



# Office Waste Reduction and Reuse




Reuse and waste reduction is also known as waste prevention and source reduction. Source reduction, preempts the need to collect, process, or dispose of materials by preventing their use or need up front by updating policies and operation protocols. Waste prevention actually starts with product purchase. To use a shared or donated item or products meant to be used over and over again and are repairable prevents purchasing new materials. Repurposing worn out or unrepairable products to create permanent or seasonal use items prevents waste.

Los Angeles County Departmental Recycling Program promotes reduction, reuse, recycling, and environmentally preferable procurement of office supplies and materials. Waste reduction and reuse activities can result in cost savings and revenue including reduced waste disposal and purchasing costs. Although there are up-front purchase costs for reusable materials and products, the longer product life avoids repetitive purchases of disposable materials and products. Reduction of material use may require changes in protocols or procedures to ensure materials are being used more efficiently and in lower quantities.

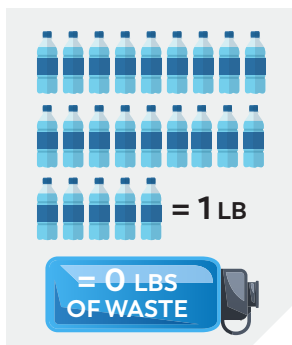
In 2016, each California employee disposed an average of 11.4 pounds each day, amounting to over 1.4 tons of waste each year. In 2014, Los Angeles County adopted the Roadmap to a Sustainable Waste Management Future establishing a goal of 80% diversion from landfills by 2025 for unincorporated Los Angeles County communities. The implementation of waste reduction and reuse measures at County facilities will help Los Angeles County and the State meet waste reduction goals.



## Tips, Resources, and Assistance

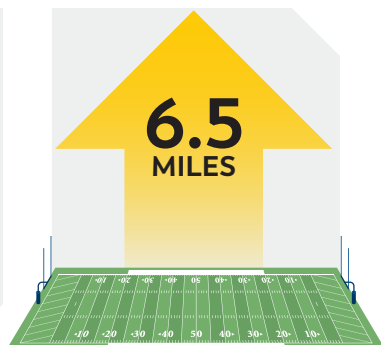
-  Learn more about green purchasing at [pw.lacounty.gov/epd/drp/PreferableGreenProducts.aspx](http://pw.lacounty.gov/epd/drp/PreferableGreenProducts.aspx)
-  Bring and use reusable plates, cups and utensils. Flyers and templates for the Bring Your Own campaign can be found here: [pw.lacounty.gov/epd/drp/BringYourOwn.aspx](http://pw.lacounty.gov/epd/drp/BringYourOwn.aspx)
-  Reduce office paper by printing double-sided copies, reusing envelopes, and making scratch pads from used paper. Store documents electronically when possible instead of printing and proof documents on-screen before printing or consider the need to print at all.

Removing 23 plastic water bottles from the waste stream reduces one pound of disposal.



Source: CalRecycle CRV rates sheet

In 2016, California disposed of 42.7 million tons in landfills, equal to filling a football field 6.5 miles high between goalposts.





Source: CalRecycle California's 2016 per Capita Disposal Rate Estimate

To divert 80% of waste from landfills (LA County's 2025 goal) every resident would need to dispose no more than 3 pounds each day - equal to 2 full kitchen bags for a family of four.



Source: Los Angeles County Roadmap to a Sustainable Waste Management Future

-  Check for available materials and supplies or post your facility's usable surplus materials and supplies at [isd.co.la.ca.us/surplus/scripts/surSale.cfm](http://isd.co.la.ca.us/surplus/scripts/surSale.cfm)
-  Find more tips to reduce waste by visiting [pw.lacounty.gov/epd/drp/QuickTips.aspx](http://pw.lacounty.gov/epd/drp/QuickTips.aspx) or calling the Countywide Recycling Coordinator at 1(888) CLEAN LA



# Los Angeles County Facility Case Studies

## Reducing Disposable Plastic Water Bottles

The Pomona Department of Public Social Services building installed three water bottle refill stations. Each month, refill stations eliminate the equivalent of approximately 2,000 disposable plastic bottles. The Los Angeles County Library Headquarters building has installed three water bottle refill stations, and since the first installation in 2017, they have eliminated the equivalent of approximately 58,000 disposable plastic bottles.



By installing combination water fountains that have both a drinking spout as well as a vertical water spout for bottle refilling, the number of disposable bottles used by a facility can be substantially reduced. Refill stations should be installed in publicly accessible areas to encourage building visitors to bring refillable water bottles, as well as in areas that are heavily trafficked by building employees. Notices should be placed around the facility to inform visitors and employees about the availability of refill stations. Prices for the add-on fountain are approximately \$500, while the full fountain costs \$1,000.

## Archiving Electronic Forms and Data



The Industry Sheriff's Station has numerous bookings each month, resulting in excess waste of paper but has transitioned to electronic forms.



The Station has also transitioned from paper file storage to electronic archiving using SEEDA, the Sheriff's Electronic Criminal Document Archive. The transition to electronic forms and archiving has multiple benefits, including reduced paper use, reduced filing time and less

space for filing cabinets. Offices that generate large volumes of paper waste may benefit from electronic forms and data archiving systems. Identifying what processes generate the most paper waste is the first step in determining if electronic systems are appropriate for your office. One critical point to consider is if signatures are required on forms, and if so, if electronic signatures are an acceptable alternative.

## Purchase and Provide Bulk Water and Reusable Cups and Mugs



According to Cupanion, businesses that offer disposable cups for employees, spend approximately \$75 per employee, each year on the cost of disposable cups. Installing refill stations and offering reusable cups can reduce facility costs. The Public Works Hollydale Yard orders filtered water in bulk. This is a convenient solution for employees to refill water bottles and reusable mugs.

Water jugs ranging in size from 3 to 5 gallons can be ordered at specified intervals from water delivery companies. Employees are encouraged to bring their own reusable water bottles to refill instead of using plastic water bottles. If your office is interested in establishing a bulk water refill station, simply set aside an area for receiving and storing full and empty water jugs and provide reusable cups for employees and guests.

50 billion paper coffee cups are being thrown away in the United States every year. Reusable mugs can reduce a lot of waste.



## Change to Sharing and Reusing Office Supplies

The Performing Arts Center of Los Angeles County (The Music Center) has two programs to increase reuse of office materials and reduce the purchase of new supplies.

One program called "Leave, Take, Use" allows employees to leave office supplies on a shelf, as well as take any items they may need. A second program called "Take, Read, Return" act as an employee library for books and resource materials. Materials can be borrowed, read and returned to the shelf for others to use. Both programs can be easily replicated. Designate a storage area, closet, or bookshelf as a reuse center. Inform and encourage employees to drop off gently used office items and books that can be reused by other employees to avoid the purchase of new materials.

