



The Recycling Partnership

Building a Better Recycling System

Improving the Quality of Recyclables in Orange County

How The Partnership's Feet on the Street contamination reduction program improved recycling

City, State: Orange County, Florida

When it comes to capturing the different materials that enter the U.S. residential recycling system, it is as important for residents to know what cannot be recycled as it is to know what can be recycled. Excessive contamination can cause a host of problems once the material is collected. The curbside recycling program in Orange County, Florida, had a nearly 40% contamination rate, which threatened the long-term sustainability of the program. For that reason, the county began working with The Partnership in 2019 on an initial Feet on the Street contamination reduction program, with the goal of expanding the program to its 220,000 households by 2023.

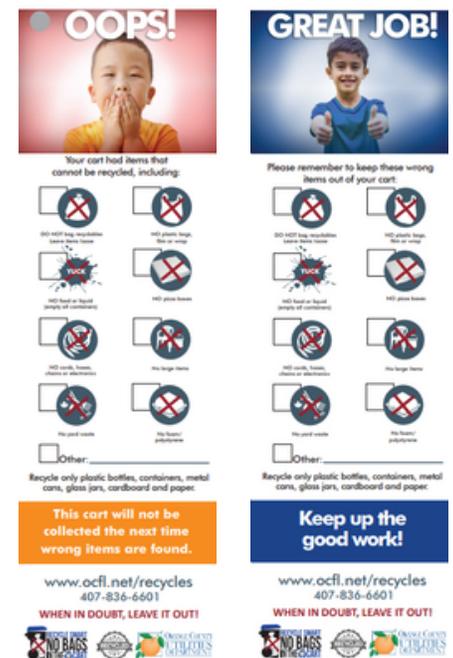
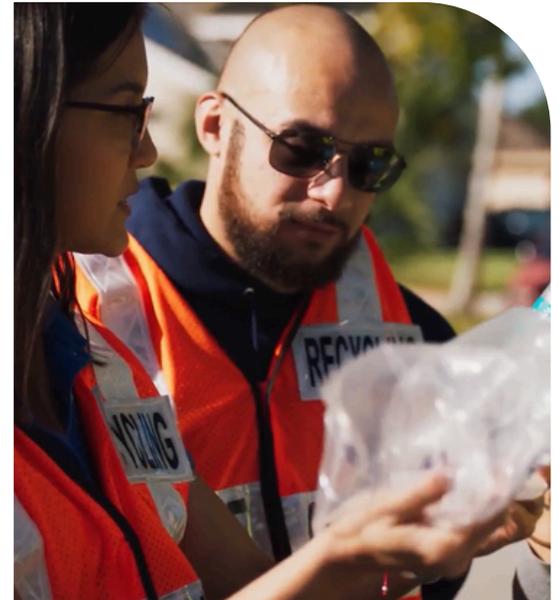
Teams walked the streets to check recycling carts for contamination. Carts were then tagged with educational instructions to help residents learn what can and cannot be put into their recycling carts.

The project drove a transformation of the county's recycling system, resulting in a better connected and more efficient program ultimately providing recycling to 1.3 million residents and the potential to recover \$3.6 million in recycled material when implemented countywide.

Key Outcomes

- Education and outreach program reduced contamination rate by 29%
- Recycling truck loads processed at the county's MRF increased tenfold
- Generated 40 million pounds of recyclables annually

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