



STATE OF WISCONSIN  
**Legislative Audit Bureau**  
NONPARTISAN • INDEPENDENT • ACCURATE

Hearing Date  
February 2, 2021

# State Recycling Programs

(report 20-21)

# Best Practices for Local Recycling Programs

(report 20-22)



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# Recycling in Other States

Other states implemented recycling initiatives in recent years, including:

- educating the public about recycling;
- awarding grants to upgrade the infrastructure of recycling facilities; and
- developing the markets for recyclable materials.



# DNR's Program Expenditures and Staffing Levels

Expenditures for DNR's three recycling programs totaled \$21.8 million in FY 2018-19.

The number of FTE staff positions that administered DNR's three recycling programs declined from 17.1 in FY 2014-15 to 10.3 in FY 2018-19.

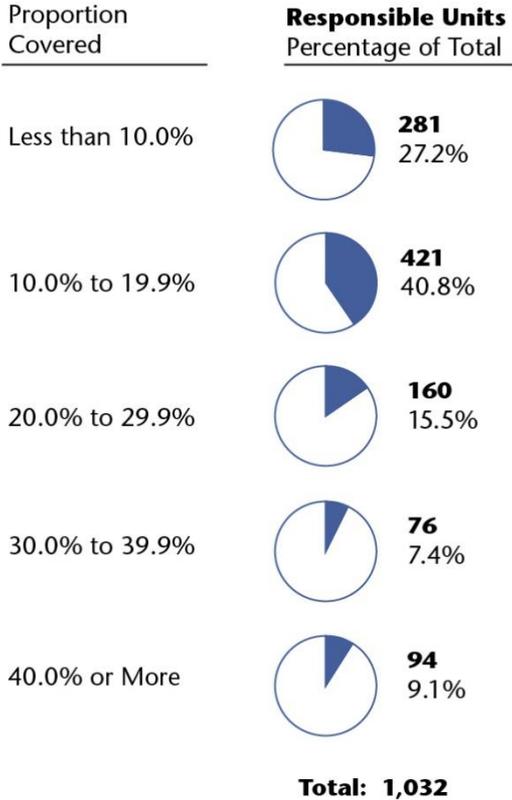


## We found that DNR:

- spent funds appropriated for recycling on activities related to recycling but not allowed by statutes;
- reviewed fewer recycling programs than statutorily required from 2016 through 2018;
- did not analyze the results of its program reviews in order to provide all responsible units with additional guidance on addressing common concerns; and
- did not fully comply with its administrative rules pertaining to effective recycling programs.



# Proportions of Eligible Recycling Expenditures Covered by Recycling Grants



# DATCP's Administration of the Clean Sweep Program

In 2019, DATCP awarded Clean Sweep grants to 57 recipients in amounts that averaged \$13,200.

Total program grants equaled 52.7 percent of the amount requested by the applicants.

DATCP did not require grant recipients to submit documentation to verify all expenditures.



# Survey of Responsible Units

In January 2020, we surveyed all 1,077 responsible units about the state recycling programs.

Most respondents indicated satisfaction with the assistance that DNR and DATCP provided them.

Respondents were less satisfied with their grant amounts.



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# Best Practices

We identified 15 best practices for complying with state recycling laws and improving the administration of recycling programs, including those related to:

- outreach and education;
- containers;
- collection;
- drop-off sites; and
- program administration and oversight.



# Legislative Consideration

The Legislature could consider modifying the statutorily required method for awarding recycling grants to responsible units.





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