IMPLEMENTATION GUIDE FOR SMALL BUSINESS RECYCLING COOPERATIVES

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Background
Cooperatives can provide small businesses convenient and affordable access to recycling services. With support from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, under the President’s Climate Change Action Plan, the Northeast Recycling Council (NERC) funded organizations throughout New England to establish pilot projects for small business recycling cooperatives and to develop a model for these cooperatives to be replicated across the country. The Center for Ecological Technology, WasteCap of Massachusetts and WasteCap of New Hampshire, three nonprofit organizations, worked with local business organizations such as Chambers of Commerce and Rotary Clubs to organize small business recycling cooperatives in Massachusetts and New Hampshire. The Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection used NERC funding to assist the establishment of five pilot recycling projects in its state. NERC also funded the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management to revise and streamline paper recycling service contracts for all the state agencies to increase revenue and return funds to agencies based on the amount of paper recycled.

For more information on establishing small business recycling cooperatives, and for examples of printed materials referenced throughout this Guide, contact the Northeast Recycling Council.

The pilot cooperatives discussed in this Guide all focus on the collection of printing and writing papers, although cooperatives can target any recyclable material. Each program in this Guide followed a series of steps to design, implement and monitor its cooperative. These cooperatives experienced economic and geographic challenges and their models were adapted to reflect those challenges. This Guide draws from these experiences to assist future efforts to establish or expand recycling cooperatives.

Acknowledgments
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Introduction

Business Recycling Cooperatives
A business recycling cooperative is a group of businesses, located in a single geographic area, that separate the same recyclable material for prearranged collection by a shared hauler. Cooperatives can be set up to accommodate single industry sectors, such as retail stores, offices, manufacturers, or restaurants, or different sectors which generate similar materials, such as cardboard, plastics, office paper, bottles or cans.

Why Business Recycling Cooperatives?
Almost all businesses generate recyclable materials. But because of the small quantity of material they generate, many small businesses have difficulty finding a recycler willing to serve them at a reasonable cost. Business recycling cooperatives help small and medium sized businesses gain access to cost-effective, convenient recycling.

While small businesses generate small amounts of materials individually, cumulatively their recyclable generation is both significant and under collected. For example, nationally, offices with 100 or more employees generate about 45% of the total quantity of discarded printing and writing paper (office paper), and about 95% of these offices recycle their paper, while offices with less than 50 employees generate nearly 40% of the supply, but only 30% have on-site recycling programs.

Purpose
This Guide is designed to provide readers with the information and tools needed to establish business recycling cooperatives. The target audiences are organizations and individuals with resources and expertise to work with haulers and businesses to improve the cost-effectiveness and scope of business recycling efforts. Specific audiences include public recycling and solid waste management officials, community environmental and economic development organizations, and business membership organizations such as Chambers of Commerce.

Getting Started
This Guide presents a seven step program to start a business recycling cooperative in your community. The sequence and scope of the following tasks may vary from community to community, and it is important to develop a flexible implementation plan that can easily adapt to unforeseen circumstances.
Step 1: Assess and Identify The Host Community
Communities hosting cooperatives can be suburban, urban or rural. Cooperatives can be successful in a variety of economic and geographic settings. They can be established for a single commercial district in a community, for an entire community, or for several adjoining communities. Although there is no steadfast rule for determining whether recycling cooperatives will be effective in your area, communities that have successfully implemented these projects share the following characteristics:
- An organization with time and enthusiasm to sponsor and coordinate the cooperative.
- A person or organization willing to spend time to promote the cooperative.
- Businesses clustered in a geographic area.
- Medium or large businesses willing to participate to “anchor” the program.
- Recycling service provider interested in providing service to a startup program.
- Businesses interested in recycling.

Step 1: Check List
If you are unsure of the interest level in your community, or if your community has several business areas, you may want to identify a single area in which to start your cooperative and plan to expand from there.
- Is there more than one “center” of commerce in your community that is interested in hosting a cooperative?
- Have you chosen to focus on a single commercial district or the entire community?
- Have you met with business groups within your community to assess their needs?
- Have you met with organizations that are likely to support your cooperative (environmental clubs, municipal recycling programs)?

Tips to remember
Be flexible: Your community is unique and will need to adjust the model to its special circumstances.
Be organized: Start a database of everyone you talk to that is interested in participating. The database will help maintain contacts as the cooperative progresses.

Step 2: Develop Partnerships
To insure success, a cooperative should recruit as many local partners as it can. Potential partners include: municipal recycling coordinators, Chambers of Commerce (or other business membership organizations), Rotary Clubs (or other service organizations), and nonprofit recycling organizations. The level of participation of each partner can vary, but all should be committed to support the cooperative to promote business participation.
Potential roles for partners include:

1. **Municipal Recycling Coordinator**
   - Act as liaison between the town residential recycling program and the business community.
   - Facilitate opportunities for businesses to participate in the existing residential recycling program.
   - Provide information about the cooperative to interested businesses.

2. **Chambers of Commerce**
   - Advertise the cooperative through mailings and newsletters.
   - Promote the cooperative when talking to local businesses and new or potential members.
   - Provide pro bono support to the cooperative through mailings, press releases to the local paper, and staff time.
   - Designate a staff member to serve on the Advisory Committee.
   - Include the cooperative in trade shows and events to help recruit more businesses.

3. **Service Organizations**
   - Promote cooperative at meetings and in newsletters.
   - Participate on cooperative Advisory Committee.
   - Encourage members to participate.

4. **NonProfit Recycling Organizations**
   - May be able to provide overall coordination for program development and implementation.
   - Advise local partners on program design.
   - Provide technical assistance to develop contract and select a service provider.
   - Serve as a liaison between partners and the recycling service provider.
   - Assist recycling service provider with outreach and education.
   - Recruit businesses to participate.

**Step 2: Check List**
Successful cooperatives will work best with motivated community and organization leaders. Strong partnerships will also help in business recruitment and participation and can help to keep down the costs both to run the program and to participate in it.

- Have you approached business and civic organizations to recruit their participation?
- Are all partners aware of their responsibilities for the cooperative?
- Have you developed a Memorandum of Understanding to outline the responsibilities of each of the partners?
The Waltham Recycling Partnership

The Waltham Recycling Partnership is a cooperative sponsored by the Waltham Rotary Club and the Waltham West Suburban Chamber of Commerce. WasteCap of Massachusetts, a nonprofit organization formed to assist businesses reduce and recycle solid waste, assisted the Rotary and the Chamber to create their cooperative. Waltham is a suburban community outside of Boston with a small thriving downtown full of storefront businesses and a number of office buildings and office parks located on the outskirts of the community. The number of small and medium sized businesses provided an ideal setting for a successful recycling cooperative.

The Rotary Club was the initial sponsor of the cooperative. The Rotary was interested in supporting a community service project, providing a recycling service for their members and in potentially raising money for their scholarship fund. Soon after starting the cooperative, however, the Rotary realized that it could only succeed by recruiting more and larger businesses to participate and anchor the program.

The Rotary solicited help from WasteCap of Massachusetts. WasteCap agreed to become the Project Coordinator for the cooperative. The next step WasteCap took was to recruit the local Chamber of Commerce as a partner.

The Chamber of Commerce boasts a larger membership than the Rotary. Once they became a partner, the Chamber released its membership list to the Advisory Committee to solicit potential participants through the mail and over the telephone; their marketing staff assisted the program by submitting press releases to the local newspaper; the membership staff introduced potential Chamber members to the cooperative; and the Advisory committee representative assisted in event planning and inviting the Cooperative to promote itself at Chamber trade shows and expositions.

The Advisory Committee was comprised of two Rotarians, one Chamber staff person and the WasteCap Project Coordinator. The WasteCap Project Coordinator provided technical assistance and program organization. WasteCap was the liaison between the Chamber, the Rotary and the recycling service provider, JetAWay. With suggestions and introductions from the Advisory Committee, WasteCap recruited and educated participating businesses.

The result: In 1997, the Waltham Recycling Partnership recycled over 75 tons of white and colored office paper from 96 businesses.
Step 3: Form an Advisory Committee:
Once the partners are established, an Advisory Committee should be formed. The Advisory Committee should include individuals representing their own organization and supporting the development of the cooperative. This committee will provide the leadership for the program and organize steps four through seven.

Committee Members’ Responsibilities:
Committee members may include property managers, commercial real estate agents, active Chamber or Rotary members, and local recycling and solid waste officials who are familiar with businesses, business locations and business people in town.

Advisory Committee members should be enthusiastic and willing to reach out to their neighboring businesses. The members should be prepared to meet frequently at the beginning of the process (once each week or two weeks). This time commitment will decrease dramatically once the cooperative is up and running. Committee members may also be asked to provide pro bono assistance to the cooperative or be willing to seek it from others. The level of volunteerism will be dependent upon whether there is a paid coordinator and project budget or whether this is entirely a volunteer effort.

Step 3: Check List
An Advisory Committee will guide the direction of the cooperative and establish its timeline. It should be comprised of representatives from the partnering organizations. An Advisory Committee may also include representatives from the host community and the hauler.

- Did you form an Advisory Committee?
- Does your Committee have a Chairperson or Coordinator?
- Have you set up a regular time to meet (e.g., weekly/biweekly)
- Are committee members fully invested for the long-term?

Step 4: Design the Program
Once a community, a sponsoring organization and an Advisory Committee are selected, the cooperative’s structure can be designed. Surveys can be used to collect the information you will need to design the program.

Cooperatives can be structured to provide pickup service for participating businesses or to provide recycling containers in central locations for businesses to use as dropoff sites. The two models of recycling have distinct advantages and disadvantages.
DropOff Programs
A dropoff program is designed so that businesses bring their material to a centrally located container. It works best for many businesses with small quantities of recyclables located in a densely populated area. Compared to pick-up programs, dropoff programs:

- Are quick to set up, they only require an identified and approved centralized location and a dumpster to be delivered to it.
- Requires up-front costs of purchasing or renting a dumpster.
- Requires motivated business people to walk with their recyclables to the dropoff location.
- Are likely to lose participants without frequent oversight and reminders.
- It is harder to identify who is putting contaminants into a dumpster.

Some hints about dropoff programs
Obtain a dumpster which locks to ensure confidentiality of materials and so it is not used as a local trash repository.

Locate the dumpster near a central parking lot or area where it is easily accessible to participating businesses.

Pickup Programs
In a pickup program, a designated hauler conducts a “milkrun” collection of accumulated material at participating businesses. This model requires the availability of a service provider with transportation capabilities to conduct pick-ups at multiple sites and the ability to supply participating businesses with collection containers. In this model, each business separates the recyclables inside their office. The hauler picks up the materials from either the office itself, the front door of the building, or the loading dock. The location of the bins prior to pickup should be determined with your service provider and explained to the businesses during the recruitment process.

Surveys
Surveys can be used to gauge businesses’ interest in recycling and in participating in cooperatives. Surveys can also be used to gauge what materials are being generated in large amounts.

Administering surveys requires a word of caution, however. Surveys sent out with no follow-up will result in a very low response rate which may not be representative of the community population as a whole. Here are some tips to increase response rates:

Keep the survey short (one page maximum) if a survey is mailed, try to follow up unanswered surveys with phone calls or by going door-to-door. Find volunteers from high school and college environmental clubs to follow up with businesses door-to-door. Survey a percentage of the communities’ businesses over the telephone. Go to meetings which business people attend and distribute surveys before the meeting starts (be sure to ask permission of those running the meeting prior to this activity).
**Program Tip Pick-up Programs:** For programs in which haulers conduct “milk-run” pick-ups at multiple businesses, the economics of their routes are enhanced by the participation of large, “anchor” businesses. Anchor businesses may have ten times the number of employees and generate significantly more materials than the vast majority of small businesses involved in the cooperative, and serve to support the hauler’s costs associated with multiple pick-ups from small generators. For small business recycling cooperatives to be economically attractive to service providers, the quantity of materials available must be maximized and the number of pick-ups minimized. Following are tips for ensuring that this occurs:

- Schedule pick-ups once a minimum threshold for the quantity of material generated is reached. For instance, pick-ups can be scheduled on a designated day each week and businesses meeting the threshold can contact the service provider prior to the pick-up day to request service.

- Coordinate neighboring businesses to consolidate materials. If several small businesses are situated in close proximity to one another, materials can be placed at a central location that is easily accessible to the service provider. Businesses such as print shops and Chambers of Commerce often relish the opportunity to have more visitors coming to their locations, even if they are doing so just to drop off recyclables; it might bring them new business.

- Work with property managers to sign on entire buildings. Building owners and managers can play an important role in coordinating their tenants into cooperative programs. Such arrangements can translate into significant quantities of materials for service providers at centralized locations.

**Step 4: Check List**
The Advisory Committee will design the cooperative to meet the needs of the local businesses. The Advisory Committee should determine the type of program they want to create and how that program will be marketed.

- Have you decided on a type of program (dropoff or pickup)?
- Do you have a budget for promotion of the cooperative?
- If you have a budget, what will it be used for?
- If you do not have a budget, have you recruited volunteers to help with marketing?
- Has someone donated inkind services or pro bono support for marketing the program?
Step 5: Recruit a Recycling Service Provider

Selecting a service provider is critical to the success of your program. Cooperatives have been successful in many geographic areas, but even the idea of cooperatives may be new to your service provider. Service providers should be informed that cooperatives have been successful in other communities and can be a good business decision for them. The following steps should be considered:

1. Gather a list of recycling service providers in the area. These providers can be found in the Yellow Pages under “Recycling”, “Waste Disposal” and “Rubbish”. You may also want to contact your town’s recycling service provider or Department of Public Works to inquire if there are any opportunities to add businesses to the town’s program, or whether public facilities might be used for transportation, consolidation and/or processing of materials.

2. Send out a letter to all service providers explaining what you are trying to do. Ask service providers to respond. Include some parameters and some opportunity for their suggestions. Include in the letter the benefits to the hauler (presence in the community, opportunity for expanding their business if they haul either additional recyclable materials or recyclables and trash, potential to collect large amounts of materials, and having a dedicated person other than themselves market and promote their services) and the goal of the program (increase recycling).

3. Meet with the Advisory Committee, the Project Coordinator and recycling service provider to evaluate the responses. Develop a list of questions and invite the top proposal or several proposals to a meeting.

4. Select a service provider, meet with the selected service provider, develop a plan agreeable to all parties. Service providers should be willing to work with the Advisory Committee to design a program that works for all involved parties.

Matching Program Structure to Local Characteristics

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Dropoff</th>
<th>Pickup</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very small volumes</td>
<td>☑️</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No vendor willing to do pickups</td>
<td>☑️</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anchor businesses</td>
<td></td>
<td>☑️</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very close proximity of all businesses</td>
<td>☑️</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher participation rates</td>
<td></td>
<td>☑️</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher participation costs</td>
<td></td>
<td>☑️</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5. Execute a contract or agreement. Once a prospective service provider is identified, contract negotiations are conducted to finalize the design and financial parameters of the service arrangement. As recycling cooperatives are likely a new model for haulers, some haulers may be more comfortable operating under an informal “hand-shake” agreement rather than a formal legal contract.

6. Establish a price structure. How the cost for the recycling service is structured is critical to the success of the cooperative. It is important to develop a price structure so that small businesses do not bear the burden of paying the highest prices. Three options may be considered:

I. Time plus materials: This price structure is based on having the value of the collected materials cover the hauler’s costs of collecting and baling the materials. The danger is that it depends on a fairly steady recycling market and fairly highly valued recyclable material.

Example: If the hauler spends two hours collecting the materials and one hour baling the materials, it will cost the hauler for that time. Then, the hauler will sell the bales of recycled materials. The sale price needs to be equal or more than the hauler’s cost. If this is not the case, businesses will need to pay a fee to cover the hauler’s cost. If the sale price covers more than the collection cost, the cooperative and the hauler could establish an agreement to split the profit.

In this scenario, the Advisory Committee should ask the hauler:
◆ The price per hour to collect the materials
◆ The estimated time it will take to collect the materials
◆ The cost of sorting and baling the materials
◆ Any other costs the hauler might incur (providing bins for the participating businesses, etc.)
◆ The current market rate for the materials
◆ The split ratio for the profit
◆ How the businesses will be charged until they meet the break-even point
◆ What the maximum cost to the businesses will be if the recycling markets fall

II. Pickup and rental fees: This price structure is based on the traditional pickup fee plus bin rental fee. Since this option is based on individual businesses, it does not offer the potential for individual businesses to save money by participating in a cooperative. In this case, special services (e.g. a smaller minimum amount of material that needs to be collected per stop) or a discount from the hauler’s regular prices (e.g.,
all businesses signing up for the cooperative will receive a 10% discount from the hauler’s regular rates) should be negotiated. This method would give credit for services provided in a densely populated area and reward the Advisory Committee for marketing the program.

III. Incentive to sign up businesses: This price structure is fixed on a sliding scale based on the number of businesses recycling. For example, the first 20 businesses pay a single pickup rate. Then, the cost for all businesses are reduced with the addition of the 21st business, and reduced again for the 41st business, etc.

7. Establish a service structure.
A service structure includes the day each week that recyclable collection will be provided, the types and size of bins that will be available to each business, and whether businesses will be on an on-call or weekly collection schedule. The hauler should also be asked to provide collection data on a regular basis.

8. Finalize a contract or an agreement with the recycling service provider.

9. Work with the recycling service provider to make sure that educational materials and brochures accurately communicate the quality and quantity requirements of the program.

10. Work with the recycling service provider on how to recruit businesses. Many service providers will welcome help in recruiting businesses. Other service providers will want to visit the site themselves before signing up the business. If your hauler will let you market the program, be sure that you understand all their requirements for participating businesses. One thing to consider when recruiting businesses in pickup programs are that haulers should not and often will not walk up and down stairs with large recycling containers (which can weigh over 100 pounds when full).

Step 5: Check List
The Advisory Committee should inform local recycling service providers of the program plans through a Request for Information. The responses may be turned into a contract or service agreement.

☐ Did you develop a Request for Information?
☐ Did you send the Request to all local service providers?
☐ Did you set up an Advisory Committee meeting to evaluate the proposals received?
☐ Did you interview selected vendors?
☐ Did you establish a fee structure for the program agreeable to the service provider, the partners and some potential participating businesses?
☐ Did you finalize an agreement with the service provider?
Step 6: Recruit Businesses

Business recruitment is an ongoing process that occurs throughout the startup and maturation of the program. The more businesses participate in the program the greater the economies of scale. Economies of scale increase the cost effectiveness of the program for both businesses and service providers. Following are a number of steps to assist you with the business recruitment process.

1. Sign up businesses:
   - Develop a brochure or an introductory letter to advertise the program.
   - Use your advisory committee to spread the word.
   - Advertise the cooperative in local papers and newsletters.
   - Work with property managers in your community to sign on whole buildings at once.
   - Distribute brochures through the mail and at public buildings (libraries, city hall).
   - Hold a press conference with the mayor or other public officials at a local event.
   - Conduct presentations at local meetings.
   - Submit articles to local newspapers.
   - Develop spots for public access cable and radio shows or volunteer to be a guest on a local program.
   - Offer incentives donated by a local business (reams of recycled paper, discount lunch coupons, etc.).
   - Acknowledge participating businesses in newspapers and through word of mouth.
2. Education
Develop flyers or posters announcing what materials can and cannot be recycled in the cooperative program. (Check with your service provider. They may already have and distribute these materials). An employee should serve as an on-site program coordinator at each participating business. This individual is the point person for the program, and is responsible for coordinating material separation and pick-up or drop-offs. If businesses are on an on call pickup program, they should be made aware of who to call when their recycling bins are full and what that person’s telephone number is.

Businesses should be encouraged to collect a minimum amount of materials before contacting the service provider for pickup. By having an oncall schedule (calling for pickup when recycling bins are full, as opposed to having an automatic, weekly pickup regardless of how full bins are), the service provider can benefit from economies of scale by collecting the most amount of materials at one time. Obviously, for some businesses such as print shops or large offices, weekly pickups will be required.

**Step 6: Check List**

- Did you develop a plan to inform local businesses of the cooperative and their opportunities to participate?
- Did you send out a press release about the Cooperative?
- Did you send out a press release to announce the service provider?
- Do you have an arrangement to market the program with the recycling service provider and the businesses?
- Are you educating participating businesses about the recycling program?
- Are you recognizing the participating businesses in local papers or newsletters or at organization meetings?
- Are you planning a kick-off event to announce the cooperative?

**Step 7: Monitor and Modify the Cooperative**
It is important to keep businesses apprised of progress (e.g., how much material is collected and diverted from landfills) and modify the program as necessary. For example, change mixed paper collection to white paper if the markets demand it; change the minimum requirement for pickup; offer dropoff options, etc. Consider opportunities to expand the cooperative by adding new materials to recycle or recycled content materials to purchase cooperatively.
Step 7: Check List
The Advisory Committee and partnering organizations must monitor the Cooperatives’ initial performance to ensure that it is on its way to sustainability.
- Has your Advisory Committee continued to meet since the cooperative was started?
- Have you received feedback from participating businesses?
- Have you received feedback from the recycling service provider?
- Are businesses maintaining their participation rates?
- Do you need to make additional outreach efforts into the business community?
- Are businesses of all sizes having their needs met through this cooperative?
- Did you send out a press release to announce the progress of the cooperative?

Your cooperative may need to be altered to keep up with the changing demands of the recycling markets, the needs of the recycling service provider or the needs of the participating or interested businesses in your community.
- Are the needs of all interested businesses being met?
- If no, is it possible to renegotiate with your service provider to accommodate these businesses?
- If no, is it possible to work within your community to provide other recycling services to these businesses? (i.e., set up additional dropoff sites)
- Are there opportunities to expand the cooperative to include additional recyclable materials or to incorporate or increase recycled product purchasing?

Economics
How much will this program cost to start?
Cooperatives can cost a sponsoring organization a great deal to start up, or very little. All cooperatives, whether expensive or not, require time. The cost of this time will determine the start-up costs for the operation.

Funded cooperatives: Staff time
The cooperatives highlighted in this guide all received startup funding from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s President’s Climate Change Action Plan. This funding enabled several cooperatives to have part-time organizers. The organizers worked with the partners and Advisory Committees to lead the program through
step six. These funded coordinators first worked with the community to design and develop a program that was effective for the local businesses, and then worked with the Advisory Committee to develop a turnkey operation. When the coordinators’ funding ran out, they could hand over a sustainable operation to the local community to monitor as they saw fit. It is important to note that in these funded cooperatives, the more involved the Advisory Committee, the quicker the program got up and running. While the funding helped to ease the process, the local volunteer component was critical to reaching the local businesses. Funding for cooperatives may be available from your state or municipal recycling programs.

Below are the estimated start-up costs for several of the programs demonstrated under NERC’s project.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community</th>
<th>Program Design</th>
<th>Staff Time</th>
<th>Hard Costs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Waltham, MA</td>
<td>Pick-up</td>
<td>32 hours/month for 12 months</td>
<td>$500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pittsfield, MA</td>
<td>Pick-up</td>
<td>70 hours/month for 12 months</td>
<td>$375</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Britain, CT</td>
<td>Drop-off</td>
<td>50 hours/month for 12 months</td>
<td>$6,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southbury, CT</td>
<td>Drop-off</td>
<td>23 hours/month for 12 months</td>
<td>$5,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Averages</td>
<td></td>
<td>44 hours/month for 12 months</td>
<td>$3,169</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note that hard costs incurred by program coordinators for the drop-off programs where significantly higher than those incurred for pick-up programs. These additional hard costs are due primarily to higher costs for equipments such as collection bins for individual participants, toters for consolidating materials, and the dumpsters used at collection sites. For most drop-off programs, these costs are covered by the program coordinator. For pick-up programs, collection bins and toters are typically supplied by the service provider.

Unfunded cooperatives: staff time

Unfunded cooperatives will depend on time donated by volunteers. Volunteer time can come from the Advisory Committee but there are also a number of local organizations that may provide free or inexpensive service. For example, civic organizations, college interns or volunteers are often looking for community service projects and can help with initial surveys of businesses, recruitment of businesses to participate, or even paper collection at dropoff programs. High schools often have environmental organizations that will be willing to work with the Advisory Committee. Municipal recycling programs may be able to dedicate a staff person to working with the Advisory Committee to provide technical assistance.
Promotional Materials
Promotional materials do not have to cost a great deal of money. While fancy flyers and brochures can be developed, photocopied black and white flyers will convey the same information.

A number of marketing tactics are free. For instance, many local newsletters and newspapers are looking for information. Local cable access television stations may also include your message at no charge.

Cost of Recycling Service
As discussed above, whether a program is funded or unfunded, the recycling service provided to the businesses will be paid for by the participants and possibly by revenue generated through material sales. There are options for a mature program to generate funding for the continuation of the cooperative. If the value of the materials collected is high, the cooperative should secure a promise from the recycling service provider that a rebate will be given to the Advisory Committee. The Advisory Committee has several options for this money. First, it can save the money in an escrow account to offset costs at a later date if the recyclable markets go down and the hauler wants to raise the price. Second, the committee can designate a charity or a scholarship fund to which they might donate the money. Third, the committee can divide the money among the participating businesses or purchase acknowledgments or gifts for the participating businesses. In Connecticut, one community gave its participating businesses orange trees.

Creative financing
For unfunded cooperatives, the Advisory Committee may evaluate opportunities to raise money to offset the cost of setting up a cooperative or generate the funds to pay a part-time coordinator. One option is to charge a membership fee to businesses interested in participating. Remember, the cooperative is being established to save them money on recycling and garbage costs so this amount must be less than the amount they would pay to obtain recycling service on their own. A second option is to purchase recycling bins for material collection and then sell the bins, at a profit, to the participating businesses.