



# New Designation for Cups Moves the Needle on Polypropylene Recycling

## Polypropylene Recycling Coalition

Through focused determination and collective action, polypropylene to-go cups are now easier to recycle. It's the latest example of The Recycling Partnership's (The Partnership) bold leadership to improve polypropylene recycling nationwide.

### The Win

In January 2026, polypropylene to-go cups **earned a Widely Recyclable designation** from How2Recycle, North America's most recognized on-pack disposal label. This major step forward for cup recyclability reflects that more than 60% of U.S. households can now recycle these cups through curbside or drop-off programs.

This packaging category could not have earned this designation as recently as last year, with cups holding steady at 56% acceptance. To make that happen, The Partnership's Polypropylene Recycling Coalition convened How2Recycle, Starbucks, NextGen Consortium managed by Closed Loop Partners' Center for the Circular Economy, WM, and others to connect existing recycling capabilities to clear recycling program communication.

### How We Got Here

The cups designation builds on a critical earlier success: a **label upgrade for rigid polypropylene containers** in 2022.

That change also happened largely thanks to efforts by the Coalition, which The Partnership convened in 2020 as a response to domestic polypropylene recycling challenges. Since inception, millions of dollars granted to processing upgrades and community education has catalyzed millions more to strengthen polypropylene recycling nationwide.

Remarkably, The Coalition's work helped lead to this upgrade within two years — and then kept going. In 2025 the Coalition analyzed recycling program data for thousands of communities and facilities, identifying cups as the largest opportunity to keep more packaging out of landfills through improved community education and outreach.

Acceptance is one step; supporting communities to capture the right materials is a must. The Partnership's expertise informed a cross-industry effort to deliver best practice toolkits to hundreds of communities, supporting updated program guidance wherever cups could be recycled.

### What's Next

Boosting polypropylene capture is an example of The Partnership's commitment to tackling system challenges that no single company, community, or policy can fix alone. Through collective efforts that include infrastructure investments, material recovery testing, and industry partnership, we are bringing more plastic beverage containers into the circular economy, making it simpler for customers to recycle and reduce waste.



PARTNER WITH US. LET'S SOLVE RECYCLING'S TOUGHEST CHALLENGES, TOGETHER.