

SELECTING / CONTRACTING

FOR GARBAGE AND RECYCLING COLLECTION

FACT SHEET

Recycling and garbage collection services are part of the costs of running a business, and each business should try to select a firm that will be reliable, meets your needs and gives you the best deal.

SELECTING A GARBAGE AND RECYCLING COLLECTOR

- Talk with neighboring businesses or local businesses similar to yours and find out who collects their garbage and recyclables. Ask about their satisfaction with the service and what they are paying.
- Call local firms and get price quotes. Regardless of the size of your business, their quotes will be based on the size of the dumpster(s) they will provide, frequency of pick-up, and the type and volume of recyclables.
- If the volume of trash and recyclables you generate each week is small, ask other businesses in the same building or immediately adjacent to yours if they would be interested in sharing services.
- It is not necessary to have the same firm provide both garbage and recycling collection services; however, total costs may be less if the firm provides both services.

Also, ask each firm how they deal with:

- other parties using your dumpster
- overflowing containers
- holidays on scheduled pick-up dates
- severe weather on scheduled pick-up dates

CONTRACTS

Besides the basic cost of service, frequency of pick-up, days for pick-up, and size of containers, your contract with a firm should also answer these questions:

- What is the length of the contract?
- What recyclables will be collected
- What is the contract renewal date? (Note: many may renew automatically unless notice is given by the customer to cancel.)
- What are the cancellation terms?
- Can you change container size or frequency of pick-up without penalty?
- Will containers be clearly marked indicating what should be placed in them?
- Can extra bins/containers be provided for special events? At what cost?
- If your volume of trash decreases during the contractual period, can you get a rate reduction?
- What price increases are allowed during the contract period?
- What equipment and containers will the contractor provide?

- Will the contractor help train employees? Janitorial staff?
- Will the recycling containers be a different color than the garbage can?
- Will recyclables and trash be picked up on the same days?
- Will any revenues or rebates received from sale of recyclables be shared with customers?
- If so, what market information will be used to determine any rebate value, and how often will rebates be paid?
- Will contractor provide reports on amount of trash and recyclables collected?
- Is a minimum amount of recyclables required?

COST SAVING TIPS

- A waste assessment will help identify the types of trash you generate so you can evaluate what can be reduced through better purchasing, reuse, recycling or composting. The better you manage your materials before they end up in the trash, the bigger your cost savings will be.
- Are your dumpsters or bins full on pick-up days? If not, reduce the number of pick-ups or size of the bins/dumpsters.
- Are you doing a good job collecting and separating your recyclables from the trash? Ask your collector how to prepare your recyclables to keep them free from contamination and make them easier for the firm to manage.
- Are there seasonal variations on the amount of waste you generate? For example, football Saturdays may generate more wastes for some businesses. Ask for increased containers or service frequency during these peak periods.

NEGOTIATION TIPS

- Remember, you are the customer. The garbage and/or recycling collector should be meeting your needs. Expect the same level of service that you would from any other service provider.
- Obtain more than one bid. The difference in cost and level of service among collectors can vary significantly.
- Do not assume anything. Carefully review the services each firm will provide and all the terms in the contract for the provider you select.
- Do not be intimidated by form contracts. Cross out any provisions you do not like. If the collector will not agree to reasonable requests, contact other firms.
- Pay close attention to duration of contract and any automatic renewal provisions. Long-term contracts may not be in your best interest.
- Avoid clauses that permit the collector to unilaterally raise rates during the life of the contract.
- Consider how the contract can be terminated if you sell or move your business or otherwise wish to end the contract.
- What are your rights if the collector does not perform satisfactorily? Include some minimum performance standards in the contract.