

# Cuyahoga County Solid Waste District's Master Recycler Program

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**Overview:** The Cuyahoga County Solid Waste District's Master Recycler Program is an eight week certification course offered to residents. The program is designed to create recycling leaders that will help educate and assist friends, family, and neighbors to expand on their recycling knowledge and habits.

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**Target Audience:**

- Residents
- Cuyahoga County Solid Waste District

**Social Marketing Strategy:** Social Norms and Diffusion

**Goal/Objective:** The goal of the program is create recycling leaders in the community that will help educate and assist friends, family, and neighbors to expand on their recycling knowledge and habits. This program is also intended to create a volunteer pool to assist with conferences, events, and programs.

**State Plan Goal:** Goal 2, 3, and 4

**Summary:** The Cuyahoga County Solid Waste District's Master Recycler program is an eight week certification course offered to residents. The first step towards certification is applying for the program. Applicants then must interview for the opportunity and be accepted. All applicants go through a background check due to volunteer laws within Cuyahoga County. Participants must be at least 18 years old and live, work, or go to college in Cuyahoga County. The SWMD recruits participants through environmental advocate mail groups and newsletters.

In order to earn the certification, participants must attend 20 hours of class and complete 20 hours of community service. Classes occur every other week and consist of both speakers and tours (*see attached class schedule for further information*). Participants must complete the hours of community service within a year after finishing the class portion. Some examples of community service opportunities include representing the SWMD at events, offering office assistance, and participating in a litter pick-up. **Further examples can be found on the Cuyahoga County Solid Waste District's website.**

Once participants complete the program, they receive a certificate and earn the title of "Master Recycler of Cuyahoga County". Once certified, participants assist the Cuyahoga County Solid Waste District with activities that help the District achieve its mission. In addition, master recyclers can assist with conferences, events, and other District sponsored programs. The inaugural year for the program was 2013.

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## Barriers to Desired Behavior:

- Limited staffing hours
- Limited recycling community leaders

## Barriers with Implementation:

- Finalizing the class number
- People not showing up for the course
- People not wanting a background check
- Speakers cancelling
- Hard to handle all the needs and wants of the group

## Timeline for Rollout:

- I. January/February: Begin planning
- II. June/July: Application submission open and interviews begin
- III. July: Complete planning and finalize agenda
- IV. August: Program begins
  - a. Classes: 20 hours in 9 weeks; one class every week
  - b. Service Hours: 20 hours (must be completed a year after the last class is taken)
- V. Background Check: by 2<sup>nd</sup> class session

## Considerations:

- Course needs at least 10 participants
- A course fee of \$40 was used to offset the cost of program materials for each participant
- To keep costs down, participants used their own vehicles to get to tours
- Organize guest speakers and tours well in advance

## Measurement Methods:

The success of the Master Recycler Program is determined by the number of people taking the class, and the number that graduate with a certificate.

## Overall Results and Metrics

- 18 people took the course in the 2013-2014 session
- 13 people have completed their volunteer service from the 2013-2014 session

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**Wrap up:** The Cuyahoga County Solid Waste District intends to provide the course annually as long as there are enough registered volunteers. The participants in the 2013-2014 group were very energetic with a lot of passion for recycling. The energy of the group will vary from year to year, which could influence the success of the program. Others that have implemented similar programs are the Montgomery and Adams-Clermont Solid Waste Districts.

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