

It Pays to Recycle... Really!



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Did you know the materials in your blue bin earn money for the New Bedford community? It's true. Things that get recycled at the curb, like paper, cans and bottles, have value. Companies pay the city of New Bedford for these materials which in turn are used to make new products. For instance, look at cardboard: In 2010, New Bedford collected 255 tons and earned more than \$20,000. For more information, check out our article on Cardboard Recycling in New Bedford.

Those funds are put back into the community to buy items like the black mesh trash receptacles throughout New Bedford as well as a small packer truck to collect the trash in them. The funds also purchased cloth tote bags (given out for free at city supermarkets), and free recycling blue bins, as well as paying for repairs to the Shawmut Avenue transfer station where the recyclables are loaded for market.



New Bedford blue
recycle bins.

Although recycling revenues may appear to be only a drop in the bucket, consider the alternative. If a ton of cardboard is thrown away, it takes up valuable space in the Crapo Hill Landfill. The City paid \$780,000 to dispose of trash generated in fiscal year 2011 from New Bedford residents, businesses and city departments. By recycling more, less of your trash ends up in the landfill. The less trash in the landfill the longer it lasts. And longer is good.

Let's say the landfill reaches its limit. Residents need to come up with an alternative to deal with their trash. Building a new landfill in New Bedford is not a viable option. More likely, city trash will be shipped to another location, which will cost up to \$100 a ton. Right now, the cost to throw it away at Crapo Hill Landfill is only \$18 a ton. That's more than 80% less. And that's a big deal since the city puts out 600-700 tons of trash a week. To keep the savings, the best option is to recycle and get as much life out of our landfill as possible. It's time to think of garbage in a new way –as a resource that earns money and not just trash that costs money.

New Bedford residents and businesses recycled 3,672 tons of paper, cans and bottles in 2010. Each year the City has consistently increased the tonnage of recyclables since 1999. Contact us at (508) 979-1493 or recycling@newbedford-ma.gov to request two free recycling bins. Visit us on the web or Facebook.