



Municipal Solid Waste Glass Recycling – Frequently Asked Questions

Where does the glass go?

All of PRC's glass goes directly to CAP Glass, a sorting facility in Mount Pleasant, PA. It's then prepared for the standards of glass mills and manufacturers, many of which operate in Western PA and Ohio less than 200 miles from the Greater Pittsburgh Area. Industry research tells us that a glass bottle collected at a glass-only drop-off collection will be remanufactured and back on your store shelf in anywhere from 1 to 3 months and every step of its journey will be within the tristate region.

Why are we unable to access these outlets through our contracted hauler?

The demand for recycled glass in the United States remains very high, but recycling facilities that process comingled, or single-stream, recyclables face real challenges in adequately sorting glass to meet the glass industry's quality standards – a necessity if you want to see that material truly being recycled. The challenges of “unscrambling the scrambled egg” of glass that is mixed with paper and materials at curbside and sending it to a glass processor mean higher costs, and as you have seen, those costs are being passed on to your community. For these cost and quality reasons created by comingled recycling collection methods, much if not all of the glass collected through your curbside service contract is utilized as alternative daily cover for landfills. If we really want to see glass be recycled into new bottles and jars, the best practice is to collect it separately, ensuring that all the material can be recovered and used in manufacturing. Glass-only drop-off collections achieve this outcome.

If we provide a drop-off service, will residents even use it?

PRC's 2019 pop-up events and permanent drop-off pilot demonstrate strong demand for glass drop-off infrastructure. A 5-hour, Saturday pop-up event in 2019 saw anywhere from 350 – 800 households participate in one day.

Is glass still recyclable, and are there environmental benefits?

Glass remains one of the most recyclable packaging materials in use today, and there is high industry demand for recycled glass in PA and neighboring states. An increase in the amount of recycled glass used in bottle and jar manufacturing has substantial environmental benefits, but a quality collection method is key to ensuring that this valuable material can be recovered and remanufactured. Read more [here](#) under “Why Recycle Glass?”.

What is the average tonnage collected in a collection?

Approximately 4 - 6 tons of glass in a week, depending on demand in the given location.

What do you recommend for communities wishing to partner, but reduce costs?

We strongly encourage collaboration between neighboring communities to engage in cost-share arrangements, and we are happy to partner with COGs and counties as well.



What type of location is needed to host the Traveling Glass Bin or other glass drop-off infrastructure?

A parking lot with approximately 50'x 25' of available space is needed. The ideal site is easily accessible and highly visible throughout different times of day. PRC has hosted glass collections in municipal parking lots, park facility lots, school lots, and several commercial locations with the support of local development corporations.

I am a business owner wishing to host or support glass recycling collection for my customers. Can I partner with PRC?

PRC is happy to discuss ways to partner with local businesses on glass recycling initiatives. Please contact glass@prc.org to inquire.

Can you tell me more about permanent drop-off site establishment? Is there an opportunity for municipal/COG/county partners to provide input to the design of permanent drop-off site programming?

- Yes. PRC has been workshopping a proposal with many southwestern PA municipalities and COGs, and it has been shaped by the input of these early municipal partners of our glass recycling program. Further feedback and partnership is welcome.
- PRC's vision is a regionally standardized network of collection sites that reduce costs and increase efficiency through shared equipment. We believe that public-private partnership can make this possible, and are committed to seeking various funding and in-kind supports to facilitate it.
- In early 2020, PRC hoped to coordinate a regionwide "glass recycling summit" for existing and prospective partners to attend, ask questions, workshop ideas for regional policies and programs, and finally provide input to PRC's permanent program proposal. Due to public health risks, we can no longer coordinate that as an in-person event this year, so we would welcome your feedback: What is the best way to solicit input from you and your colleagues during this remote work period?

When does PRC intend to roll out the various services in your glass program?

- **Traveling Glass Bin** goes on the road in early June and can run recurring visits to a given community (or shared service area, for collaborating communities) on a quarterly, year-round basis.
- **Permanent sites:** We were ready to roll out programming in spring 2020 but are now waiting for state grant funds to be freed up again following spending freezes instituted during COVID-19 emergency response. The trajectory of these grant funds is uncertain, but we are open to discussing the program with communities that wish to move forward without grant funds and/or to seeking additional funding opportunities.
- **Pop-up Events** are on hold for 2020 due to their high level of interpersonal contact and associated public health risks. PRC will revisit this event model in the future, when appropriate.