

MUNCIE SANITARY DISTRICT



COMPANY NAME/ LOCATION

Muncie Sanitary District
300 North High Street, Muncie, IN 47305

AMOUNT FUNDED

The Muncie Sanitary District was awarded \$468,798 by RMDP towards the purchase of automatic recycling arm bodies for two recycling CNG trucks and recycling totes to transition from a blue bag to a container curbside recycling program. They matched the award amount, bringing the total cost of the project to more than \$927,596.

PROJECT SUMMARY

The Muncie Sanitary District decided to overhaul their recycling program in late 2023 to align with upgraded operations at the East Central Recycling sorting facility. This process involved purchasing two new recycling trucks and 7,500 recycling totes. Alongside the physical purchases, they invested part of the RMDP grant money into recycling education material for every resident who elected to participate in the recycling program.

- The MSD hired two full time automated operated technicians, at a salary of \$20.96 with benefits, to run routes Monday through Friday.
- The RMDP grant financed a portion of the first phase of the Muncie Sanitary District's three-year plan for residential recycling upgrades.

DO THE BLUE: WITHOUT THE BLUE BAGS

For 24 years the Muncie Sanitary District (MSD) offered a “Blue Bag” recycling program, where residents separated recycling and trash into blue and black bags, but put them in the same bin on the curb. This setup saved money by reducing the number of bins and trucks needed but led to a lot of recycling being contaminated. Another issue arose as the scale of participants grew; hundreds of tons of cardboard were not being recycled, and their list of recyclable materials was outdated. This led to MSD needing an overhaul of their recycling program, and the development of “Do the Blue: Without the Blue Bags”.



Their recycling overhaul was a three-stage plan, with our RMDP grant helping fund the first stage. Stage 1 was unveiled in August of 2023 with the rollout of nearly 5,000 recycling-only totes to residents who applied. Two new recycling trucks hit the streets on August 7th and began curbside pickup of separated recycling. The MSD also used this opportunity to educate the community about recycling practices. They hired a recycling educator and included a pledge that states residents will comply with MSD's acceptable recyclables guidelines and review video before they can opt-in for curbside recycling. The combination of consumer education and new equipment for only recyclables was a great success in many areas. In just three weeks, 54.79 tons of mixed recyclable material were collected, and staff saw a significant increase in clean recyclable material. The efficiency and ease for residents reportedly improved and MSD was able to hire two new automated operator technicians to run the recycling routes. MSDs focus on education and efficiency shines a light on how cities can value teaching without sacrificing the quality of their work!