2. WRAP surveys show that public education works best when provided through varied channels, i.e. from participating retail stores and community outreach efforts.



RESOURCES

- > [WRAP Campaign Overview](#)
- > [WRAP Invitation for Retailers](#)

Creating Your Work Plan



Now it's time to put your goals, metrics, and timeline on paper in the form of a Project or Work Plan (see below).

Many WRAP pilot campaigns utilize local contractors and volunteers to collect data, perform outreach, and analyze data, so don't forget to assign tasks to the partners and volunteers supporting your efforts.

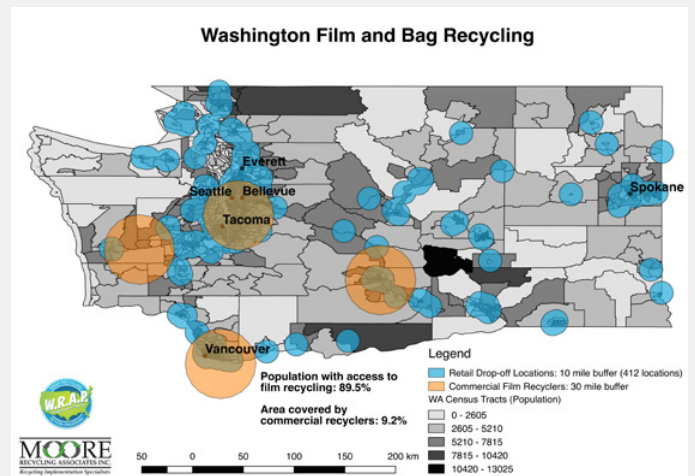
You can use the Infrastructure Map (shown at right) to target sectors that may need help starting or expanding film recycling programs. It's also time to collect any baseline data that you need for your metrics.

When collecting data, consider documenting:

- o Volume of plastic film collected
- o Number of participating retailers
- o Landfill space saved through your WRAP efforts
- o Citizens engaged

TIPS

Be flexible. Everyone is busy and the flexibility to adjust goals and dates makes for a more fulfilling partnership.



Example State Infrastructure Map

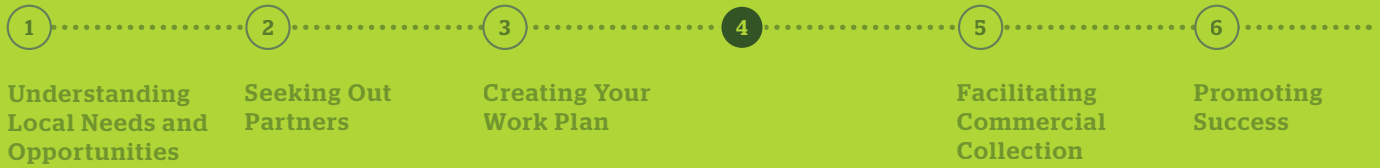
ACTIVITY	ACTIVITY TYPE	RESOURCE	STATUS	DUPLICATE
Strategy Planning: Needs & Opportunities Assessment				
Project initiation meeting: discuss goals, tasks, deliverables	Planning			
Set High Level Targets for commercial and residential access	Metrics			
Determine Project Partners	Planning			
Determine Budget & Funding Sources (sponsors and grant opportunities)	Funding			
Set-up Project Team progress meetings (monthly/biweekly/weekly)	Planning			
Determine Reports	Reporting			
Retain resource help: local contractors (as needed)	Planning			
Data Collection Planning				
Determine area's data needs and sources	Metrics			
Request data-who is collecting and who can use film scrap-Infrastructure Map	Metrics			
Plastics Markets, Drop off Directory	Metrics			
State or Local Recycler Directory	Metrics			
Other Trade Associations	Metrics			
State or local survey opportunities (household surveys)	Metrics			
Define Goals based on Infrastructure Map	Metrics			
Determine campaign and pilot locations	Planning			
WRF data	Metrics			
Promotion, Outreach and Engagement				
Develop Promotion Plan	Planning			
Plan for communications deliverables and support	Education			
News Media: Press Releases, radio, ads, trade pubs, etc	Education			
Residential: Cart Tags/Postcards	Education			

Example Work Plan

RESOURCES

- > [Sample WRAP Work Plan](#)
- > [Sample Retail/Drop-off Questionnaire](#)
- > [Sample Residential Survey](#)
- > [Sample Audit Sheet](#)
- > [Potential Sources for Recycling Bins](#)

GO!



Congratulations! You're ready to launch your WRAP campaign. Studies show the most effective campaigns piggy-back on your existing communications and use the WRAP communication tools available once you sign-up. Here are a few suggestions for your roll-out:

- o Provide educational materials about the types of plastic film accepted at retail drop-offs. This will help minimize non-recyclable material.
- o [Link to the drop-off directory](#) on your website(s) so that the public can easily locate nearby recycling locations.
- o Ask your partners and the media to circulate your message — “Keep plastic bags, wrap and film out of the curbside bin & return it to retail.”
- o Use varied methods of communication — including social media, on-site educational materials, and communication via retail partners — to help your program succeed!

Now it's time to tag those carts, paste the posters, connect businesses to haulers, educate your residents and direct your partners to support your outreach.

RESOURCES

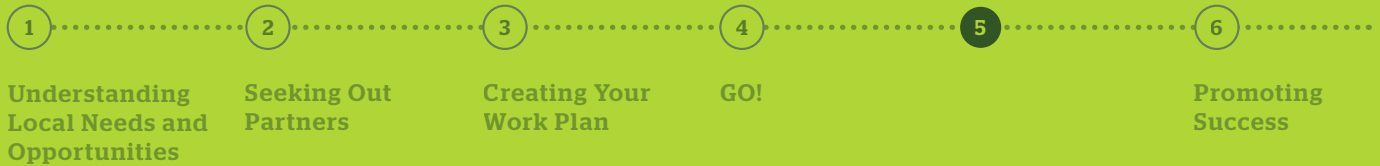
- > [WRAP Posters, Collateral](#)
- > [Sample News Release](#)

FACT

In a post-campaign consumer survey nearly 80% of respondents said the film and bag recycling program gives them a positive impression of the store.



Facilitating Commercial Collection



After initiating a WRAP pilot program geared toward residential collection, some municipalities found tackling plastic film recovery within the commercial community to be a logical next step.

Many companies across the U.S. provide recycling services to local businesses. To help facilitate the commercial collection in your locality, consider

- o Who might need a collection service?
- o Who provides collection services?
- o Are there any untapped opportunities, like scrap dealers or distributors who backhaul, that could help your WRAP program succeed?



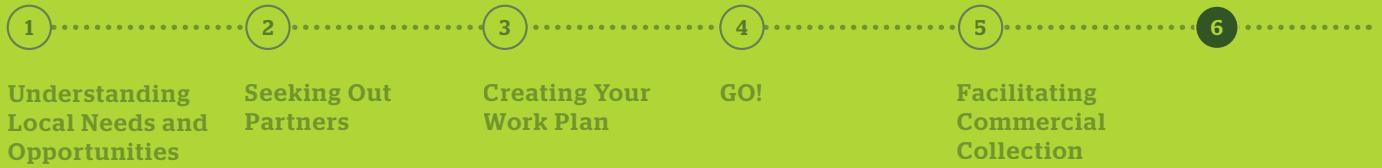
FACT

Commercial material comprises the majority of film collected for recycling; however, many large manufacturing facilities use tremendous amounts of film from pallet wrap and parts packaging but may not know it's recyclable.

RESOURCES

- > [Film Recycling Tip-sheets for Businesses](#)
- > [Film Disposal Cost Calculator for Businesses](#)
- > [Film Recycler Directory](#)
- > [Success Stories](#)
- > [Retail Drop Off Location Spreadsheet](#)

Promoting Success



Many past WRAP campaigns experienced a decrease in film at the MRF, an increase in film collected at retail drop-off locations, and an increase in consumer awareness. These results are great to share with local media outlets and the community!

Remember that WRAP is an ongoing community effort, so continue to promote your efforts. Embarking on a WRAP journey takes motivation and collaboration with your team and partners. Some states and municipalities have found their path by first piloting consumer/public campaigns, then addressing commercial collection within their communities as a second phase.



Example Billboard

FACT

WRAP data has shown that consumers need to receive the messages about film recycling – “keep out of curbside bin & return to retail” – from varied and repeated sources.



How WRAP made a difference at Wegmans Food Stores

How did Wegmans succeed?

1. Wegmans expanded to other types of plastic film beyond carryout bags, acting as the community's central drop-off location for all types of plastic wrap. This made it easier for consumers to recycle their plastic film, which generated increased film recycling and established Wegmans as a community leader in recycling/film recycling/sustainability.
2. Wegmans employed a multi-faceted communication approach including in-store signage, web and social media communication, and direct messaging on their Wegmans' plastic grocery bags.
3. Partnerships paved the path to success. Wegmans engaged The Nature Conservancy and the Sustainable Packaging Coalition to increase adoption, share goals and responsibilities, and develop ongoing partnerships.
4. By creating a closed loop system for recycling plastic film, Wegmans established their stores as the solution in their community. This brought more recycling-minded consumers to their store and contributed to their huge success.



KEY TAKE AWAYS

- o 4.2 million pounds of plastic film recycled in 2014, which is equivalent to 190 million recycled grocery bags
- o 17% increase in collection from 2013 to 2014



How can WRAP benefit retailers like Wegmans?

1. Enhances customer recognition of the retailer's sustainability commitment, leading to positive associations with the brand and a stronger customer connection.
2. Brand support helps increase the recycling of plastic film packaging.
3. Achievement of sustainability objectives for essential packaging.
4. Recycling efforts can help to offset the program operation costs, increase revenue, and reduce waste disposal costs.
5. Wegmans encountered little-to-no increased contamination from its plastic film recycling initiative.

The greatest challenge is low public awareness.

Most people don't know

- o Plastic bags and film can be recycled
- o Plastic bags and film are generally not accepted in curbside recycling
- o Plastic bags and film are valuable materials that can be recycled into new products like composite lumber, new bags, pipe, and more.



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT PLASTIC FILM

1. Which plastic wraps and film can I recycle?

Clean, dry plastic grocery / retail bags, bread bags, newspaper bags, air pillows, bubble wrap, overwrap on bulk products, produce bags, zip-close bags, and any plastic film packaging or bag that has the How2Recycle Label (visit how2recycle.info for more information).

2. Can I recycle colored plastic film?

Yes, recycling facilities accept colored materials.

3. I have some plastic that tears like paper — is it recyclable?

Unfortunately, no. This type of plastic is not currently accepted in the bag recycling bins.

4. What if the plastic film crinkles loudly, like candy wrappers, flower bouquet wraps, or potato chip bags?

Unfortunately, no. This material includes non-recyclable materials.

DID YOU KNOW?

- o 75 tons of plastic wrap gets sent to landfills every hour, resulting in a lot of wasted opportunities.
- o Plastic film put in curbside bins causes MRF machinery to jam frequently, leading to a 10% reduction in their ability to recycle materials.
- o In just one year, Wegmans Food Market recycled 4.2 million pounds of plastic film!

5. Should I remove labels, stickers, and tape from the plastic?

Yes, the recycler needs clean plastic. If the bag or material tears when you remove labels, stickers, or tape that's fine--the recycling facility just needs the plastic.

6. Can I recycle pet food bags, bedding bags, or heavy-duty bags with a zipper?

No, this type of plastic includes non-recyclable materials.

7. My plastic is silvery and/or metallic, like a mylar balloon, snack packaging, and printer ink cartridges. Is this recyclable?

No, these materials are not acceptable.

8. What if the packaging says it's degradable or compostable AND recyclable?

Unfortunately, biodegradable plastic is meant to degrade over time which means that it won't survive the recycling process. Please keep this sort of material out of the recycling bins!

9. Is it OK if my plastic is dirty, has crumbs, or is wet?

No, recyclers need the bags to be both clean and dry. If plastic has dirt or food remnants on it, it can't be used to make recycled plastic products of good quality. If in doubt, throw it out!

GET IN TOUCH

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Your thoughts and participation are important to us as we continue to improve the WRAP program.

Have questions or comments? Email us at WRAP@plasticfilmrecycling.org.

CREDITS

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This document and plasticfilmrecycling.org were made possible through the collaboration and support of the Flexible Film Recycling Group, current WRAP Champions and Partners across the country, and Moore Recycling Associates Inc.