

# Volume-Based Pricing for Trash Collection

*The Easiest Way to Reduce Waste and Increase Recycling in Your Community*



NEBRASKA  
RECYCLING  
COUNCIL

*Do you want to provide a fair, cost-effective waste service to your community that encourages recycling and reduces waste? The answer may be as simple as changing the way trash collection is billed.*

Volume-based pricing, or pay-as-you-throw (PAYT), is a method of charging households for trash service based on the amount of waste they throw away. Currently, most Nebraska residents pay a flat fee for trash service, regardless of whether a household puts out five cans of trash per week or only one.

PAYT creates a fairer, more equitable pricing system that provides a financial incentive to encourage residents to recycle more and save money on trash services. It's the same way residents are charged for other utilities, such as electricity, gas and water—based on how much they use. Since there are not meters to measure trash service like there are for water and energy use, residents are billed by volume instead, either by the number of trash bags they set out or by the size of their trash cart—hence volume-based pricing.

**Volume-based pricing is the single most effective way to motivate residents to reduce, reuse, recycle and compost more, and it comes at little or no cost to the city to implement.**

## VOLUME-BASED PRICING IS A PROVEN SOLUTION

More than 7,100 communities across the U.S. use volume-based pricing to provide fair, cost-effective trash services and encourage recycling<sup>1</sup>. In Nebraska, PAYT is used in Imperial, Neligh, Laurel, and Bellevue. Regional leaders include Cedar Falls, Iowa and Loveland, Colorado.

PAYT programs are used in communities of all sizes and are compatible with all types of trash and recycling systems, including automatic or manual collection, whether trash is collected in carts or bags, and whether the city or private haulers pick up trash.



**49%**

Communities with volume-based pricing produce 49% less waste than communities without Pay-As-You-Throw<sup>2</sup>.

## BELLEVUE Success Story

Bellevue moved to a PAYT trash system in 2018 as a way to control trash costs, increase recycling and provide more equitable pricing. Residents choose between three sizes of trash carts based on what they need, and all households automatically receive curbside recycling and seasonal yard waste collection at no additional charge. The program is an expansion of a

### Pick your cart, pick your price.

Graphic is based on average tall kitchen bags (13 gallon size) of trash per week.



pilot program in two neighborhoods where residents were able to nearly triple their recycling rates with the new system. Faced with the closing of the regional landfill and higher transportation costs for waste, this program will allow Bellevue to stabilize costs for the next 10 years while increasing recycling.

## BENEFITS TO VOLUME-BASED PRICING

### Save Money & Control Costs

Under a PAYT system, residents pay only for the amount of trash that they generate. This gives households the opportunity to lower their costs by reducing their waste and subscribing to the smallest trash cart, which helps control costs for seniors or others on fixed income. Cities could also save money by reducing the frequency of trash service, for example, by collecting trash only once per week instead of twice per week.

### Increase Equity & Fairness

Volume-based pricing is more transparent and equitable than charging a flat fee because residents pay only for the level of service they use, just like other utilities. Households that produce less trash and recycle more pay less. Residents who recycle and compost can save money on their trash bill by choosing the smallest trash cart or using fewer bags.

### Decrease Trash, Increase Recycling

Communities typically see a 17% increase in their recycling rates after implementing PAYT, and cities with PAYT generally produce 49% less trash than communities with a flat-fee pricing model<sup>1,2</sup>.

### Protect our Environment

By diverting waste from landfills and increasing recycling, PAYT programs conserve natural resources, reduce air and water pollution, reduce greenhouse gas pollution, and protect ecosystems and wildlife habitat. PAYT is one of the most cost-effective strategies for reducing climate pollution.

### Extend Landfill Life

PAYT gives residents a financial incentive to reduce waste, which extends the life of the local landfill and can reduce waste disposal and transportation costs for the city.

### Flexible to Your Local Programs

PAYT programs are inexpensive to implement and can be adapted to fit within an existing trash collection systems, including municipally-operated, franchised, and open subscription systems serviced by multiple haulers, regardless of location or community size.

### Improve Neighborhood Aesthetics & Reduce Litter

Overflowing trash cans are an eyesore and a big source of litter. Under a volume-based system, all trash is collected in bags or carts, resulting in cleaner streets and less windblown litter.



**PAYT communities produce less waste per capita. Residents in Imperial throw away only 2.7 lbs per person per day, compared to EPA estimates of 4.5 lbs per person per day nationwide.**

*Get started today!*

Nebraska has the lowest recycling rate in our region and produces the most waste per person. Nearly 80% of what we use is thrown away in landfills every year. We can do better! PAYT is one of the fastest, easiest and most cost-effective strategies to reduce waste and increase recycling. The Nebraska Recycling Council is here to help you implement PAYT in your community.

Learn more about PAYT and how we can help you get started today at [www.nrcne.org](http://www.nrcne.org), or call (402) 436-2384.

Funded by



#### References:

1. Ecoconservation Institute. Pay As You Throw. Accessed at [www.paytnow.org](http://www.paytnow.org).
2. US EPA. Pay-As-You-Throw 2010 Summer Bulletin. Accessed at <https://archive.epa.gov/wastes/conserve/tools/payt/web/html/index-3.html>