

# Case Studies on Zero Waste Outreach and Education



# Scope

## Key questions from the ZWAC:

- **How to reach diverse populations?**
- **How to balance enforcement with incentives for participation?**
- **How to leverage community partnerships, existing platforms, and institutions to expand messaging?**

# Scope

**Cases organized into 3 categories:**

**1. General Approach to Outreach and Communication**

- outreach to broad and diverse populations, allocation of resources, community partnerships

**2. Managing Communication about New Programs**

- engaging participation in new roll outs across diverse populations

**3. Enforcement**

- Strategies to encourage, coerce, cajole, and enforce program participation

Conducted research in **Seattle, San Francisco, Austin, and Cambridge**



# Communication is key to Zero Waste

Zero Waste = behavior change

## Austin:

- 30 staff for outreach & communication
- \$2 million annual budget for residential outreach; \$3 million for business
- Creative strategies across media types and market segments



### DARE TO GO ZERO

Four Austin families try to reduce the amount of waste they generate while documenting their progress on camera... all for a chance to win a Sustainable Home Improvement Package worth more than \$2,000. Watch all five episodes!

### MEET THE FAMILIES



#### The Barnes Family [The Blue Team]

Meet Joe and Elisa, and their two children Kathy and Konnar. Joe and Elisa want to teach their kids to recycle for the benefit of our planet. They also want to learn new ways of reducing waste in their home.



#### The Johnson/Tompkins Family [The Green Team]

Meet Cassandra Johnson, Ashley Tompkins and daughter Martaeyah Walker. Cassandra wants to participate in Dare to Go Zero her daughter, who cares about the environment, but Cassandra has no idea how or what to recycle.

### TOP CONTENT

- ★ My Collection Schedule
- ★ Recycle & Reuse Drop-Off Center
- ★ Residential Curbside Collection Schedule
- ★ Residential Bulk Collection
- ★ Residential Trash Collection

# Communication is key to Zero Waste

**Zero Waste = behavior change**

## Seattle:

- **6 full-time staff + interns, consultants, and community liaisons**
- **Strategies include direct mail, information in solid waste bills, social media, and person-to-person outreach**
- **Messaging/graphics consistent across all media platforms, bins, and all signage**
- **Constant communication**



Example of reminder tweeted to residents by Seattle Public Utilities.

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**“we’ve been recycling for 30 years, and we still talk to people about recycling all the time!”**



Example of an image tweeted out by Seattle Public Utilities; this poster is just a reminder for residents

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**Zero Waste = behavior change**

## **San Francisco:**

- **24 full-time staff + support around Zero Waste communication from the 100-person Department of Environment outreach team**
- **Strategies prioritize “grassroots” campaigns: face-to-face communication between city staff and residents**
- **Also use social media, marketing and advertising**



Marketing campaigns target specific audiences and interest groups.

# Communication about New Programs

- All case study cities ramp up communication efforts around new roll outs
- Cambridge:
  - Direct mail to every eligible household
  - Messaging across the city website
  - Social media
  - Advertising, posters in public spaces, in partnership with MBTA and MassRecycle
- Austin:
  - Pilot tests media and messaging for each new program roll out





# Enforcement

## Seattle:

- Disposal bans yield bumps in diversion, even without enforcement
- City relies on understanding why and where compliance is weak, and works with property owners to resolve
- Fines = last resort, usually for large multi-family properties or businesses



Informational warning tag on an organics violation in Seattle

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## San Francisco:

- **Inspection by hauler**
- **1<sup>st</sup> violation: Notices and information**
- **Continued violation: firm letter with explanation**
- **Even more violations: formal notice, then a charge executed through the solid waste bill**
- **All enforcement is carried out by Recology**

# Key Lessons:

- **Communication is an essential component of cultivating a Zero Waste Culture**
- **Devoting sufficient resources is essential to success**



Recycling and Composting reminders in San Francisco