



# Northeast Resource Recovery Association

*"Partnering to make recycling strong through economic and environmentally sound solutions"*

## SWAT (Solid Waste Advisory Team) Program: How-To Guide

Under the Northeast Resource Recovery Association's (NRRA) *Recycling with Results* grant project, NRRA solicited teams of experienced solid waste operator mentors and launched the Solid Waste Advisory Team (SWAT) Program to provide free, hands-on technical assistance and solid waste facility evaluations for qualified New Hampshire communities.

NRRA provided an initial on-site visit with staff, town officials, and recycling committee members to identify 3-4 priority areas for improvement for their recycling operations. The SWAT team mentors were brought in for a second on-site visit to review and provide short and long-term recommendations regarding the priority areas for improvement. Topics addressed through the SWAT Program included traffic flow through solid waste facilities, pay as you throw programs, disposal fees charged to residents, and changes to recycling and solid waste management to maximize recycling revenue and minimize costs. Five NH communities that fit the USDA Grant criteria participated in the SWAT Program and received a comprehensive final report.

Communities interested in organizing their own SWAT can apply the following steps:

1. Talk to relevant staff and decisionmakers in town, such as recycling staff, public works director, town administrator, selectboard, and recycling committee.
2. Agree on top 3-4 priority areas for improvement. This step is key for narrowing the focus and can be difficult if community members have differing opinions.
3. Identify three or four similarly situated communities that have a similar population size and similar type of recycling program (ex. single stream versus source separated). Invite representatives from those communities to visit your transfer station and provide recommendations on your priority areas for improvement. NRRA municipal members can use NRRA's email listserv to connect. <https://www.nrrarecycles.org/news/join-nrras-email-listserv>
4. Hold your SWAT visit with all relevant local stakeholders and SWAT volunteers. Designate a note taker to document the input from your SWAT volunteers. Recommendations may include research for relevant grants to support recommendations and visiting other similarly situated communities to view their recycling operations.
5. Have your note taker prepare a brief report summarizing the recommendations. It can be helpful to divide the recommendations into short-term and long-term recommendations. Invite your SWAT volunteers to provide input on the report before it is finalized.
6. Present the report and recommendations to your community stakeholders and discuss next steps to implement some or all of the recommendations.

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