

# COMMUNITY GRANTS PROGRAM



## CASE STUDY

## NY Product Stewardship: Increasing Paint Diversion in New York State

New York Product Stewardship Council (NYPSC) is a nonprofit organization that formed in 2009 under the auspices of the New York State Association for Solid Waste Management. NYPSC's goal is to promote product stewardship as the priority policy for solid waste management in New York State. NYPSC is governed by a board of individuals from local government, environmental nonprofits, and the waste management, engineering, recycling, and electronic industries. Since its inception, NYPSC has built grassroots coalitions to support producer responsibility, reduce waste and associated costs, and promote sustainable product design.

The project, "Increasing Paint Diversion in New York State" was a collaboration between NYPSC and its fiscal partner, the Product Stewardship Institute (PSI). Founded in 2001, PSI is the first national organization to systematically promote the concept of product stewardship in the U.S., and has played a pivotal role in the development and implementation of most of the nation's 92 Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) programs. The goal of this project was to decrease the quantity of leftover paint sent to landfills and household hazardous waste (HHW) facilities by increasing opportunities for reuse. The results of this initiative will continue to provide communities with sustainable solutions to address high volumes of paint waste now, as well as build the infrastructure to support expanded reuse and recycling operations under a producer-funded paint stewardship program.

### CHALLENGE

New York State residents purchase over 30 million gallons of paint each year, more than three million of which go unused. Although paint is highly recoverable, reusable, and recyclable, most leftover post-consumer paint is not managed in an environmentally or economically efficient manner. While some paint reuse programs currently exist in New York, there has been no coordinated initiative to increase the number of reuse opportunities to ensure the current programs are maximizing effectiveness. Most leftover latex paint is either poured down drains (representing problems for local wastewater treatment systems), dried and sent to landfills, or brought to local HHW programs at a high taxpayer expense, even though it is not hazardous.

Municipal program managers report that used paint represents the largest segment and the highest cost element of their HHW programs, consuming 50 percent of their HHW budget. Such inefficient paint management is a waste of materials, energy, and taxpayer dollars, and limits potential jobs in reuse and recycling. State and local government agencies have identified paint management as a top concern.

This project addressed the environmental issues of waste generation, landfill use, and toxic dumping. Additionally, the project built capacity for municipalities to establish and implement effective paint reuse programs that improve the environmental outcomes of post-consumer paint management now and in preparation for the implementation of a producer-funded paint stewardship program.

### CHALLENGE

- More than three million gallons of paint each year goes unused in New York State
- Inefficient paint management is a waste of materials, energy, and taxpayer dollars, and limits potential jobs in reuse and recycling

### SOLUTION

- NYS P21's Community Grant Program provided support for the project, "Increasing Paint Diversion in New York State" allowing NYPSC, in partnership with PSI to increase opportunities for paint reuse and recycling in New York State communities, thereby decreasing the amount of leftover paint

### RESULTS

- End products of this project include improvements to paint reuse infrastructure across the state, as well as documents that provide continuing guidance for paint reuse program development

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## TESTIMONIAL

“Offering a paint reuse program is a simple, cost-effective way for governments to provide a beneficial service to their communities and simultaneously reduce waste,” said Scott Cassel, PSI’s Chief Executive Officer and Founder. “The reuse guide is an easily accessible best practices compendium for the nation as well as New York state. We are thankful to New York State Pollution Prevention Institute for their support of this resource and our effort.”

– Scott Cassel, CEO & Founder  
Product Stewardship Institute

## SOLUTION

In 2015, NYSP2I’s Community Grant Program provided support for the project, “Increasing Paint Diversion in New York State” allowing NYPSC, in partnership with PSI to increase opportunities for paint reuse and recycling in New York State communities, thereby decreasing the amount of leftover paint sent to landfills and HHW facilities. NYPSC leveraged its network of local governments, recyclers, and environmental nonprofits in New York State to gather data, disseminate information, conduct educational outreach, and establish new partnerships and programs. PSI used its experience with paint stewardship program operations, as well as its resources and industry relationships, to provide the best possible information to New York stakeholders.

This initiative created instructional materials for implementing and improving reuse programs, fostered public-private partnerships to increase reuse opportunities, and provided ongoing technical support to municipalities as they introduced and improved paint reuse programs. These efforts will help prevent leftover paint from being improperly disposed of and improve efficiency of source reduction and recycling operations under a future producer-funded paint stewardship program. Such program could save local governments up to \$37.2 million, collectively.



Photo Credit: NYPSC

## RESULTS

End products of this project include improvements to paint reuse infrastructure across the state, as well as documents that provide continuing guidance for paint reuse program development.

- Approximately 650 waste management and local government organizations were surveyed in order to determine the extent of existing paint reuse programs. Of the 69 responses received, it was found that only 4 waste management organizations had current reuse programs. 34 programs showed an interest in starting a reuse program.
- NYPSC conducted interviews of 9 existing reuse programs in New York and other states to gather information to include in a paint reuse manual.
- A paint reuse manual was created and distributed to 502 municipal and county waste programs across the state, which included a “Best Practices” guide for program development and improvement, as well as a directory of existing paint reuse programs.
- NYPSC and PSI provided direct technical assistance to 5 local organizations to implement new paint reuse programs. It is anticipated that this project will have a future impact as it fosters partnerships between local governments and resale stores, and provides ongoing support to municipal organizations as they introduce and improve paint reuse programs.

## ONLINE RESOURCES

[Reuse Manual](#)

[Reuse Directory](#)

[NYPSC Website Paint Reuse Link](#)

[NYPSC Website](#)

## NYSP2I PARTNERS

**R·I·T**  **Rensselaer**

  
**University at Buffalo**  
The State University of New York

**Clarkson**  
UNIVERSITY

10 Regional Technology Development Centers

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