

## **Six Steps To Implementing North Cornwall Township's Mandatory Recycling Program**

Hello! My name is Jean Elia and I am North Cornwall Township's Recycling Coordinator. North Cornwall is a small Township in Lebanon County, Pennsylvania, with an area of 9.5 square miles. Due to our 2000 population, we became mandated by Pennsylvania's Act 101 recycling law to implement a recycling program. However, up until this time we had many residents and businesses in the Township recycling on a voluntary basis. In the spring of 2002, the position of Recycling Coordinator was added to my other Township responsibilities. From that point on I did many things in order to have the mandatory recycling program running by the March 16, 2003, compliance date.

1. Develop the recycling ordinance and resolution. The first step was writing a Township ordinance to set up the program. Instead of laying out all of the specific details of the program in the ordinance, I decided to write an accompanying resolution. Reason being: It is much easier to modify a resolution than an ordinance. All of the general recycling requirements were listed in the ordinance and the specific items that had the possibility of being changed went into the resolution. Both documents were adopted in November 2001 at the Township's Board of Supervisors' meeting.
2. Determine how collection will occur. Some of the next questions that I had to answer were how and when the required materials were to be collected for recycling. After talking to the Township Manager, Supervisors and Road Foreman, the unanimous decision was the following:
  - **Commingled recyclable materials** would continue to be collected curbside by the garbage haulers.
  - **Leaf and Green Waste** will be collected by the Township's road crew seasonally in the spring and fall.

Another question was where the leaf and green waste would be taken after it was collected. Since 1985, the Township road crew collected leaves in the fall. From that time to the present, we have been fortunate to have two farmers in the Township take the leaves free of charge for land application to their fields. The farmers are currently in the process of obtaining a permit-by-rule from the Department of Environmental Protection for the land applying of leaf waste. We will continue to utilize the services of the farmers as a means of leaf waste management, as long as they will continue to accept the material. As for the green waste, we are currently looking into several options for composting this material.

3. Revise the Township's burning ordinance. Next, I had to change our burning ordinance because, as you all know, the burning of recyclable materials is not an acceptable management practice under Act 101. Until this point, we only allowed our residents to burn paper products if they met all of our requirements. However, because paper is now

a designated recyclable material in the Township, we instituted a “burn ban” for all residents and businesses with one exception. After receiving clearance from DEP, we allowed farmers with 25 acres or more to do open burns, but the material must be completely generated on their farm, i.e. brush, branches, trimmings, weeds and so on. Qualified farmers need to apply for a burning permit and pay either a one day fee or an annual fee.

4. Apply for grant funding to assist with leaf and green waste collection and processing. I received word that there was an Act 101 Section 902 Recycling Grant application round open for composing proposals. After talking to Mr. Mark Vottero, my DEP Regional Planning and Recycling Coordinator and Ms. Amy Mazzella di Bosco, our Lebanon County Recycling Coordinator, I began to research and complete the grant application. In the application, the Township asked DEP to provide funding for equipment that would help us begin our new leaf/green waste collection program. I should receive notice about the grant in June 2003.
5. Develop educational materials for various audiences. Some of the last things I did not only helped myself get more organized but also helped my residents and businesses to be more informed of the new program:
  - I created new recycling folders and organized my desk drawers for easy filing.
  - I created two different packets of information to hand out door to door. One was geared toward residents and the other for businesses. Both stated what was required to be recycled, how the materials had to be prepared for the recycling containers, how often recyclables would be collected, tentative schedules for leaf and green waste collections, and the new burning regulations.
  - Letters were prepared and sent to all owners of apartment complexes. In the letter, I asked that all owners of these complexes supply recycling containers that would be sufficient for the number of residents that occupy their building(s). I also asked that they inform all tenants about the recycling program and post a sign by their recycling containers listing the recycling requirements.
  - Letters were prepared and sent with recycling information packets to all listed businesses in the Township.
  - Leaf waste and green waste collection schedules were established. The Township was divided into four sections, each of which will be collected on a different weekday.
6. Distribute recycling containers and educational packets to residents. Finally, Lebanon County’s Greater Lebanon Refuse Authority was kind enough to supply the Township with recycling containers, which we received in late February. The Authority did this because at the time, there was not grant application round available to fund these items. After receiving the bins, the Township road crew hand delivered them, with the respective recycling information packets inside, to every property in the Township.

Although there are a few things that need to be worked out, most of the recycling program has been developed and explained to everyone in North Cornwall Township. I am anticipating many bumps in the road ahead, but I hope that in time everything will run very smoothly.

