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CASE STUDY

Opening Doors to Multifamily Recycling in Houston

Houston, Texas

Houston's recycling system already reaches single-family homes citywide, with curbside collection and drop-off sites. But until now, recycling access for multifamily residents has been limited to just a handful of properties, even as multifamily housing continues to grow. With support from The Recycling Partnership, the city is tackling that gap through a yearlong pilot bringing service to 3,000 units across 12 properties—testing what it takes to make recycling work for everyone.



Recycling bins were delivered in September 2025 to the doorstep of participating multifamily properties.

What We're Testing

The pilot, which kicked off in October 2025, is testing two types of service:



On-Site Recycling
Residents drop materials at a centralized collection point.



Valet Recycling
Recyclables are collected right at the doorstep.

Every household in the pilot receives an in-unit bin with recycling education on how to participate. Material is then collected on-site or through a valet service and taken locally to **FCC Environmental** for processing. And to make sure convenience meets clarity, the city is pairing service with strong resident education. Residents receive follow-up door hangers and reminders, designed using The Partnership's proven behavior-change strategies.



For on-site recycling, these large containers are positioned on the property for easy access by residents.

Why It Matters

Nationwide, **only 37% of multifamily households have recycling access**. In Texas, that share is even lower, at 20%. Houston's pilot is a critical step toward closing that gap and informing a potential citywide recycling ordinance that ensures every household, no matter the housing type, has access.

"This pilot gives us valuable insight into what it takes to expand recycling citywide," said Houston Director of Solid Waste, Larius Hassen. "The information we're gathering will help us build a program that meets the needs of multifamily residents and moves Houston closer to its sustainability goals."

What's Next

After the pilot wraps up in fall 2026, audits will measure tonnage, composition, and contamination rates across both service types. The data will reveal the performance of each model and where to focus resources for the greatest impact as the city explores a multifamily recycling ordinance.

The results won't just shape Houston's future; they'll inform strategies nationwide for scaling recycling to multifamily communities everywhere.

Support innovation. Create data-backed, replicable recycling programs.

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

The Recycling Partnership