

# COMMUNITY GRANTS PROGRAM



## CASE STUDY

### Increasing Textiles Reuse in New York Through Outreach and Education

The New York Product Stewardship Council (NYPSC) works to implement the principles of product stewardship in New York State (NYS) and nationally by providing leadership, guidance, and educational tools to individuals, organizations, institutions, local governments, and elected officials. NYPSC also participates in the development and implementation of stewardship programs throughout NYS.

#### Challenge

Over 1.4 billion pounds of clothes and textiles are disposed of in New York (NY) each year. These textiles comprise about five percent of the municipal waste stream, and although they are highly recoverable, reusable, and recyclable, 85 percent of unwanted clothing is thrown in the trash and sent to landfills or waste-to-energy plants at taxpayer expense. In fact, NY municipalities spend approximately \$36 million each year to dispose of them. The New York State Association for Reduction, Reuse, and Recycling (NYSAR3) estimates these textiles to be worth more than \$130 million dollars and, if they were all recovered, over 1,000 jobs could be created in NYS.

#### Solution

With assistance provided by the New York State Pollution Prevention Institute (NYSP21), NYPSC reignited the statewide Re-Clothe NY textile recovery campaign, which seeks to educate New York residents about the need for and benefits of textiles recovery, as well as what textiles to donate and where to donate them. To do this, NYPSC updated and expanded a Re-Clothe NY Media and Outreach Toolkit to contain unified branding and educational materials, including decals for bins and store windows, posters, fliers, and sample social media posts for use by Re-Clothe NY Coalition members. NYPSC promoted the Toolkit through e-mail blasts, 6 training emails for recycling coordinators that contained specific tips and tricks for effective outreach, a webinar, speaking engagements, and more.

NYPSC partnered with the Product Stewardship Institute, New York State Association for Reduction, Reuse, and Recycling (NYSAR3), the Secondary Materials and Recycled Textiles Association (SMART), and the Council for Textile Recycling (CTR) to run the Re-Clothe NY campaign, which ultimately decreased the quantity of textiles sent to landfills and waste to energy plants.

#### Results

The 2016 Re-Clothe NY campaign was launched on September 15th and successfully educated NY residents about what textiles to donate, where to donate them, and why textiles donation is so critical. NYPSC sent a press release to over 800 contacts, including 75 press contacts. 400 NY recycling coordinators received outreach and education tips and tricks via email. The project team conducted a baseline survey of New York municipal textile recycling coordinators and collection organizations. Survey respondents reported an increase of textile collection by 22% overall, 7% among bin collections and from 24% to over 200% for other types of collectors. The 25 people that attended the outreach training webinar, "Tips and Tricks for Successful Textile Recycling," learned from speakers who had

#### CHALLENGE

- Over 1.4 billion pounds of textiles are thrown away in NYS each year, and municipalities spend approximately \$36 million each year to dispose of them

#### SOLUTION

- With assistance from NYSP21, NYSPC ran an educational campaign by developing and promoting an Outreach Toolkit that recycling coordinators around NY could use to raise awareness about textiles donation and recovery to residents

#### RESULTS

- 800 contacts received campaign press releases, including 75 press contacts, and 400 NY recycling coordinators received outreach and education tips and tricks via email
- 25 people attended the outreach training webinar, "Tips and Tricks for Successful Textile Recycling," to help increase textile recycling by sharing best practices for reaching out to and educating residents
- Attendees at the NYSAR3 Annual Recycling Conference's "Textiles Recycling" session received fliers and posters created by NYPSC
- Survey respondents reported an increase of textile collection by 22% overall, 7% among bin collections and from 24% to over 200% for other types of collectors

## CONTACT INFO

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a proven history of increasing textiles collection by educating residents, whether by using Toolkit resources or by developing their own. Attendees at the NYSAR3 Annual Recycling Conference “Textiles Recycling” session received fliers and posters created by NYPSC. NYPSC received positive feedback from government agencies, universities, and organizations around NY on the educational materials and branding created for the Re-Clothe NY Coalition. In 2017, with additional NYSP2I support, NYPSC will host the “NY Textiles Summit: Innovations in Textiles Manufacturing, Waste Reduction, and Reuse” at New York City’s Fashion Institute of Technology (FIT) to connect stakeholders, address challenges in textiles recycling, and drive innovation.



Photo Credit: The True Cost



#### Resources

- Website <https://nypsc.org/>
- Twitter <https://twitter.com/productsteward>
- Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/ProductStewardship/>
- LinkedIn <https://www.linkedin.com/company/product-stewardship-institute>

## TESTIMONIAL

“Thanks to NYSP2I, NYPSC, as well as NYSAR3, PSI, and SMART, we were able to strengthen the Re-Clothe NY Coalition – one of the nation’s most extensive efforts to increase textile recovery – by running an outreach campaign to help residents understand the benefits of textiles recovery, as well as what textiles to donate and where to donate them. This funding allowed us to solidify the Coalition’s branding, enhance our outreach materials and create new resources, and ultimately increase textiles recovery in New York – both during the campaign and for years to come.”

– Andrew Radin, Chair  
New York Product Stewardship Council

## NYSP2I PARTNERS



New York Manufacturing Extension Partnership

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