



## 2024 WM Recycling Report Shows Education, Access and Investment are Critical to Strengthening the Nation's Recycling System

Nov 13, 2024

*Survey of consumers and businesses reveals many Americans want to recycle, despite confusion on what happens to materials*

HOUSTON , Nov. 13, 2024 /PRNewswire/ -- WM (NYSE: WM), a leading environmental solutions provider and North America's largest recycler, today released a new report that emphasizes the importance of consumer households, businesses, policymakers and local municipalities working together to potentially improve the nation's recycling system. Based on a survey of more than 1,000 American consumers and businesses, the [2024 WM Recycling Report](#) summarizes data and takeaways with respect to recycling behaviors and perceptions to better understand opportunities to bolster recycling education, investments and accessibility in the U.S.



"Recycling is essential to enabling the circular economy, but it works best when we work together," said **Tara Hemmer, chief sustainability officer, WM**. "WM's research shows that many Americans are eager to recycle, but they need more education and greater access to recycling in order to build confidence in the practice. As the demand for recycled materials continues to grow, WM is driving solutions alongside our communities and customers by investing in technology that can make recycling more efficient, building new recycling facilities in areas that previously lacked access, and helping consumers and businesses understand what and how to recycle. Together, we can make a difference."

The report offers insight into education and access gaps as well as opportunities for greater collaboration. Key learnings from the survey include:

- **Many Americans want to recycle, but some lack an understanding of how recycling works and the positive impact it can have on the environment.** Many households across America have a high desire to recycle, with nearly half (44%) reporting that they are looking for ways to expand their recycling practices in the future. However, while 86% of people who recycle say they recycle plastic bottles and containers, 1 in 10 are not-at-all confident that their plastics are actually recycled.
- **Americans are likely more inclined to recycle when they have greater awareness, education and access.** Data showed 45% of respondents cite a lack of knowledge about what can and cannot be recycled as their biggest barrier, and 64% say if they knew more about what to recycle and how (and what not to recycle), their involvement would increase.
- **Where consumers live can have an outsized impact on their recycling habits.** Rural areas face greater accessibility issues – 50% of respondents in rural areas reported dealing with more inconveniences that led to lower rates of recycling, such as having to drive long distances or to a different site to recycle
- **Creating products with recycled content can be a differentiator for brands and potentially drive consumer purchase.** Data indicated 75% of surveyed Americans report that they are more likely to buy products from companies that include recycled content in their products. But as many as 60% of those same respondents report not having clarity on which brands use recycled content in their products, calling for additional education so that consumers have a better understanding.

The report, which comes ahead of America Recycles Day on Nov. 15, highlights the critical role recycling can play in advancing the circular economy by fueling the continuous reuse of materials. The findings emphasize that a robust recycling infrastructure relies on collaboration among consumer households, businesses, policymakers and local municipalities. WM is committed to advancing these efforts through its planned \$1.4 billion investment to upgrade and build approximately 40 recycling facilities with advanced technology between 2022 and 2026.

WM also works with customers of all sizes and other organizations to advance recycling education, including through its collaboration with the National League of Cities' [Recycle Right®](#) campaign, through its sustainability advisory services as the first [Official Sustainability Partner of Major League Baseball](#), and as the title sponsor of the [WM Phoenix Open](#), one of the largest certified zero-waste sporting event in the world.

Read the [2024 WM Recycling Report here](#).

### 2024 WM RECYCLING REPORT METHODOLOGY

[The Futurum Group](#), a research and advisory firm, was commissioned by WM to conduct two online surveys of 1,045 consumers and businesses in July 2024 regarding recycling behaviors and perceptions. The consumer survey included 518 individuals over the age of 18 in the U.S., balanced to reflect U.S. census demographics. The business survey included 527 employees from companies across the U.S., including both recycling program


service or contract decision makers within the company, employees responsible for managing recycling programs and general staff. Throughout the report, 'Americans,' and 'consumers,' 'residents,' 'individuals,' and 'households,' refer to consumer survey respondents, and 'business decision makers' and 'businesses' refers to business survey respondents.

#### **ABOUT WM**

WM ([WM.com](http://WM.com)) is North America's leading provider of comprehensive environmental solutions. Previously known as Waste Management and based in Houston, Texas, WM is driven by commitments to put people first and achieve success with integrity. The company, through its subsidiaries, provides collection, recycling and disposal services to millions of residential, commercial, industrial, medical and municipal customers throughout the U.S., Canada and Europe. With innovative infrastructure and capabilities in recycling, organics and renewable energy, WM provides environmental solutions to and collaborates with its customers in helping them achieve their sustainability goals. WM has the largest disposal network and collection fleet in North America, is the largest recycler of post-consumer materials and is a leader in beneficial use of landfill gas, with a growing network of renewable natural gas plants and the most landfill gas-to-electricity plants in North America. WM's fleet includes more than 12,000 natural gas trucks – the largest heavy-duty natural gas truck fleet of its kind in North America. To learn more about WM and the company's sustainability progress and solutions, visit [Sustainability.WM.com](http://Sustainability.WM.com).

#### **Forward Looking Statements**

*This press release contains forward-looking statements, including all statements regarding future events, future investments and all outcomes or benefits of such investments. Such statements are based on the facts and circumstances as of the date the statements are made and are subject to risks and uncertainties that could cause actual results to be materially different. Please see Part I, Item 1A of the Annual Report on Form 10-K, and subsequent Forms 10-Q, available at [investors.wm.com](http://investors.wm.com) for information regarding such risks and uncertainties. WM assumes no obligation to update any forward-looking statement.*

 View original content to download multimedia:<https://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/2024-wm-recycling-report-shows-education-access-and-investment-are-critical-to-strengthening-the-nations-recycling-system-302304184.html>

SOURCE WM

[media@wm.com](mailto:media@wm.com)