NCTCOG 2016 – 2017 Materials Management Call for Projects
Electronics Recycling (E-recycling) Guidance Document

The proper management and recycling of used electronics is important as consumers toss out increasing numbers of electronics.

Why recycle electronics?
Used electronics disposed of in the municipal solid waste stream contain many potentially hazardous components that may create a danger to human health, the environment, and sanitation workers. For example, computer and television displays contain an average of 6 pounds of lead each, and electronic circuit boards are another leading source of lead in the waste stream. Other hazardous materials used in computers and electronic devices include cadmium, mercury, hexavalent chromium, PVC plastic, and brominated flame retardant. It is important to properly manage these materials in order to minimize their hazards.

How much does it cost to recycle electronics?
The cost will vary based on participation. There are several disposal vendors in the region that will assist local governments with hosting electronic recycling events. NCTCOG can assist local governments with identifying appropriate facilities and provide information on electronic recycling services available.

How do I reduce costs for used electronics recycling?
The cost for an E-recycling event can be high, but there are ways to control costs. One is to limit the items that you will accept. For example, items with circuit boards or cathode ray tubes (CRTs) pose the greatest environmental risk. Limiting your collection to only these items can reduce costs. There are also several national programs which will accept some items for free, such as toner or ink jet cartridges, cell phones, and some types of batteries. Also, you can work with charity groups who may be willing to review the materials as they are collected and pull out those pieces that they can use or refurbish. All of these methods can lower your costs by reducing the amount of material collected by your recycling contractor.

Should I charge residents for electronics recycling?
Because of the costs to collect and recycle used electronics, many collections charge residents a fee or ask for donations. Fees vary from entity to entity. Some programs charge the full cost of recycling ($15-$30 per item), some programs charge considerably less ($5 per item), while other programs do not charge a fee at all. To help off-set costs, you should consider charging a fee.

How do I organize an E-recycling event?
Many disposal vendors can assist you with estimating costs and planning collections. NCTCOG is available to assist or you can contact Shannon Herriott from TCEQ at (512) 239-6453, or at sherriot@tceq.state.tx.us, for information on holding an electronics collection event.

How should I staff an E-recycling event?
Use volunteers to help direct traffic, screen participants and unload vehicles. Coordinate with your chosen recycling contractor to determine your staffing needs and to determine what staff will be provided by the contractor.

How should I advertise for an E-recycling event?
All types of media can be used to advertise a successful collection. The key thing to remember is that the more advertising you do, the greater the participation will be. Increased participation equals increased recycling costs. Do not devote an excessive portion of your budget to advertising if you have limited recycling dollars.

For more information contact:
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