

# Alec Cooley– Keep America Beautiful



**Alec Cooley is the Director of Recycling Programs at Keep America Beautiful,** where he manages public space recycling and collegiate programs. He has over 20 years experience in the recycling industry, beginning as a student leader helping to launch recycling efforts at Humboldt State University in Northern California in the early 90's. Following college, he managed solid waste and recycling operations for the university for ten years before moving to Charleston, South Carolina in 2006. Alec worked for the National Recycling Coalition as a program manager for three years before joining KAB in 2009. He has served on the boards of the Arcata Community Recycling Center, the California Resource Recovery Association and the Carolina Recycling Association.

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# **Desk Side Recycling Study Best Practices For Bin Arrangement**

College & University Recycling Coalition Webinar

**August 13, 2015**



# Recycling@Work Research

## Objectives:

Test the impact of recycling and trash bin configurations on recycling in the workplace.

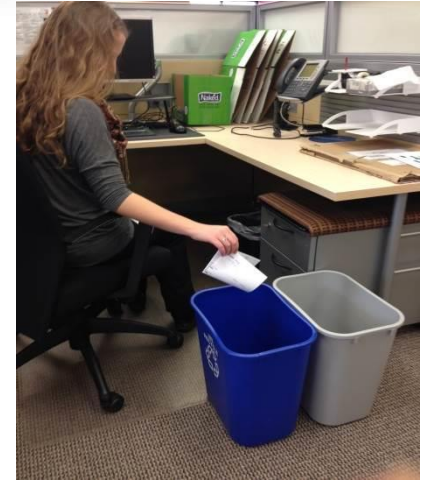
## Metrics:

- Increase recycling
- Reduce trash in the recycling bins
- Reduce recyclables in the trash bins



# Four Set-Ups Tested

- 1) Little trash bin with desk sized recycling bin
- 2) Equal size trash and recycling bins
- 3) Recycling bin only
- 4) Information only





# Common Area Bins & Signage



## RECYCLING

These are some common recyclable items in your office.

Please put these items in a *recycling* bin:



Office Paper



Plastic Beverage Bottles



Aluminum Beverage Cans



Frozen Dinner Boxes



Soup Cans



## LANDFILL

These are some common non-recyclable items in your office.

Please put these items in a *landfill* bin:



Food Scraps



Bubble Wrap



Plastic Eating Utensils



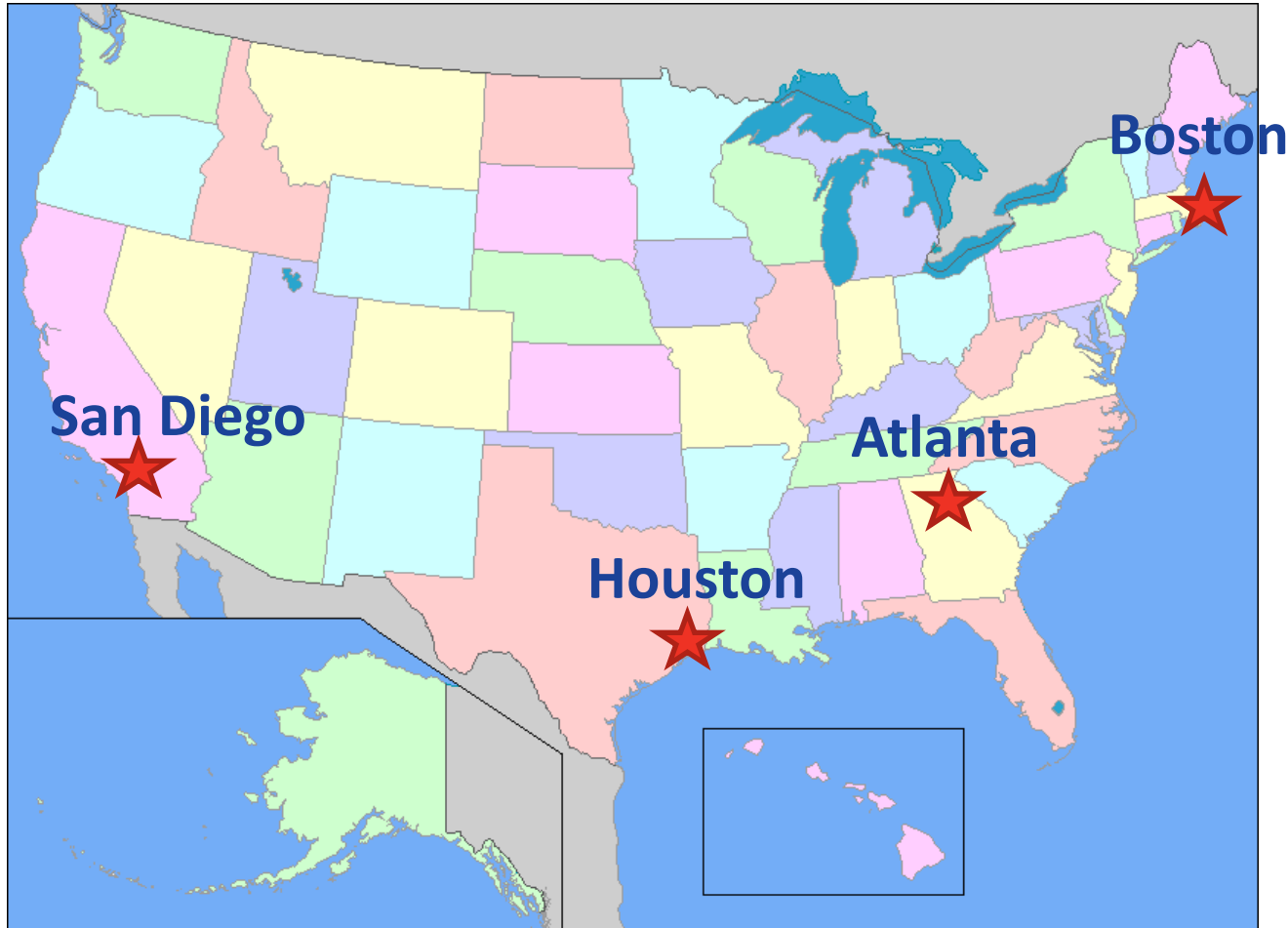
Used Paper Plates



Paper Towels

\*\*Please note that these are some common items. For a more comprehensive list of recyclable and non-recyclable items see your building manager, or your waste hauler's website.

# Participating Office Buildings



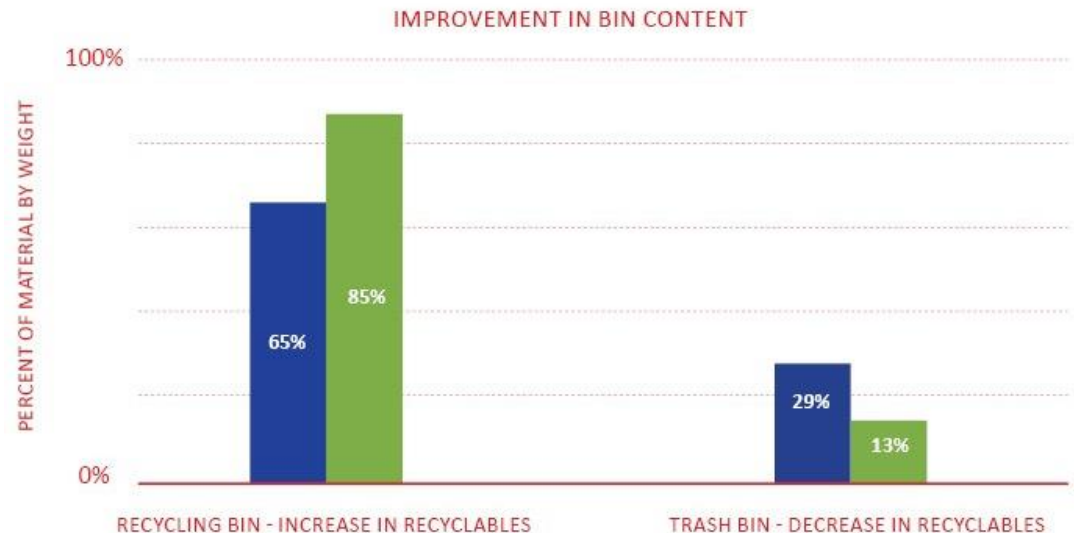
# Monthly Waste Audit

- Over six months
- Total weight
- Weight of items listed on flyers
- Count of cans and bottles



# Conclusion: Little Trash Most Successful

- Increased correct disposals
- Decreased recyclables in trash from 29% to 13%
- Decreased recycling bin contamination by 20%





# Equal Size - Fairly Successful

- No significant decrease in recyclables in the trash
- No significant change in the weight of paper in trash
- Decreased recycling bin contamination 17%



# Recycling Only-Least Successful

## Poor results

- Undesirable or neutral audit results
- 14% increase in recyclables in the trash
- No change in weight of office paper in the trash
- No change in recyclables in the recycling



# Download Resources

- 2 page factsheet
- Full report
- Workplace recycling tools

<http://recyclingatwork.org>



## WORKPLACE RECYCLING NEW RESEARCH: BIN SET-UP CAN BOOST RECYCLING

A new study shows how office recycling and trash bin set-ups can increase recycling by 20% while reducing contamination in the bins. Here are the key research findings, along with tips to improve workplace recycling program.

### Key Findings

**Increasing convenience improved recycling behavior.** Office workers need both recycling and trash bins at their desks. This makes recycling a quick and easy choice, while ensuring that daily trash items (paper towels, food scraps, tissues, etc.) do not end up in the recycling bin.

**Big recycling bins paired with smaller desk-side trash bins increased recycling and reduced contamination.** Replacing a desk-sized trash bin with a little one attached to the recycling bin at each desk proved most effective.

Here are the results:

- Increased recyclables from 65% to 85%, and decreased contamination in the recycling bin by 20% (see chart).
- Reduced the amount of recyclables in the trash from 29% to 13%.
- Reduced the amount of office paper in the trash to almost zero.

Employees with little desk-side trash bins also had increased recycling awareness and knowledge. Researchers suggest that this bin set-up motivates participation because it is convenient and restricts some recyclables from easily fitting in the trash bin. Importantly, this set up demonstrated that it does motivate more recycling and reduced nonrecyclable waste in the recycling bin.



### About the Research

Action Research conducted the 2014 study commissioned by Keep America Beautiful and sponsored by PepsiCo Recycling.

A total of 34 offices in Atlanta, Boston, Houston, and San Diego were randomly assigned to one of four conditions: (1) Two equal-sized recycling and trash bins at desk, (2) Recycling bin only at desk, (3) Little trash bin hanging on recycling bin at desk, and (4) Information only, existing recycling and trash bins were not replaced. The information flyer was given in all conditions. Researchers gathered data on:

- Employee knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors relating to workplace recycling.
- Weight and percentages of recyclables in the recycling and trash bins through waste audits.
- Frequency of materials in proper and improper bins.



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