



HANDBOOK

Inspire Change in Your Community

Master Recyclers are a volunteer corps who inspire neighbors and coworkers into action

Fall 2021

INTRODUCTION TO THIS HANDBOOK

Welcome to the Master Recycler Handbook and Program! The Master Recycler Program aims to bridge the gap between awareness and action by motivating people to consume sustainably in their homes and workplaces. The program stresses education and outreach and is informed by behavior change theory. Master Recyclers are key agents of change, working with communities throughout the Metro region.

This Handbook you are holding is yours to keep. It is an essential resource to you as a Master Recycler and it incorporates contributions from key professionals and community leaders as well as fellow Master Recyclers.

The Handbook has a number of objectives, including:

- Provide current and relevant information.
- Reinforce key messages for outreach and education.
- Provide resources for outreach and education.
 - Supplemental reading options.
 - Ideas for connecting to community efforts.
- Improve outreach and education skills.
- Motivate continued commitment and action.

Each week of the class, the Master Recycler Program Coordinator will announce the week's reading assignments. You will gain more from your course experience if you complete this reading on time.

Once you've completed the course, this Handbook will be a reference tool to help you develop outreach and education projects. Whether you staff an information table, give a presentation, or work on a personal project, the Handbook supplies key messages and facts, common vocabulary used in the field, and resources available to you, including literature and demonstration kits.



The Handbook is divided into four topic areas



1. **Systems.** The first seven chapters describe major systems so that you can understand the context of processes and messages. It introduces the concept of materials management (from extraction to end of life) and how materials relate to climate change, sustainable consumption and equity. This section also explores behavior change theory, which will be important throughout the course.



2. **Our Lives.** Once we have explored the bigger picture, the next five chapters will put these concepts in the context of our homes, workplaces and community gathering places. You will explore resources and learn how to implement easy and practical changes that can have significant impacts.



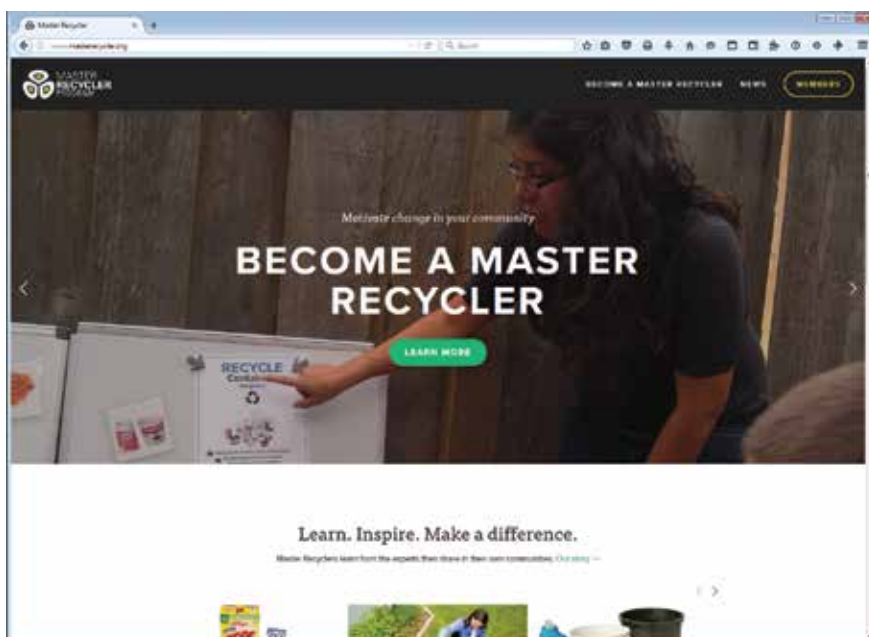
3. **Special Considerations.** Some materials are worth a closer look because they have greater environmental and social impacts, because they pose more difficult challenges, or because there are special opportunities for positive change. These four chapters focus on toxics, food, electronics and buildings.



4. **Volunteering.** The magic of the Master Recycler Program is that you will be sharing the information you learn in the community. The final section of six chapters connects you to resources and builds skills to help you be the most effective outreach and education volunteer possible.



- G **Glossary of terms.**



Keep your handbook current.

This handbook is current on the day that you receive it. Once a year, the handbook will be updated. To give you the opportunity to keep your handbook current, update packets will be posted to the members section of the website. The packets will include only the updated pages which you may print and replace in your binder.

MASTER RECYCLER ELECTRONIC TOOLS

- A monthly newsletter will be sent to you by email to keep you informed and connect you with events and new resources.
- You are encouraged to follow www.facebook.com/masterrecyclers.
- There are several Facebook groups you can join as well: The Official Portland Area Master Recyclers, Eastside Master Recyclers, Master Recyclers of Color and Westside Master Recyclers.
- You will find these resources in the Members section of www.masterrecycler.org:
 - A volunteer opportunity calendar
 - Volunteer hours report form
 - Past newsletters with informational articles
 - A list of brochures, literature, and demonstration kits you can use
 - A job seekers board
 - Presentations from class
 - Update packets for your handbook

Master Recycler Members Section Password is “recycler”.



To access the members section of the website, enter “recycler” as the password

INTRODUCTION TO THE MASTER RECYCLER PROGRAM

Most people know they should reduce, reuse and recycle to protect the environment. But people don't always act in accordance with what they know! In fact, research demonstrates that just giving people information has little or no effect on what they do. If brochures won't change behavior, what will?

Research shows that personal contact, when paired with specific information about how to reduce waste, is a powerful way to inspire action. Master Recyclers bridge the gap between awareness and action by motivating people to consume sustainably in their homes and workplaces.

You are about to embark on an exciting adventure that will impact the way people think about consumption and waste. After taking the course, Master Recyclers make personal contacts and work to encourage sustainable consumption throughout the community.

Master Recycler Program Mission:

Bridging the gap between awareness and action by motivating people to consume sustainably in their homes and workplaces.

History of Master Recycler program

In 1990, Jeanne Roy, Chair of Recycling Advocates, read an article about a Master Recycler in Seattle who held compost parties at her home. Jeanne was captivated by the idea of individuals using their own knowledge of waste reduction practices to influence their peers. She drove to Seattle to visit King County's Master Recycler program compost demonstration site. She proposed Recycling Advocates develop a program here.

Recycling Advocates agreed and formed a committee. Fortunately, Seattle shared its Manual and curriculum outline for Portland to adapt. OSU Energy Extension Program joined as a partner to help develop and administer the program.

When the OSU Extension Service experienced budget cuts in 2003, the City of Portland Bureau of Planning and Sustainability agreed to administer the program, while Metro, and Clackamas and Washington Counties committed to contribute funding.

Master Recycler partners

The Master Recycler Program is supported by community partners committed to resource conservation in the Portland Metro area. The City of Portland's Bureau of Planning and Sustainability administers the program and employs the Program Coordinator.

The program's founding partners are:

Metro, our regional government, manages garbage disposal and recycling for 1.5 million residents in three counties and 25 cities in the Portland region.

City of Portland Bureau of Planning and Sustainability (BPS) takes action to shape the future of Portland and advance climate protection for a more prosperous, healthy, equitable and resilient city now and for future generations.

Clackamas County's Sustainability & Solid Waste Program provides education and technical assistance to residents, businesses and workplaces, schools, and events throughout Clackamas County so the community can reduce waste, conserve resources, recycle effectively, and adopt more sustainable practices.

Washington County Solid Waste and Recycling oversees the collection and transportation of waste, yard debris and recyclables in the unincorporated county area and regulates one dry waste landfill and one compost facility. Additionally, Washington County delivers waste reduction and recycling education to residents on behalf of the 10 cities that make up the Washington County Cooperative Recycling Program.

Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) helps consumers and industry make more sustainable choices. DEQ sets goals and monitors the management of materials, including the production, consumption and recovery of materials.

Recycling Advocates is a volunteer-based group dedicated to creating a sustainable future through local efforts to reduce, reuse and recycle.

Master Recycler community outreach

Master Recycler participants receive training on waste reduction and outreach. In return, course graduates commit to at least 30 hours of community education and outreach.



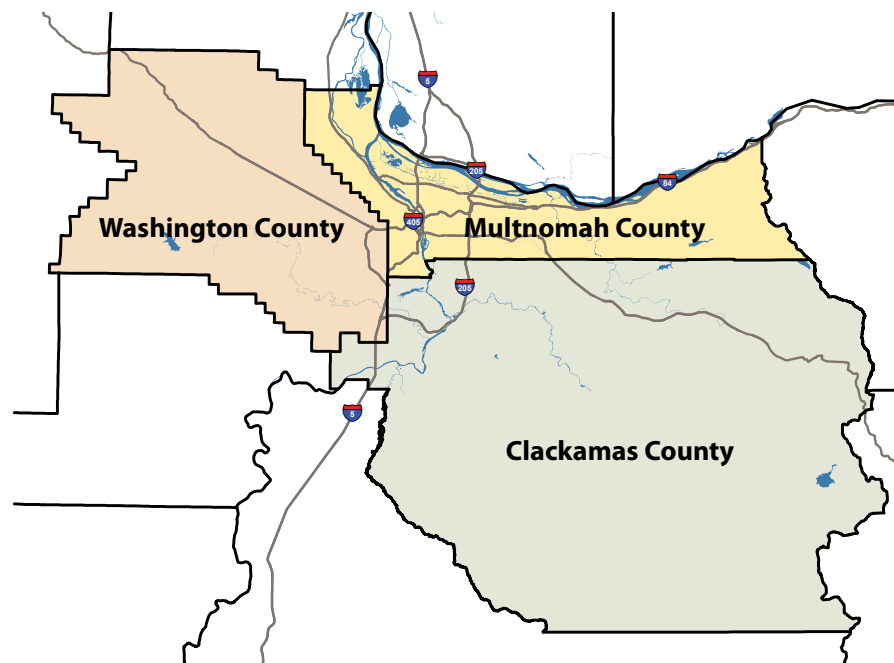
Kelly explains plastics recycling in North Portland

Master Recyclers serve their neighbors throughout the Metro region (Clackamas, Washington and Multnomah Counties). With about 1,800 graduates, 60,000 volunteer hours have been devoted to the one-on-one contact necessary to drive behavior change. Through this sort of work, individual behavior change can quickly scale and lead to changes in community norms.

When you volunteered to become a Master Recycler, you made a commitment to fulfill this goal by providing “payback” hours that will 1) implement a system or program that eliminates or diverts materials from the waste stream, and/or 2) provide direct community contact to educate and inspire people to practice waste reduction.

Payback activities may include individual projects created by you and/or fellow classmates and approved by the Program Coordinator. Or they may be organized by the Program Coordinator working with other volunteers and local educational and solid waste programs.

Most graduates do some of both. However you choose to participate in the program, your contributions will be an important part of a larger movement to protect our natural resources in the region. We hope you enjoy the course and even more that you enjoy your subsequent volunteer work. **Thanks!**



Metro area Master Recyclers volunteer hours count when they take place anywhere in the tri-county area (Washington, Multnomah and Clackamas)