

Pay-As-You-Throw in Transylvania County

Overview

Transylvania County operates a "Pay as You Throw" (PAYT) system, which provides a fee structure for solid waste disposal based on the amount a citizen throws away. The program began in 1997 when the County recognized it would need to increase its \$60/year solid waste fee to cover general operating costs of their solid waste program. Citizens encouraged the County not to increase fees. Meanwhile, the state pushed for local governments to increase recycling recovery rates. Transylvania County adopted a PAYT system to provide a financial incentive for people to reduce their household disposal, increase recycling, all while helping the department meet its budget.

Implementation

Citizens may dispose of their garbage and place their recyclables for collection in any of the three staffed convenience centers around the county. Citizens must purchase a sticker at any of these locations for \$1.50 per each bag of waste disposed. Recycling is accepted free of charge. County landfill staff collect the cash at the convenience centers more than once a day to ensure the safety of their center attendants.

Keys to Success

The financial incentive to reduce waste is the key driver of program success. Another driver was the inequity of the previous system: a household of two retirees might pay the same as a family of six, yet the amount of waste disposed for each household vastly differed. The PAYT program allowed for households to equitably pay for the amount of waste they disposed.

Recycling Program Results

When the program began, waste disposal decreased almost 30%. Transylvania County has not significantly increased its per capita disposal over the NC baseline monitoring year of 1991.

*Type of Facility:
Local Government*

*Present Owners Recycle Since:
Pay As You Throw (PAYT)
program began in 1997*

*Recycles:
Transylvania County recycles all
materials commonly accepted in
local government recycling
programs. These materials are
accepted at 3 convenience
centers throughout the county.*

*Cost of Recycling
Services vs. Disposal Costs:
The County finds the PAYT
system to be highly economical,
as citizens pay for the amount of
waste they throw away and are
able to recycle at no cost.*

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