

Waste Stewardship Essentials

To put our Guiding Objectives into practice, the WSWG identified actionable strategies to accomplish our goal. These strategies were ranked through collective input to help outline how to prioritize and implement a successful Waste Stewardship Plan.

Opportunities for Action

1. Standard Recovery Infrastructure
2. Sustainable Procurement Practices & Policies
3. Reuse & Reduction Infrastructure
4. Education & Engagement
5. Zero Waste Events
6. Tracking Waste Generation & Reduction
7. Institutionalize Waste Stewardship

1. Standard Recovery Infrastructure	Baseline & Compliance	Progressing	Excelling	Highest Potential
Maintain separate, monitored, and clearly labeled collection areas for all MA waste ban items and regulated items	X			*
Locate trash/recycling/compost bins together	X			*
Verify that all bins have approved signage	X			*
Follow waste bins color standard of black or gray for trash, blue for recycling, green for compost	X			
Perform periodic audit or evaluation of collection bins (location, usage, labels, etc.)	X			
Prioritize reuse and recycling during clean-outs, renovations, or move-outs		X		*
Provide liquid collection adjacent to recycling bins (to empty beverage containers)		X		*
Limit or control access to loading docks and other waste collection areas		X		
Centralize waste collection for offices, classrooms, etc. (e.g. elimination of desk-side bins)			X	*
Establish special collection programs: lab plastics, plastic film, PPE, etc.			X	

Opportunities for Action

2. Sustainable Procurement Practices & Policies	Baseline & Compliance	Progressing	Excelling	Highest Potential
Establish an informal environmentally preferable purchasing (EPP) policy (reference OFS Sustainable Purchasing Guide)	X			
Periodic audit of purchasing practices	X			
Regularly update and train staff on purchasing guidelines	X			
Enforce EPP policies (e.g. include in purchaser training)	X			
Develop process to check reuse options first before purchasing	X			
Formalize a buy recycled policy	X			
Work with vendors that have existing takeback programs		X		*
Create purchasing program evaluation		X		
Formalize an EPP policy: purchasing in bulk		X		
Formalize an EPP policy: for compostable or recyclable (aluminum or paper) items for food service		X		*
Formalize an EPP policy: purchasing durable goods		X		*
Implement bans (e.g. single use items)			X	*
Support or help implement vendor takeback programs			X	*

Opportunities for Action

3. Reuse & Reduction Infrastructure	Baseline & Compliance	Progressing	Excelling	Highest Potential
Establish a local reuse option (i.e., dorm swap shelf; Listserv)	X			
Create communal, shared resources (e.g., shareable office mugs, "Library of Things")	X			
Replace single-use items with bulk or reusable options when available		X		*
Promote and/or host reuse/repair events (i.e. Freecycle)		X		
Establish a system for office supplies reuse		X		*
Provide reusable takeout containers			X	*
Replace all single-use items; redesign systems as necessary			X	*
Develop a packaging reduction strategy (e.g. consolidating shipments; related to "2. Sustainable Procurement Practices & Policies")			X	*
4. Education & Engagement	Baseline & Compliance	Progressing	Excelling	Highest Potential
Share information with your local community (e.g., building, department) on waste resources and practices	X			*
Include updates and/or resources in communications to your local community	X			
Include waste information in orientation for staff, faculty, and students	X			*
Publicly communicate progress towards goals		X		
Perform awareness surveys		X		
Have an occasional waste stewardship section (brief updates, resources) in large department meetings		X		
Use audit findings to inform education campaigns (see "6.Tracking Waste Generation and Measuring Reduction")			X	*
Foster and utilize engagement teams			X	

Opportunities for Action

5. Zero Waste Events	Baseline & Compliance	Progressing	Excelling	Highest Potential
Use OFS Sustainable Events Guide to aid planning	X			
Reduce/eliminate waste in event decorations and favors	X			
Locate trash/recycling/compost bins together with proper labels	X			
Follow waste hierarchy for food service-ware: reusables if possible; then compostables or recyclables (inc. utensils)	X			*
Use bulk condiments instead of single serve		X		
Provide liquid collection for emptying beverage containers		X		*
Limit event swag, programs, etc.			X	*
Monitor and/or sort waste			X	*
6. Tracking Waste Generation & Reduction	Baseline & Compliance	Progressing	Excelling	Highest Potential
Monitor waste generation	X			*
Assess and analyze any new waste reduction program	X			
Provide the correct size and number of collection containers based on usage	X			
Track specific specialty recycling streams (i.e. count and type of surplus items, e-waste, etc.)		X		*
Set targets for waste reduction		X		
Perform regular waste audits to measure contamination		X		
Analyze and evaluate data from purchasing, awareness, waste, and infrastructure survey and audits (see earlier sections)			X	*
Perform waste characterization to determine material composition of the waste stream			X	*

Opportunities for Action

7. Institutionalize Waste Stewardship	Baseline & Compliance	Progressing	Excelling	Highest Potential
Assign any waste stewardship program to a leader or point of contact	X			
Set clear responsibilities for any waste stewardship process or program	X			*
Establish leadership buy-in and active support		X		*
Share publicly the commitment to waste stewardship and connect to mission statement		X		*
Support community outreach and lead by example (e.g. collection drives)			X	
Establish commitment to Waste Stewardship as part of employee's performance standards			X	