

City of Bisbee, Arizona

The City of Bisbee did not have a recycling program in place to reduce the amount of trash making its way into the landfill each year and because of Bisbee's steep geography a curbside program was not possible. In 2006, the city started a recycling drop-off program and began educating its 5,000+ residents about this new effort through fliers, mailers, school presentations, and knocking on doors to talk with citizens directly.

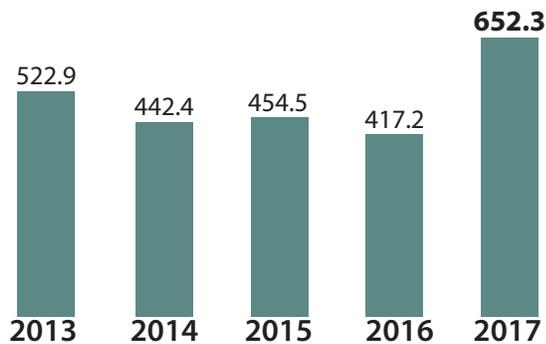
We didn't look at a can or a bottle and call it trash — we now refer to it as 'money'.

– Bisbee Public Works Director
[Watch the City of Bisbee's Recycling Story >](#)



Photo courtesy of *Green Living* magazine

Tons of Recycled Materials by Year



How Did They Do It?

Low-Hanging Fruit

Cardboard at businesses

After a waste stream analysis, the city discovered that nearly 40 percent of their waste stream was made up of commercial cardboard. By providing local businesses with bins for cardboard, Bisbee businesses were able to drastically reduce the volume of their garbage, in turn reducing their garbage fees.

Plastic in public

The city strategically placed bins for plastic in the middle of a downtown parking lot with heavy tourist traffic. Visitors started using the bins and awareness began to build throughout the local population.

Get Help

Bisbee is transitioning from using prison labor to offering young people part-time jobs at \$12/hour.

Convenience

Bisbee has 17 full-service recycling stations around town. Every bin has clear signage to avoid confusion and contamination.

Separate Bins

People in Bisbee pitch in by dropping their trash into already-separate bins. This saves an entire handling step and helps maximize the value of recyclables while further reducing garbage output. Touching the material more than three times would lose money.

Shared Success

Education is key to a successful recycling program—whether it's about how to recycle, why it matters or how much trash is being recycled.

The City of Bisbee and its residents are engaged in recycling and have shown a sense of pride and shared ownership over the program.

Want to learn more? Contact:

Recycling Division, Bisbee Department of Public Works
bisbeeaz.gov/2361/Recycle-Division

Start your own recycling program at school, work or home:
azdeq.gov/RecyclingToolkit