

NOVEMBER 2021

2021 America Recycles Day

November 15 is America Recycles Day! This year's event is particularly important as it is the first event with a national recycling goal from the EPA: 50% recycling rate by 2030! Recycling rate is simply the amount of recyclables sent to our recycling facilities divided by the amount of waste generated (both trash and recycling).¹ This means we can increase our recycling rate by either increasing the amount we recycle, decreasing the amount of trash we generate, or both! The current recycling rate for the NIH is 66%. Although this is currently above the EPA goal, there have been many changes in the global recycling market in the past few years. The most notable change occurred when China banned the import of most recycling scrap material in 2018. This impact has trickled down to local recycling processing and could alter the NIH recycling rate in the future. America Recycles Day (ARD) provides an excellent opportunity to start a new daily habit that will help us reach our recycling goals regardless of future changes. Activities like collecting plastic bags for grocery store drop-offs or returning empty toner cartridges to their manufacturer are great ways to expand your recycling efforts outside of commingled recycling.

We also encourage NIH staff to consider all three "R's" of waste reduction for America Recycles Day: Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle. Although not the namesakes of this event, "Reduce" and "Reuse" are equally important to reducing our waste generation. For example, think about composting your food scraps or only purchasing food that you know you will eat before it expires to "Reduce" your waste generation. You could also reuse a mug rather than opting for a single-use plastic cup or submit electronic devices to manufacturers so they can reuse the rare metals contained within. As a bonus, since many of the items being reduced or reused are not recyclable, we increase our recycling rate every time we keep these items out of the landfill!

The America Recycles Day activities at the NIH vary by campus. Please locate your campus below to learn about the opportunities available at your campus. More activities may be added after this article is published, so check the [America Recycles Day page](#) on the NEMS websites for the most up-to-date information.

Bethesda:

- Collections for non-accountable electronics will be held from November 12-19. The collection bins will be placed in the lobbies of Buildings 1, 10 (South Lobby), 13, 31A, 35, 38A, 40, 45, and 50. Acceptable items include computer keyboards, computer mice, cords, speakers, webcams, CDs, and floppy disks. Items with NIH decals, broken glass or sharps **are not** accepted.
- Soft plastic film recycling collections will be held at the Building 10-B2 loading dock and the Building 10 Supply Store. Acceptable items include plastic grocery bags, Zip-loc bags, shrink wrap, clear plastic pillows (deflated), bubble wrap, and case wrap from water and soda bottles. Green (biodegradable) air pillows, chip bags, rigid (hard) plastic, packing peanuts and paper products **are not** accepted.
- Take the [NIH Recycling Pledge!](#)
- Virtual activities to be determined (visit the [ARD page](#) for more details at a later date).

Bayview:

- Collections will be held on November 15 for non-accountable electronic items (all items must be decontaminated using DOHS procedures), Cell Phones for Soldiers, and clothes in usable condition. There will also be informative presentations about the recycling opportunities on the Bayview campus, in the laboratory, and at home.

STAFF SPOTLIGHT



Meet the Bethesda Campus Recycling Coordinator: Sierra Cheri!

Each NIH campus has its own recycling coordinator. The Bethesda campus welcomed a new Recycling Coordinator last year and we would like to introduce Sierra to everyone!

[LEARN MORE](#)

TAKE ACTION



The Hazardous Waste Search Table

The Division of Environmental Protection has created a tool to assist with hazard determination for the NIH Chemical Waste Tag. Please read the full article to learn how this tool can help with the hazard determination process!

[LEARN MORE](#)

NEMS TRAINING

Did you know? The EPA has established a national recycling goal of 50% recycling rate by 2030. The current national recycling rate is estimated to be around 32%.¹ To learn more about recycling at the NIH, please visit the [NEMS Training webpage](#) to view a short (20 minute) NIH environmental awareness training video.