



**E-CYCLE**  
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[ecyclewashington.org](http://ecyclewashington.org)

# **E-Cycle Washington**

## 2023 Local Government and Community Satisfaction Report Summary

*Draft—May 2024*

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## Introduction

The E-Cycle Washington program completed its fifteenth year of operations in 2023.

The program's fifteenth year showed a 3% decrease in the weight collected of unwanted covered electronics (TVs, computers, tablets, e-readers, portable DVD players, and monitors).

The year's decrease was exclusively in the TV category, with a weight increase in collection of monitors and computers. This is likely because the large, heavy cathode ray tube (CRT) televisions have been disposed of in previous years. Most of the TVs getting recycled now are the thinner and lighter flat panels.

We expect decreasing collection numbers to continue as the backlog of recycled CRTs decline and newer manufactured electronics become lighter. More producers and retailers also provide their own takeback programs.

Over 12.9 million pounds were recycled in 2023 compared to over 13.3 million pounds in 2022.

Funded by manufacturers, E-Cycle Washington's over 200 collection sites and collection events provide a statewide network of free drop-off sites where Washington residents can recycle covered electronic devices.

The Department of Ecology (Ecology) asked local governments to fill out a survey to help Ecology determine the effectiveness of the program in 2023 and identify potential areas for improvement. Out of the over one hundred local governments contacted, Ecology received 20 responses.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Some responses in this report may have minor punctuation, spelling, and grammar corrections made by Ecology staff.

## 1. Local Government Name


### Responses:


-  Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department
-  Kittitas County Solid Waste
-  City of Seattle, Seattle Public Utilities
-  King County Solid Waste Division
-  Thurston County Public Works
-  City of Vancouver, Public Works Solid Waste
-  Lewis County Solid Waste
-  City of Lynnwood
-  Skamania County
-  City of Sedro Woolley
-  Clallam County Environmental Health
-  Clallam County
-  City of Auburn
-  Adams County Public Works
-  City of Renton
-  Asotin County
-  Chelan County Public Works

**2. Were the collection services provided by the MMFA in your community accessible and convenient for the public? If there are services that are not working; please explain why in the comment section below.**


Were the collection services provided by MMFA in your community accessible and convenient to the public?	
<b>Yes</b>	<b>71%</b>
<b>No</b>	<b>29%</b>


**Other responses:**

 There has been a substantial and sustained decline in access to convenient collection services provided by WMMFA in Seattle. The number of collection sites in the city has declined by 60% in the past five years (from 30 sites in 2019 to 12 sites in 2023) and is now at its lowest point since the first year of program implementation. The number of residents served per collection site is now nearly double the state average: statewide, there is 1 site per 35,655 people, while in Seattle there is 1 site per 64,993 people. Seattle accounts for 10% of state population, but only 5% of E-Cycle sites are located in Seattle. Seattle is a dense city, with a significant population living in apartments and that walks, bikes, or relies on public transportation. The decrease in collection sites makes access to the program much less feasible for many Seattle residents. We have not done a comprehensive GIS analysis of remaining collection sites, but a high-level review of sites listed on WMMFA’s new website suggests that residents in some parts of the city would have to travel several miles to access a collection point. This is particularly concerning because many of these areas are designated as having high vulnerability on the Washington State Environmental Health Disparities map. Seattle Public Utilities has stepped in to fill this gap in service by offering curbside collection service to residential customers and by hosting six collection events per year across the city, but our ratepayers currently bear the cost of this service. We are in the process of negotiating cost coverage with WMMFA for transport and processing of covered electronic products that are collected through our curbside collection service, but it has been challenging and we have not yet been able find a mutually agreeable approach. Even if that is secured, the cost of collection will not be covered by the program. This is frustrating and disappointing, because it means that the responsibility for providing convenient access to recycling of covered electronics for Seattle residents is falling to the local government and its ratepayers once again.


 According to a survey that we conducted together with the Northwest Product Stewardship Council (NWSPSC), a fifth of residents surveyed in King County said that electronics recycling was very or somewhat inconvenient for them. For example, Vashon Island is part of unincorporated King County with over 10,000 residents, yet they do not have any accessible or convenient collection services provided by WMMFA. While there appears to be accessible and convenient electronics collection services in King County, we continue to see increasing amounts of E-Cycle covered electronics being sent to our landfill. According to our waste characterization studies from 2019 to 2022, there was a 79% increase of residential of E-Cycle covered electronics sent to our landfill (from 465 tons in 2019 to 834 tons in 2022). This seems to indicate that collection rates by E-Cycle are decreasing and there is a need to boost collection efforts. According to the WMMFA's Annual Report for 2020, 41 collection sites closed in King County (40% of all collection sites). Many of these sites closed due to Covid and although some sites did reopen, only 52 collection sites remain in King County according to the latest program plan. There used to be 100 sites in King County. The amount of sites seem to be correlated with the amounts of collected covered electronic products. We have observed that there are an increasing number of alternative collection sites for e-waste not covered by E-Cycle such as scheduled curbside collection services offered in Bellevue, Redmond and Kirkland and Ridwell. WM (North Sound Hauling and Reload Facility) is listed as a collection site. Curious to know if covered electronics collected curbside in Redmond and Kirkland are included in E-Cycle WA. We also have concerns about the outreach and collection services provided to non-residential covered entities such as small businesses, nonprofits, schools and local government agencies. According to our waste characterization studies from 2019 to 2022, there was a significant increase in computers, monitors and televisions showing up at our landfill from the non-residential sector (in 2019 there was 603 tons of covered electronics from the non-residential sector being sent to landfill, in 2022 there was 1,553 tons).

 I do not have enough details about the collection services to provide a response either way.

 Very little awareness of where to take devices, and takeback systems are not convenient for where community members already such as general retailers (not just electronics retailers, recycling centers and donation centers). Some suggestions: Consider establishing takeback locations where community members go regularly (grocery stores, churches, community centers, etc). Enable curbside campaigns a few times/year to enable members without personal cars to participate. Establish partnerships with TaskRabbit and other gig economy services (UberEats, Instacart, etc) to enable community members to request pick up of electronics.





 In Lewis County, we are limited to only two locations for Ecycle drop off. There is one located in Centralia at the Goodwill and another in Morton at Tiger Mnt electronics. Lewis Co solid waste HHW has offered to assist in collecting Ecycle during remote collection events but the need for more sites that can accept Ewaste more regularly is needed. Only option other than Ecycle in Lewis Co is the Transfer Station which charges customers for disposal.

 It is not super clear to me and to the community where we can drop off electronics for free.








 Only one in Wenatchee, Goodwill. Need something in Leavenworth.

### **3. Did you have any suggestions for improving the services in your community? Please be specific if you are recommending additional collection locations/services.**

Responses:

-  I know much of this is legislative driven but increasing the scope and types of electronic products collected by the program.
-  We only have one location in our county that accepts e-waste.
-  We appreciate the additional focus that WMMFA has included in its 2024-2028 program plan update on reaching schools, including intent to conduct email outreach to school districts to inform them on how to access the program. Seattle is home to a number of private schools that need to be informed about the program and how to access it as well, so we would like to make sure that private schools are also included in mailing list. We encourage WMMFA to coordinate with us prior to the outreach to ensure that the email list is comprehensive and inclusive of both public and private schools within the city. We also appreciate the addition of the "Small Business" section to the program plan update but are disappointed that it includes no specific commitment that outreach will be conducted to small businesses, only that WMMFA will "offer to collaborate" with business associations on outreach. We would like to see details about how this collaboration is offered and what action results. Outreach to small businesses has been a significant gap in program outreach in the past. We value the commitment that WMMFA has made to provide partial funding on joint outreach with local governments and we intend to pursue this to support outreach to Seattle residents to increase awareness of both the program and the recent disposal ban enacted by Seattle Public Utilities on electronics covered by the E-Cycle WA program. We are supportive of WMMFA's focus on internet ads but we are concerned about the lack of detail regarding how these ads will be deployed in ways that effectively reach our diverse communities. We would like to see WMMFA dedicate a specific portion of ad funding to ethnic media outlets or use other strategies to reach residents across the state, including those with a primary language other than English.
-  Increase awareness and outreach among all covered entities and the organizations that serve them such as waste management companies and junk haulers. The WMMFA should consider how to make their services more accessible for the diverse communities, including underserved communities. This could include providing collection services and sites closer to where people work and live; providing better





access in terms of opening hours; and communicating in ways that are effective for the diverse communities.

-  Our county is long (roughly 2hrs) end to end, having more locations available throughout the county would better serve the needs of our community.
-  Can they have window signs? Can you give me a list of places?
-  More signage for the project.
-  Add all electronics to the program.
-  The available options for what can and can't be accepted is very limited for our county. Currently the only option we have is Goodwill and their list of accepted ewaste is quite small.
-  Access to boxes that we put the e-cycle in. It's hard finding places that carry large boxes and when we do find them, they are expensive.
-  More publicity. People still do not realize that this option is available. And they have a misunderstanding that the units will be re-used, not that the components get recycled.














**4. Did you know that local governments must promote the E-Cycle WA program (per WAC 173-900-980(4)) and that this outreach is an eligible activity under LSWFA grants? This year, the MMFA has launched an online form to help better facilitate joint outreach projects at <https://ecyclewa.org/program-details/>. Briefly describe the E-Cycle Washington Program public outreach and education conducted by your agency/organization this year.**

**Responses:**

-  We promote via our website on 'hazardous chemicals at home' and provide e-cycle WA information at local fairs/festivals.
-  We have a link on our webpage, and we hand out fliers.
-  We include E-Cycle and other drop-off and stewardship program information in our annual customer solid waste mailer, and Where Does it Go Flyer. We also include information on our Where Does it Go Web site materials look-up tool. <http://www.seattle.gov/utilities/your-services/collection-and-disposal/where-does-it-go#/a-z> Our Beyond the Cart flier showing most common types of items for reuse, recycling, composting and proper disposal, including electronics and referral to E-cycle WA is translated into Amharic, Chinese, Oromo, Somali, Spanish, Tigrinya and Vietnamese and can be seen on the Where Does it Go web page. We also provide handouts to customers at our transfer stations who bring in electronics or who ask about e-waste recycling options. We plan to work with WMMFA to develop and deploy additional joint outreach to customers this year to inform them about the E-Cycle WA program and the recent disposal ban enacted by Seattle Public Utilities on covered electronic products.
-  Both our Solid Waste and Hazardous Waste websites inform residents and businesses of E-Cycle WA. Our Take it Back Network recyclers lists electronics recyclers and designates authorized E-Cycle WA collectors (<https://kingcounty.gov/depts/dnrp/solid-waste/programs/take-it-back/electronics.aspx>). Our What do I do with...? tool (<https://info.kingcounty.gov/Services/recycling-garbage/Solid-Waste/what-do-i-do-with/>) directs residents and businesses to E-Cycle WA's website. King County does not accept covered electronics in the garbage or at its transfer stations (<https://kingcounty.gov/en/legacy/about/policies/rules/utilities/put716pr>). Brochures are distributed at our transfer stations, when people bring in electronics for disposal, to direct them to collection sites and E-Cycle WA. KC SWD creates and publishes social



media posts about electronics recycling and E-Cycle WA. We help organize and promote recycling events that collect electronics. Together with the Northwest Product Stewardship Council (NWPSC) we conducted a survey about residents' e-waste related behavior and their knowledge of E-Cycle WA. The findings were provided to WMMFA. More than a third of residents surveyed in King County did not know of E-Cycle WA.

-  As a community member, I haven't received any outreach. I only am aware of these services because I have actively registered with NWPSC and have a professional background in e-waste management systems in Europe.
-  Lewis Co HHW and Recycling hold Spring and Fall Collection events at 5 remote city locations to collect and educate the public on safe and responsible disposal practices.
-  I have it listed on our electronic recycling flyer.
-  We have signs and flyers.
-  Online, flyers, and mailers.
-  Primarily done through direct phone conversations, facebook posts, and in-person events.
-  We include information about E-Cycle on our website, in our annual WM collection guide, and this year we also advertised it in a Hazardous Waste Newsletter that mailed to residents in Fall 2023.
-  We promote this program through our annual Newsletter and through our website. We also try to add messages about it whenever we have updates to our HHW programs.
-  We did not advertise the program in 2023 but will do so going forward.
-  Flyers, signage at the landfill.
-  Chelan County utilizes the entire LSWFA grant for our Moderate Risk Waste operations. There is not enough money to operate as it is. Too often, this grant is advertised to public groups that we have access to an abundance of money in LSWFA. Most counties do not have enough to do hazardous waste and Solid waste plans, let alone food waste diversion or education or promoting E-cycle.






**5. Please tell us your story in the comment box below: How has E-Cycle Washington affected your community since it began in 2009? (For example: How much money does this program save your residents and local government?)**

<b>How has E-Cycle Washington affected your community since it began in 2009?</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
Are businesses providing recycling in your community who were not providing that service before E-Cycle Washington?	<b>50%</b>	<b>50%</b>
Are people recycling their electronics now when they may have thrown them in the trash before the E-Cycle program?	<b>83%</b>	<b>17%</b>

**Responses:**




-  Opportunities to access responsible recycling for covered products increased for our residents with the implementation of E-Cycle WA in 2009, and improved significantly for a number of years, resulting in more convenient access to collection and less burden on our local government to provide this service. However, as noted in the response to question 1, convenient access to collection has decreased substantially in recent years as more than 60% of sites closed. As a result, Seattle Public Utilities has begun providing curbside collection service. This service fills the gaps in convenient collection not provided by the program but results in a burden on ratepayers once again. We urge action by WMMFA to take voluntary measures to remedy this issue to keep covered electronics out of the waste stream and take responsibility for the costs of responsible collection and management.
  
-  E-Cycle WA has been a tremendous success and diverted more than 80,000 tons of electronics from the landfill. Besides the volume of materials, e-waste contains many hazardous substances such as lead, mercury, and chromium. We aim to achieve zero waste of resources and enhance the environment through collaboration and innovation, which is why we would like to see all e-waste managed responsibly. Computers, TVs and other electronic devices are designed with little or no thought to recycling and are difficult to disassemble. Recovering the high-value recyclable materials and the toxic components from these devices when they are discarded is costly due to the amount of labor or expensive equipment required to separate out the recyclable materials. We appreciate that it is up to industry to finance these costs and figure out the most effective and responsible way of managing their own products at their end of life. There are businesses providing electronics recycling services that were not providing that service before E-Cycle WA, but since 2016 almost half the collection sites in King County have now closed. We assume that people are recycling their electronics now




when they may have thrown them in the trash before the E-Cycle program, but at the same time it does seem as if less people are recycling now compared to ten years ago as the amount of collected covered electronics has decreased and more electronics are going to landfill. From 2010 to 2022, the number of foreign-born King County residents increased by about 185,000 to 26% of the county's population. A lot of the residents that have moved to King County might not be familiar with the recycling options available.

-  We see a lot of tvs and Ewaste still being tossed out on logging roads and in the trash due to the limited locations within Lewis Co that offer Ecycle. Lewis Co tries to do our part by offering Ecycle collection at remote events through spring and fall. More Ecycle locations are needed in Lewis County, preferably in the cities of Packwood, Pe Ell.
-  I don't have stats on of either of these. I know as a resident in the area I would not know about the E-Cycle program if I did not have this job. I have never seen any information about it in the real world.
-  We are seeing very little if any electronics being illegally dumped or in the garbage stream.
-  We don't have a lot of information on this as Asotin County just recently took over the E-cycle program. Before we took it over, we only provided a place for the collection. We were not involved in anything else. we will know more down the road.
-  I think we can do better. Rural areas need better education.

## 6. Other comments about the E-Cycle Washington program.

### Responses:

-  It's a great program that should broadcast its success story. It does require change to include the increase types and quantities of electronic wastes not currently covered.
-  Need to find more locations to accept computers and electronics in our area.
-  Reiterating our comments from previous years, we appreciate that Ecology conducts a survey of local governments to gather input, but we believe that WMMFA and/or Ecology should convene regular meetings with stakeholders to share program information and gather input on local experiences. The Washington Department of Health convenes such a group on a quarterly basis as part of the safe medicine disposal program and it is very helpful. It is clear, from a review of issues with existing EPR programs throughout the country and as new legislation has been considered, that ongoing stakeholder engagement, beyond what is possible through annual commenting, is important for sustained program success.
-  Besides the concerns regarding the decreasing amounts collected by E-Cycle WA and greater amounts of covered products are being sent to landfill, number of collection sites, awareness, and outreach of the program, we have concerns about where the collected materials end up – particularly the plastics. We do not want to contribute to greater burdens on vulnerable populations and communities due to waste exported from King County. We would also like to see greater repair and reuse of electronic products to bridge the digital divide and reduce waste. Finally, there are many other types of electrical and electronic products, e.g., printers, battery containing products, computer peripherals, etc., that are not covered by E-Cycle WA and should be managed more responsibly. The Dept of Ecology and / or WMMFA should look into how all e-waste can be managed responsibly through a product stewardship / extended producer responsibility program, so that these products do not end up in landfills or incinerators and are instead repaired and reused, and their valuable resources are recycled.
-  It's a GREAT program and we hope to expand it more throughout our community.
-  You need signage at places that accept. The public do not know about this program. Even knowing about it, I am often not sure where I can take my personal electronics to recycle. We host an electronics collection event twice a year and we collect a very large quantity of materials, which to me says people don't know there is a local regular option.

-  The program is working! I would like to see a cost of doing business increase in the money we get back for offering the program. staffing costs are going up significantly.
-  I wish these postings would be in Spanish as well.
-  Thank you, it's a great program. Just think we could get the message out to better understand.

## Summary

Ecology continues to work with the Materials Management & Financing Authority (MMFA) to make improvements to the E-Cycle Washington program. Suggestions for improvements provided by local governments are a key part of that process and are greatly appreciated by Ecology. Public outreach and education about the availability and benefits of the program is a priority for Ecology and the MMFA.

In 2023, E-Cycle WA was advertised through print media, signage, on social media platforms, and through in person outreach efforts. Read the MMFA annual report to see more details, <https://ecology.wa.gov/getattachment/e816e06f-339a-4ec0-bc4d-425fce84cd81/2023-WMMFA-Annual-Report-04-23-2024.pdf>.

Additional 2023 outreach included a partnership with the Walla Walla Sweets baseball team and Spanish commercials running on Hispanavision TV. Some other outreach throughout the year included:

- Tabling on the state Capital Campus.
- Tabling in Cle Elum at Earth Day event.
- Tabling at Tenino Oregon Trails Day.
- Tabling at a state Small Business Fair.
- E-Cycle was promoted in the Central Washington State Fair guide in a bilingual ad in English and Spanish.
- E-Cycle WA was promoted at the TRENDS Property Management Tradeshow.
- E-Cycle WA was promoted at the WSRA conference.

Ecology's Outreach in 2024 will include participating through community partnerships. The program will again partner with the Walla Walla Sweets to provide outreach to the community. Additionally, the MMFA plans to coordinate with local governments to share information. Outreach opportunities are explored throughout the year to increase awareness.

This year the most common suggestions from local governments for improving the program is continued promotion, specifically to non-residential covered entities, and to create more collection sites. Respondents feel that there is still a lack of awareness of the program.

Ecology agrees that more outreach is needed. Ecology will continue to work with the MMFA to ensure the requirement that all covered entities are informed about where and how to recycle their covered electronics and ensure outreach is shared throughout the state. The MMFA will also request recommendations from local governments on potential collection sites.

This report will remain in "Draft" form to accommodate any additional comments/suggestions received from local governments in the coming months.

