

What Minnesotans Throw Away

Less is more - especially when it comes to what we throw away. Recent data from the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency and Hennepin County shows that we are generating less trash per person than we were ten years ago. And we are putting fewer recyclables in the trash.

So give yourself a pat on the back. Hugging your recycling cart is optional.

If you're like me, you're wondering what I can do next. The data shows a couple of areas where we can improve. More products come in plastic bottles and while we are putting a few more in the recycling, even more are ending up in the trash. Put all your plastic bottles, jugs, cups and containers in your recycling – and leave the lids on.

We are also trashing lots more plastic bags than we used to. I have talked to many residents who would like to recycle bags in their carts, but we just can't do that. The bags get caught in the machinery at the sorting facility. So please don't put your recycling in plastic bags or put plastic bags in your cart. Instead keep your recycling loose in the cart and take the bags back to the grocery store.

Green Partners program

Hennepin County wants to help your group spread the word about making positive environmental changes in our daily lives. Their Green Partners grants can fund your organization's project to actively educate, engage and empower residents.

For example the Minnesota African Women's Association in Brooklyn Center was a grant recipient in 2015. The Association trained six African women church group leaders on green cleaners, household hazardous waste and recycling.

Green Partners Environmental Education program guidelines and application materials can be found at www.hennepin.us/GreenPartners. Applications are due May 20, 2016. Projects begin September, 2016.

