

Organized Trash and Recycling Collection

Better Service at a Better Price



NEBRASKA
RECYCLING
COUNCIL

Across Nebraska, there are three methods commonly used to provide trash and recycling collection services to residents. Some cities run their own trucks. Others contract with a single company to service residents. However, in the majority of Nebraska communities, trash is collected in an open subscription system. This means each resident must contract individually with a company for services. Unfortunately, while being the most widely used, this system is also the most inefficient—resulting in higher prices, more truck traffic, increased road damage, inconsistent service levels, greater safety concerns, and higher greenhouse gas emissions. Plus, it is less likely to include curbside recycling collection.

An organized trash and recycling system saves residents money, increases recycling, reduces wear and tear on city streets, and provides fair prices.

More than 70% of U.S. cities use an organized trash and recycling system to provide more comprehensive services at a better price, either through a contract or through city-run trucks. A statewide study in Minnesota found that residents with organized collection systems saved up to 30% on their trash bills and recycled almost 15% more than residents with open subscription services.

LOWER PRICES THROUGH COMPETITION, ECONOMIES OF SCALE

Residents benefit when their municipality has better control of the trash and recycling collection programs and when trash companies compete to offer the lowest price. **The best method to drive this competition is when the city puts out a contract for trash and recycling services.** It creates a transparent process whereby the trash haulers compete with one another to offer the best services for the lowest price. It also allows the municipality to structure the contract to fit the specific needs of the community, require measurement and accountability, and negotiate additional services.

The biggest expenses for garbage haulers are the driver and the truck. When a hauler collects materials from every home on the street, they can efficiently spread the costs of the truck and the driver across every household, which means they can also offer a lower price. **The best way to get the best price on trash service is to provide services to every house on the block, just like other types of utilities.**



Benefits of organized trash service

- Bundled services to all residents, e.g. curbside recycling, yard waste collection, bulky item pickups, etc., often at little or no additional cost
- Fair, consistent prices and same quality of service for all residents
- Fewer trucks on the street = safer neighborhoods, less noise pollution, reduced road wear, and reduced fuel consumption, resulting in cleaner air
- Fewer illegal dumping and solid waste complaints because all residents have trash service
- Improved neighborhood aesthetics by having trash cans out on one day, not every day
- Increased recycling rates

**Benefits of
ORGANIZED HAULING
compared to
OPEN SUBSCRIPTION SYSTEMS
(averages based on statewide study
in Minnesota)**

200 - 400%

Savings on fuel by reducing
truck traffic

\$36 - \$72

Annual savings per household on
trash expenses

\$100,000

Savings per year on street repairs

15% Increase in recycling rate

SAFER, CLEANER STREETS AND REDUCED COSTS

Garbage trucks cause tremendous damage to city streets and alleys because they are heavy and make frequent stops. Each truck is the equivalent of 1,000-1,400 vehicles per day, disproportionately adding to the city's road repair and maintenance costs.

Under a subscription-based system, anywhere from 2 to 8 different haulers might drive up and down neighborhood streets every day of the week to collect trash and recycling. When a city provides organized trash collection, it means there is only one company driving on the same street. Fort Collins, CO estimated it could save \$170,000 per year in street maintenance by switching to an organized collection system and reducing the number of garbage trucks on each street.

Large garbage trucks are also a safety hazard. Fewer trucks on the street for fewer days improves traffic safety. It also reduces air and noise pollution, resulting in cleaner, safer neighborhoods.

CURBSIDE RECYCLING

Curbside recycling greatly increases the convenience of recycling, which increases participation and reduces the amount of trash going to landfills. Nearly 25% of Nebraska residents say it is too hard to take materials to drop-off center and another 25% say lack of curbside service is a primary barrier to recycling. When recycling is automatically provided to residents as part of their trash service, residents recycle 40% more than programs where residents have to subscribe to recycling.

By providing more efficient trash collection to residents through organized collections, many cities are able to add city-wide curbside recycling at the same or lower cost as they are currently paying for trash-only collection. Nebraska communities with organized recycling are more likely to have either recycling drop-off centers or curbside recycling compared to communities with open subscription systems, according to a statewide study.



Organized collection saves money for both residents and communities: Residents pay less for trash services and communities spend less on street repairs.

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ORGANIZED TRASH IS A PROVEN SOLUTION

Organized trash and recycling collection is a great option for any community and is widely used. Communities with control over their collection system improve efficiency, lower costs, and ensure all residents have trash collection. Trash contracts can work for Nebraska communities of all sizes, from the Missouri River to the Panhandle and all parts in between.

Learn more about the benefits of organized collection and get support to move your community to this type of system at www.nrcne.org.