



EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

Through community engagement, residential surveys, and 10 community meetings held in Athens and Hocking Counties in 2012, AOZWI found that one of residents' top priorities is improving recycling and waste reduction education in Athens and Hocking Counties. For this reason, this section of the plan focuses specifically on education and outreach.

Education, awareness, and outreach are the foundation for successful waste reduction and landfill diversion efforts. Providing frequent interactive programs, convenient assistance, and consistent messaging allows residents and businesses the ability to fully participate in recycling programs. When education and outreach efforts are lacking, waste reduction falls from the forefront of people's minds, and residents and businesses forget the recycling services available to them. Education and outreach will be a key element of promoting the use of new programs established through this zero waste action plan, and changing the waste consciousness of Athens and Hocking Counties.

Baseline for Education and Outreach

The AHSWD currently employs a part-time education coordinator, and AHSWD puts regular announcements on their website and in the Athens Messenger to notify people of recycling pickups. Rural Action and the AOZWI also offer several different education and outreach services through the Ohio Stream Restore Corps, an AmeriCorps program that includes waste reduction and recycling education for schools, businesses, and residents. Many tools and resources are available on Rural Action's website including a local recycling guide¹ and Do-It-Yourself zero waste event guide². Other educational programs and opportunities are performed by various organizations in the two counties but on an infrequent basis.

Recycling programs in the school systems within the two counties vary. An initial assessment of recycling programs in Athens County schools was performed in 2011 but is now outdated and needs to be updated. The list is in the appendix. Hocking County schools also need to be interviewed to understand recycling programs and needs. Creating consistent recycling programs and services in the schools is needed.

1 <http://ruralaction.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/Recycling-Guide-for-Athens-and-Hocking-Counties.pdf>
2 <http://ruralaction.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/01/Zero-Waste-Event0Guide-2.26.13.pdf>



ACTION STEPS FOR EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

- 1. DEVELOP AND FUND A FULLTIME¹ EDUCATION PROGRAM WITHIN ATHENS AND HOCKING COUNTIES. EDUCATION PROGRAM WILL REQUIRE AT LEAST TWO EMPLOYEES. (1 YR)**
- 2. DEVELOP AND PROVIDE CROSS-CURRICULUM WASTE REDUCTION AND RECYCLING CURRICULA THAT MEET CURRENT OHIO ACADEMIC CONTENT STANDARDS IN ATHENS AND HOCKING COUNTY SCHOOLS. (5 YRS)**
 - a. Work with teachers to understand needs and garner support.
 - b. Review Ohio Academic Content Standards to determine grade-level appropriate waste-related curriculum.
 - c. Develop materials to increase ease of implementation.
 - d. Integrate school recycling and compost programs into educational materials
Provide teacher training.
- 3. DEVELOP A MULTI-FACETED AND INCLUSIVE COMMUNICATION STRATEGY WHICH INFORMS THE PUBLIC OF WHY, WHAT, WHEN, WHERE, AND HOW TO RECYCLE. (1 YR)**
 - a. Update, maintain, and promote user-friendly website for traditional recyclables.
 - b. Use print, radio, and other media outlets for communication.
 - c. Maintain a comprehensive recycling guide that includes where to recycle a variety of items such as scrap metal, appliances and hazardous waste.
 - d. Offer zero waste event resources.
 - e. Make educational resources and activities publicly available.
 - f. Maintain 2-way communication with officials about service gaps and options, as well as community demand.
- 4. PROVIDE INTERACTIVE OUTREACH PROGRAMS THAT ENGAGE RESIDENTS IN REDUCING WASTE, AND REUSING AND REPURPOSING MATERIALS. (5 YRS)**
 - a. Provide programming curricula to community groups.
 - b. Provide local businesses with information on how and why to conduct waste assessments.
 - c. Train and engage adults to be personal waste reduction champions, community educators, and volunteers.
 - d. Provide waste-related educational programming at community events such as festivals and sporting events.
 - e. Recognize, promote, and reward waste reduction efforts in businesses and events.

¹ In order to accomplish these action steps, the working group believes 2 staff members would be required. One to focus on adult education for residents, organizations, and businesses, and a second person to focus on school-based education.