

Case Study: Enhanced Recycling Increases Waste Diversion

The U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement Chicago Field Office diverted waste from landfills by revitalizing its recycling program. This work resulted in a recycling rate of 38 percent. ICE attributes its success to redesign of recycling bin placement, an education and outreach campaign, and the clean-out of a storage room full of equipment the agency no longer needed.

In 2011, ICE's downtown Chicago office had only a single recycling bin for its 200-person, 24-hour operation housed on two floors of a U.S. General Services Administration-owned building. A new comprehensive recycling program was proposed to a field office director who approved the request to start the program.

Collaborating with GSA, ICE experimented with various setups for recycling, including stations for recycling paper and beverage containers in several locations of each floor. This did not work well because the recycling bins became contaminated with trash and other non-recyclable materials.

ICE worked with GSA to have individual recycling boxes distributed to all employees.

The boxes are emptied and sorted by cleaning staff. This allowed for minimal effort on the part of ICE employees, but still encouraged everyone to recycle. The boxes were free to ICE, but the collaboration with GSA required that



The Immigration and Customs Enforcement Chicago Field Office resides in the 536 S. Clark Building.

Key Topics

- Paper and electronics recycling.

Results

- 38 percent recycling rate.
- 85 percent participation rate.
- Recycling electronics helped local schools and opened up storage space.

Facility at a Glance

- Located in a 10-story GSA-owned building in downtown Chicago.
- Over 150 staff housed on two floors of the 24-hour operation.
- Participant since 2011 in the FGC waste and electronics categories.

Sustainable Materials Management

Federal Green Challenge



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Waste Diversion Increased

ICE promote the recycling program through emails and fliers.

Ultimately, ICE established a hybrid system of four recycling centers in common areas and recycling boxes at each work station. ICE estimates a program participation rate of 85 percent.

With the help of the building's property management, the agency also organized an electronics recycling and reuse project to clean out a storage room full of equipment. These electronics were either donated to schools or recycled with a third-party certified electronics recycler.

ICE found the most significant challenges to the recycling program were lack of funding for the project and obtaining participation from ICE

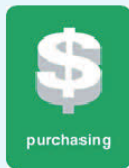
employees. In addition, the agency handles sensitive information, so some documents must be shredded. It was a challenge to teach employees the proper procedure for separating various types of recyclables and separating sensitive from non-sensitive papers. But this education was a critical component to the successful implementation of the recycling program. ICE provided reminders and instructions via email, and asked employees for their suggestions to make the recycling program a success.

The agency hopes to continue its success by working with GSA to encourage recycling throughout the rest of the building, and is evaluating methods to implement recycling collection at another ICE location in a privately owned building.

About the Federal Green Challenge

The Federal Green Challenge, part of EPA's Sustainable Materials Management Program, is designed to challenge federal agencies throughout the country to lead by example in reducing the federal government's environmental impact. It helps agencies meet obligations under Executive Orders 13514 and 13423.

In 2012, nearly 300 federal agencies, representing more than 500,000 employees participated in the Federal Green Challenge. Their combined efforts resulted in an estimated cost savings of more than \$31 million to U.S. taxpayers.



For More Information

**ICE's Chicago Field Office
Recycling Education Campaign
contact:**

Angelina Ramos
312-347-2226
aramos82@ice.dhs.gov

Federal Green Challenge:
<http://epa.gov/fgc>