MODULE 1

In Boulder County, the average business recycles and composts approximately 34% of their waste.

By taking the simple, initial step of organizing and labelling bins, you can begin to increase your company's waste diversion rate to 80-90%!

SETTING UP YOUR ZERO WASTE BINS

WELCOME TO YOUR FIRST MODULE IN THE GREEN STAR BUSINESS PROGRAM

In this module, you will establish a customized Zero Waste capture system in your office or facility to collect and sort recyclables, compostables, and trash. Educating your staff to sort materials correctly is critical for a successful community recycling program! When materials are mis-sorted (contaminated), those natural resources are likely to end up in the landfill, and all your efforts will literally go to waste.

ESTABLISHING YOUR ZERO WASTE CAPTURE SYSTEM INCLUDES:

FINDING BEST LOCATIONS FOR ZERO WASTE BINS

OBTAINING AND PLACING PROPER BINS AT THESE LOCATIONS

HANGING PROPER SIGNAGE AND LINING BINS CORRECTLY

These simple steps will demonstrate the importance of waste sorting, raise awareness about your company's commitment to sustainability, and give employees easy access to practice Zero Waste at work.

AFTER COMPLETING THE ZERO WASTE BIN SYSTEM MODULE YOU WILL ACHIEVE

- Bin systems that are accessible to all staff and have consistent signage.
- Bin systems that use appropriate bin sizes, bin colors, and proper bin liners.
- Employees use the bins properly and are proud of the committment their business is making to sustainability.
- A well laid out bin system demonstrates your company's sustainability commitment to your customers and community.

TIPS FROM GREEN STAR BUSINESSES

No need for compost bins at desks. Employees usually take their compostables to the kitchen.

Have a recycling bin AND trash bin at desks or no bins at all.

1908 Brands gives you tips on setting up bins at office desks

LET'S GET READY

TIME FRAME

Approximately 4-6 hours for small to medium size offices.

HELPFUL RESOURCES

Zero Waste Bin Signage

Eco-Cycle's Bin Vendor List (pg. 12)

CONTACTS

PACE (Partners for a Clean Environment) for bin rebates.

MEETINGS

Schedule an Eco-Cycle walk through.

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- [x] Tape or tacks to hang signage provided in this toolkit
- [x] Lamination machine or access to one
- [x] Recycling, compost, and landfill bins
- [ ] Plastic bin liners for landfill bin (various sizes)
- [ ] Compostable bin liners for compost bin
- [ ] Know your cleaning service schedule
- [ ] Know your dumpster locations and lock combinations (if applicable)

MODULE 1: AT-A-GLANCE

STAGE ONE: ASSESS CURRENT ZERO WASTE BIN STATUS

- Record all existing bin colors and sizes in your facility.
- Don't forget to count desk side bins and conference room bins.

STAGE TWO: DETERMINE LOCATIONS

- Determine location for bins in bathrooms, kitchen, offices, common areas, next to the printer, etc.
- Ensure that there is room for signage where it will be easy to see.

STAGE THREE: SELECT COLORS AND SIZES

- Consistent bin color scheme throughout the office.
- Don't forget to put compost bins in the main area of the bathroom.

STAGE FOUR: SCHEDULE WALK-THROUGH

- Pick a date where you, your facility manager, and Eco-Cycle staff can be present for a walk-through of your facility!

STAGE FIVE: OBTAIN BINS AND REBATES

- Contact RAFT and ReSource Central for second-hand bins
- Contact PACE representative for rebates (new bins only)

STAGE SIX: HANG SIGNAGE

- Print, laminate, and place signage near appropriate bins.

STAGE SEVEN: DETERMINE WHAT LINERS ARE NEEDED

- Purchase and place bin liners in the appropriate bins; no lines in recycling bins.

STAGE EIGHT: REASSESS AND FINE TUNE

- Ask employees for feedback and implement their ideas for improving bin organization.
- Don't take it personally if you receive criticism on your original layout!

STAGE NINE: CREATE A ZERO WASTE BIN MAP

- Include a Zero Waste bin map in the office directory and information for new hires.

STAGE TEN: COMMUNICATIONS

- Congratulate yourself!
- Share your progress with staff.
- Share this story on social media.

BONUS STAGE: NOT SURE BIN

- Put out the word if you have created a "not sure bin" in your office.

STAGE ONE

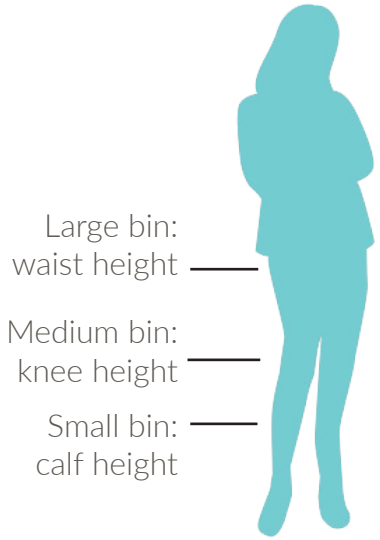
ASSESS CURRENT ZERO WASTE BIN STATUS

SET A BASELINE FOR MEASURING SUCCESS

Count the number of existing bins by type (recycle, compost, landfill) and record on the following page.

Be sure to check for bins at staff cubicles/offices/desks, bathrooms, kitchens, and common areas.

RECORD THE COLORS AND SIZES OF BINS YOU ALREADY HAVE.



ESTIMATE CONTAMINATION IN BINS

Is there food waste in landfill bin instead of compost bin?

Coffee cups in recycle bin instead of landfill bin?

Tissues and napkins in landfill or recycle bins instead of compost bin?

Shredded paper in recycle bin instead of compost bin?

Record you observations on the following page.

RECORD YOUR OBSERVATIONS:

NUMBER OF BINS

NUMBER OF RECYCLE BINS

S ☐ M ☐ L ☐

NUMBER OF COMPOST BINS

S ☐ M ☐ L ☐

NUMBER OF LANDFILL BINS

S ☐ M ☐ L ☐

DID YOU FIND ITEMS IN THE WRONG BIN? RECORD WHAT YOU FOUND.	RECYCLE BIN	COMPOST BIN	LANDFILL BIN
RECYCLABLE ITEMS		Did you find recyclable items in compost bins?	Did you find recyclable items in landfill bins?>
COMPOSTABLE ITEMS	Did you find compostable items in recycle bins?		Did you find compostable items in landfill bins?
LANDFILL ITEMS	Did you find trash in recycle bins?	Did you find trash in compost bins?	

STAGE TWO

DETERMINE LOCATIONS FOR BINS

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO COLLECT HARD-TO-RECYCLE (HTR) ITEMS IN YOUR KITCHEN OR COMMON AREAS, SET UP A SEPARATE BIN FOR THIS PURPOSE.

Walk around your office to determine the best locations for bins based on office culture and staff habits. Record these locations on page 11.

SORTING SIGNAGE WILL BE PLACED ABOVE EACH BIN. REMEMBER TO LEAVE ROOM FOR PROPER SIGNAGE ABOVE THE BINS AT EACH LOCATION.

ENJOY THE EXERCISE! THIS STAGE GETS YOU MOVING...COUNT YOUR STEPS ON AN APP FOR EXTRA FUN!

STAGE THREE

DETERMINE COLORS AND SIZES FOR BINS

RULE OF THUMB FOR COLORS

RULE OF THUMB FOR SIZES

This is a typical office set up. Your office may need different bin sizes in these locations.

	RECYCLE	COMPOST	LANDFILL
BATHROOM		medium	
BATHROOM STALLS			small
KITCHEN	large	medium	medium
PRINTER STATION	medium	medium if shredded paper is collected	small
DESK/OFFICE	small		small(er)

BIN SIZING

Large Bin:
Waist height
(23 gallons)

Medium Bin:
Knee height
(7-10 gallons)

Small Bin:
Calf height
(3.5 gallons)

A small recycle bin with a small trash hanging basket is ideal for most desks.

Ask your staff if they would like a recycle bin with a hanging trash basket at their desk!

RECORD BIN SIZES AND LOCATIONS

LOCATION	TYPE OF BIN	SIZE	QUANTITY
-- Select location --	-- Select Type of Bin --	-- Select Size --	-- Select Ty
-- Select location --	-- Select Type of Bin --	-- Select Size --	-- Select lo
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-- Select location --	-- Select Type of Bin --	-- Select Size --	-- Select lo
-- Select location --	-- Select Type of Bin --	-- Select Size --	-- Select lo

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TOTAL: RECYCLE BINS

- SMALL
- MEDIUM
- LARGE

TOTAL: COMPOST BINS

- SMALL
- MEDIUM
- LARGE

TOTAL: LANDFILL BINS

- SMALL
- MEDIUM
- LARGE

VENDOR CONTACT INFO

REMEMBER TO CHECK FOR REBATES!

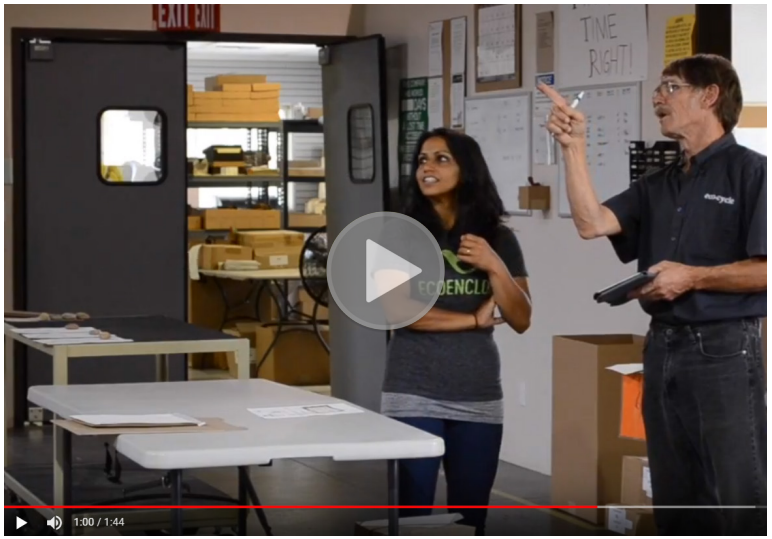
STAGE FOUR

SCHEDULE AN ECO-CYCLE WALK-THROUGH

Before you “pull the trigger” on buying bins, why not invite Eco-Cycle for a walk-through of your facility? We can give you a second opinion about how many of which type you will need and where to put them.

Your walk-through will include a consultation about bins, as well as other ways to make your facility more sustainable. Watch the video to see a walk-through in action!

Reach out to your Green Star Business contact to set up a walk-through! It often helps to have your facility manager present, too.



Click video to watch Eco-Enclose’s start as a Green Star Business member, and what an Eco-Cycle walk-through entails!

STAGE FOUR

OBTAIN BINS AND REBATES

1 CONSIDER USED BINS

Eco-Cycle recommends exhausting used bin options before purchasing new bins. Some businesses even spray paint existing trash bins green or blue to reassign them as compost or recycling bins. We may have extra bins at the office – ask us when the time comes!

2 CHECK FOR REBATES

Connect with a PACE representative to determine if your business is eligible for any bin rebates. Do this as soon as possible because rebates are available on a first-come, first-served basis starting at the beginning of each calendar year.

**Rebates apply only to Busch System products.*

3 FIND A BIN VENDOR

Busch Systems
Arrow
Art Parts
McGuckins and Home Depot
PACE
Resource Area for Teaching (RAFT)
ReSource Central
Thrift Stores, Craigslist
Tundra

STAGE FIVE

HANG SIGNAGE

Bin signage is critical to educating employees and visitors on how to sort waste properly.
Click the images below to download pdfs.

Hang this signage either on or above the bins where it is easily visible, readable, and corresponds to the correct bin.

CONSIDER LAMINATING THESE SIGNS TO INCREASE THEIR DURABILITY.

STAGE SIX

DETERMINE WHICH LINERS ARE NEEDED

RECYCLING	COMPOST	LANDFILL	HARD TO RECYCLE
NO LINERS	CERTIFIED COMPOSTABLE LINERS	CLEAR OR BLACK PLASTIC LINERS	NO LINERS
✕			✕

STAGE SEVEN

GET FEEDBACK AND REASSESS

Listen for **employee feedback** about how the new bin locations, sizes, and signage are working.

Be aware that this is an **iterative process** that may require fine-tuning!

Consider asking for **feedback by email** from staff, especially for areas of your office with which you are not as familiar.

Be open to staff suggestions for bin locations!

PRO TIP: LEARN FROM YOUR EMPLOYEES

Nick Beni, Facilities Director at SparkFun Electronics (a GSB alumni member), initially created taped spaces on the floor where bins were to be kept at all times. If they ever went missing, Nick would track them down and bring them back to the designated area.

When talking to employees, he realized that they were moving the bins so that the placement would be more convenient for them. Nick created new permanent locations for the bins in the places where employees were moving them. So observe your staff's habits! They may help you find more convenient locations for bins. Thanks for the tip, Nick!

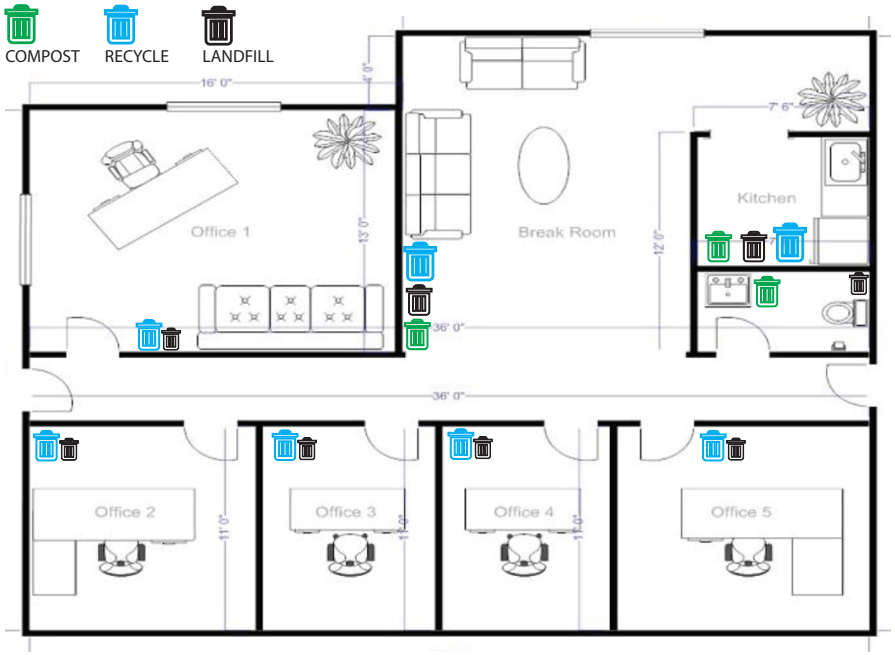
STAGE EIGHT

CREATE A ZERO WASTE BIN MAP

Create a map of your office and clearly mark the locations of bins after you have fine-tuned the process (approximately two weeks after initial organization).

- Add the Zero Waste bin map to the company file directory as a reference for future employees.
- Consider using this map as a training document for new hires.

ZERO WASTE BIN OFFICE MAP KEY:



STAGE NINE

SHARE YOUR PROGRESS

You've worked hard! Now it's time to share your sustainability progress with your staff!

ANNOUNCEMENT

Send an email to staff announcing that you are reorganizing the waste bins and ask for feedback.

Dear staff,

You may have noticed some changes around the office lately! As a member of Eco-Cycle's Green Star Business program, our first step on the road to Zero Waste is to make sure it is easy for us all to recycle and compost.

We're offering everyone a small recycling bin with a trash insert for their desk. If this sounds like something you're interested in, please let me know. You may also notice new reycle, compost, and trash bins in the kitchen, bathrooms, and the conference room.

Why is it important to sort waste properly?

One reason is because organics, like food and paper, that go to the landfill end up breaking down without oxygen and release methane - a greenhouse gas that is 84x more intense than carbon dioxide. So remember to throw your organics in the compost bin!

Also, trash that gets into our recycling bin can contaminate the whole batch, and then it cannot be recycled. Guidelines are posted above the bins, but if you're not sure if something is recyclable, put it in our "not sure" bin.

We'll go over guidelines at our next staff meeting. If you have questions before then, please ask!

HOW CAN ECO-CYCLE SUPPORT YOU AND YOUR STAFF?

TRAINING VIDEO

Show Zero Waste Bin training video to employees via email or at a team meeting as an introduction to the new bin system.

IN PERSON TRAINING

Host in-person Zero Waste training from Eco-Cycle for all employees.

STAGE TEN

SHARE YOUR STORY WITH OTHERS

If you haven't already, let your marketing team know about the progress that's been made so they can share the story in the appropriate channels. Some ideas are:

- Take photos to document the process and your success to share in the office and on social media.
- Add a paragraph about your Zero Waste bin system to the sustainability section of your company's website and/or annual report.
- Send your photos and content to Green Star Business staff for us to post.

WHAT ARE THE FACTS BEHIND RECYCLING AND COMPOSTING??

Recycling and composting are among the fastest, most cost-effective solutions to **reduce greenhouse gas emissions.**

Why recycle? By recycling just 10% more, Colorado could save more than 450,000 tons of carbon emissions annually, the equivalent of taking 100,000 cars off the road!

Why compost? When landfilled, organic materials like food and paper release methane, a greenhouse gas that traps 84 times more heat in our atmosphere than carbon dioxide (over the short term).

In Boulder County, **the average business recycles and composts approximately 34%** of their waste. By taking this initial step to organize your bins, as well as the other steps in the program, you could **increase your company's waste diversion rate to 80-90%!**

BONUS STAGE

SET UP AN UNSURE BIN

If you want to go further, put a **"not sure bin"** in the kitchen or common area for staff to place items they are unsure how to sort. This will help reduce contamination in the other bins and provide for ongoing learning opportunities for the entire office.

If there are items that are repeatedly put into the "unsure bin," consider creating custom signage to address the confusion!

CONSULT WITH ECO-CYCLE'S GREEN STAR BUSINESS EXPERTS IF YOU ARE UNSURE ABOUT WHICH BINS THE ITEMS IN THE "NOT SURE BIN" SHOULD GO IN AND RELAY THE INFORMATION TO STAFF WITH ADDITIONAL SIGNAGE IF NECESSARY.

CONGRATULATIONS!

YOU'VE MADE IT THROUGH
MODULE 1: SETTING UP YOUR ZERO WASTE BIN STATIONS

Next, we want to hear about your experience!!

feedback questions

WHAT DID YOU WISH YOU KNEW BEFORE YOU STARTED THIS MODULE?

DID ANYTHING COME UP THAT YOU WERE UNPREPARED FOR?

ARE THERE ANY RESOURCES YOU USED THAT WERE NOT PROVIDED IN THE MODULE?

what advice would you share?

YOU ARE NOW IN THE POSITION TO HELP OTHERS REACH THEIR ZERO WASTE SORTING OBJECTIVES FOR THEIR OFFICE. WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU OFFER TO A NEW MEMBER OF THE GREEN STAR BUSINESS PROGRAM AS THEY START THIS PROCESS TO SET UP A ZERO WASTE BIN SYSTEM IN THEIR OFFICE?

thank you!

YOU HAVE COMPLETED MODULE ONE.