

# Contamination in Recycling Bins

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# Contamination in mixed recyclables



# Collection of mixed recyclables



Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 4
<p>Recyclables are set-out for collection by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• people living in single family homes, apartments and condos</li><li>• businesses and their employees</li></ul>	<p>Mixed recyclables are collected by one of the 40+ companies providing garbage and recycling service in the Metro region.</p>	<p>Recyclables are taken to one of the Material Recovery Facilities (MRF) located in the Metro region for sorting.</p>	<p>Recyclables are shipped locally, domestically or internationally to be processed and recycled.</p>



# Building a resilient system

## Why does decreasing contamination in mixed recyclables matter?

- Produce quality materials that can be recycled
- Increase efficiency and decrease processing costs
- Ensure health and safety of workers
- Optimize environmental and human health benefits of recycling



# RWP Goals and Actions

**Goal 15 Improve the systems for recyclables, food scraps and yard debris to make them resilient to changing markets and evolving community needs.**

Actions (10 total)

- 15.1 Implement regionally consistent contamination reduction efforts to improve material quality, including education, sorting instructions, collection equipment changes and customer feedback methods.
- 15.3 Develop public private partnerships to expand local markets for priority recyclable materials, with an emphasis on minority-owned and other business owners from historically marginalized groups.
- 15.4 Fund investments to improve the performance of materials recovery facilities through collection rates and/or other mechanisms

# RWP Indicators



## 1. Recycling contamination by sector\*

## 2. Contamination rates for outbound recyclables at source separated Material Recovery Facilities

## 3. Share of the regional's recoverable materials, by material type, that is sent to markets in Oregon and the U.S.

\*Sector refers to the type of customers and includes:

- people living in single family homes
- people living in apartments or condos
- businesses and their employees



# Data Collection



# Contaminants in recyclables by sector

	Plastic	Glass	Food	Paper	Other	Total
<b>Single-family</b>	3%	2%	1%	<1%	3%	<b>9%</b>
<b>Multifamily</b>	3%	5%	3%	3%	7%	<b>21%</b>
<b>Commercial</b>	4%	1%	1%	3%	5%	<b>14%</b>



# Contamination reduction efforts

- **Regional Contamination Reduction Education Plan** -- meets state requirements for communities that select expanded education option under Opportunity to Recycle Act
- **Recycling behavior research** -- found high levels of confusion about what goes in the bin
- **Recycle or Not** -- cooperative regional effort provides online resources for everyday recyclers
- Local newsletters, mailings and advertising
- Residential cart tagging campaigns in Clackamas Co. and Gresham
- Business technical assistance programs