

Municipal Benchmarking

The City of Saskatoon is a member of the National Solid Waste Benchmarking Initiative (NSWBI). As advertised on their website, “The NSWBI was created as a tool that enables municipalities and regional governments to spot program differences, assess common performance indicators, and to develop language and definitions consistent for all programs.”

The Administration contacted NSWBI members and non-members to solicit feedback on how their municipalities address accessibility challenges with curbside (single-family household) residential solid waste collection. A total of 11 municipalities responded to a series of questions; 8 in Western Canada, 2 in Ontario, and 1 in the Maritimes. As a member of the NSWBI, the City of Saskatoon (City) is bound to a Confidentiality Agreement which requires information destined for the public forum to be scrubbed so that individual communities cannot be identified by name. The following is the compilation of responses received.

1. Does your municipality operate a program to enhance, in any way, curbside (single-family household) solid waste collection accessibility?
 - 8 – Yes
 - 3 – No

The balance of the questions only pertain to those municipalities who offered a related program.

2. What is the name or title of the program?
 - Special collection
 - Assisted waste collection program
 - Backyard collection / Special collection assignment
 - Special needs program
 - Walk-up collection service
 - Set-out service
 - Walk-up program
 - Carry-out program
3. What is the service delivery method?
 - 4 → Roll-out carts for waste containers. Collection truck operators or their passenger (depending on the type of collection truck) exit their vehicle, retrieve the roll-out cart from the property, collect, and return the cart to the property.
 - 1 → Roll-out carts for waste containers. However, either a dedicated service technician in a half ton truck, or the regular collection truck operators exit their vehicle, retrieve the roll-out cart from the property, collect, and return the cart to the property.
 - 2 → Combination of roll-out carts and bagged waste, depending on the waste stream (garbage, recycling, or organics). Collection truck operators or their passenger (depending on the type of collection truck) exit their vehicle, retrieve

- the roll-out cart or bag from the property, collect, and return the cart to the property.
- 1 → Bags. However, they are switching to carts. Waste collection attendant collects from the front door.
 - Note: 6 of the 8 municipalities incorporated these accessible collection services within their regular collection routes.
4. Percentage of program participants compared to the total number of curbside households serviced.
 - Ranged from 0.03-0.85%
 - Mean (Average) of 0.27%
 - Median of 0.20%
 - Note: for reference, the City's current program collects from approximately 0.4% of the total number of curbside households serviced.
 5. What is the application process for the program?
 - In all cases, the application is initiated by the resident.
 - 7 of the 8 municipalities required an application form to be completed by the resident.
 - 6 of the 8 municipalities confirmed that a qualified City representative performs a site visit to the residence as part of the application process. Cart/bag placement confirmation, assessment of any specific needs, and verification of information are examples of the reason for the visit.
 - 3 of 8 municipalities require a medical professional to verify the requirement for service.
 6. What is the frequency of follow-up with each program participant, if any?
 - 3 → Annually.
 - 1 → Every two years.
 - 1 → After 7 years. They found that an annual follow-up was an administrative burden.
 - 3 → None. They expect residents to contact them for any program changes.
 7. Are there any expectations for the residents in the program?
 - Compliance with waste-related bylaws.
 - The waste container must remain in the agreed-upon location on their property.
 - The path must be clear of snow.
 - Ensure that collections staff do not have to interact with dogs.
 - The street address must be clearly visible from the front street or back alley (depending on collection location).
 8. What are the administrative requirements to operate the program?
 - Varied greatly depending on the program design. The specific feedback will be referenced should the City proceed to expand the existing program or develop a new program.

Additional lessons learned and feedback included the following:

- Solid waste collections staff may not have the knowledge or ability to confirm program eligibility. In cases where they are expected to assess a resident's need, they consider factors such as whether they live with another individual who is able to relocate their cart.
- If contracting waste collection services, consider the very detailed instructions and information which are required to successfully deliver this program.
- Consider the cost to the residents if the program requires medical notes or information.