



Recycling Refunds Engagement Study DRAFT Technical Appendix Washington Department of Ecology

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Prepared by:

Eastern Research Group, Inc. (ERG)
Cascadia Consulting Group, Inc.



In partnership with Resource Recycling Systems, Inc. (RRS),
HDR, Inc., and Start Consulting, Inc.



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Contact Information

Solid Waste Management Program

P.O. Box 47600

Olympia, WA 98504-7600

Phone: 360-407-6000

Website¹: [Washington State Department of Ecology](#)

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Introduction

This Technical Appendix supports the Washington Recycling Refunds Engagement Study. It documents the engagement approach, survey methodology, participation summary, and detailed findings that informed the analyses in the main report.

The Engagement Study gathered perspectives from residents, Tribal participants, community-based organizations, local governments, retailers, producers, recycling system operators, and other interested parties regarding a potential recycling refunds program in Washington State. The study team synthesized findings from surveys, interviews, community-based engagement activities, Community Connector partnerships, and Tribal survey responses to evaluate assumptions and recommendations from the Phase I Model Study and inform legislative recommendations.

The Technical Appendix includes five parts:

Appendix A. Engagement Plan Summary

This appendix provides an overview of the Engagement Plan that guided the study, including engagement objectives, priority audiences, engagement methods, geographic focus areas, equity-centered engagement strategies, analytical topic areas, and the overall engagement process. It describes the planned approach the study team used to guide implementation of the Engagement Study.

Appendix B. Survey Methodology and Respondent Characteristics

This appendix documents survey administration procedures, outreach methods, respondent recruitment approaches, respondent characteristics, and limitations. It provides additional context on how the study team collected and interpreted survey data.

Appendix C. Survey Instrument

This appendix contains the complete survey instrument administered during the Engagement Study. The study team designed the survey to gather perspectives from multiple respondent groups and included tailored question modules for residents, community-based organizations, Tribal participants, local governments, retailers, recycling system operators, producers, and other interested parties. The study team organized interview questions around the analytical topic areas used throughout the study.

Appendix D. Interview and Engagement Participation Summary

This appendix summarizes interview participation, engagement audiences, participating organizations, Community Connector activities, and other engagement efforts conducted as part of the study. It provides additional information on the qualitative engagement activities that supplemented the statewide survey and informed interpretation of findings.

Appendix E. Detailed Findings by Analytical Topic Area

This appendix presents detailed findings organized around the ten analytical topic areas used throughout the Engagement Study. The study team synthesized findings across surveys, interviews, Community Connector activities, and Tribal survey responses to provide a comprehensive summary of perspectives related to accessibility, convenience, participation, equity, implementation considerations, governance, system interactions, and perceived benefits and challenges associated with a potential

recycling refunds program. Together, these sections provide the technical foundation for the findings, conclusions, and recommendations presented in the main report.

Appendix A: Engagement Plan Summary

A.1. Purpose of the Engagement Plan

The Washington Recycling Reform Act directed the Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology) to conduct a community engagement process to gather perspectives on a potential recycling refunds program and evaluate how assumptions and recommendations from the Phase I Model Study align with community and interest holder perspectives. The legislation emphasized accessibility, equity, and meaningful engagement with communities that may be affected by a recycling refunds program.

To support implementation of these requirements, Ecology and its consultant team developed an Engagement Plan. The Engagement Plan established the overall framework for engagement, including study objectives, priority audiences, engagement methods, geographic focus areas, Tribal consultation activities, and the analytical approach used to organize findings.

This appendix summarizes how the Engagement Plan was developed, the principles that guided its design, and how it informed implementation of the Engagement Study. Detailed findings from engagement activities are provided in the body of this report and in [Appendix E](#).

A.2. Development of the Engagement Plan

A.2.1. Legislative Direction

The study team developed the Engagement Plan to address specific requirements established in the Recycling Reform Act. The legislation directed Ecology to gather input regarding:

- Access to recycling and redemption services.
- Community priorities related to convenience and equity.
- Local infrastructure needs.
- Consumer awareness and perceptions of a recycling refunds program.
- Potential benefits, barriers, and economic impacts.
- Perspectives from Tribal Nations, local governments, community organizations, recycling system operators, producers, retailers, and other interested parties.

The legislation also directed Ecology to prioritize equity, accessibility, and community perspectives throughout the engagement process.

A.2.2. Background Research and Existing Studies

The Engagement Plan was informed by a review of previous research related to recycling refunds programs, consumer behavior, community engagement practices, and recycling system design.

The project team reviewed studies and engagement efforts conducted in states with existing recycling refunds programs, national consumer research, and previous Washington studies related to recycling, waste reduction, and producer responsibility systems. This review identified several recurring themes that informed development of the Engagement Plan, including:

- Convenience is a primary factor influencing participation.
- Accessibility needs vary across community types and populations.

- Community definitions of convenience extend beyond travel distance alone.
- Equity considerations are closely linked to transportation, geography, language access, and household circumstances.
- Multiple engagement methods are necessary to reach diverse audiences and gather both quantitative and qualitative information.

These findings helped inform the engagement questions, outreach strategies, and analytical framework used throughout the study.

A.3. Relationship to the Phase I Model Study

The Engagement Plan was also informed by findings from the Phase I Model Study. The Model Study evaluated how a potential recycling refunds program could provide convenient access to redemption services across different community types and geographic settings.

The Model Study identified King, Spokane, and Yakima Counties as representative locations for evaluating convenience, access, infrastructure, and equity considerations. The study also developed recommendations related to redemption site types, geographic coverage, accessibility, and program implementation.

The Engagement Study was designed to build on this work by gathering direct input from communities and interested parties regarding these assumptions and recommendations. Throughout the engagement process, participants were asked to provide perspectives on convenience, accessibility, participation, implementation considerations, and potential program benefits and challenges.

A.4. Engagement Design Framework

The Engagement Plan was guided by four overarching principles.

Broad and Inclusive Participation

The study sought to gather perspectives from residents and organizations across Washington, including communities that may experience barriers to accessing redemption services. Engagement activities were designed to provide multiple opportunities for participation through surveys, interviews, community-based engagement activities, public meetings, and comment opportunities.

Equity-Centered Engagement

Equity considerations were incorporated throughout the engagement process. The Engagement Plan emphasized outreach to overburdened communities, underserved populations, rural and remote communities, and other groups that may experience unique accessibility challenges. Engagement materials were developed using plain language principles and translated into multiple languages to support broader participation.

Respect for Tribal Sovereignty

The Engagement Plan recognized Tribal Nations as sovereign governments and incorporated Government-to-Government consultation as a distinct component of the engagement process. Tribal engagement activities were designed to complement, but not replace, formal consultation processes. Separate opportunities for Tribal review and comment were incorporated into Phase II of the study.

Multiple Engagement Methods

The study used a combination of quantitative and qualitative engagement methods to capture a broad range of perspectives. Different engagement methods were selected to serve different purposes, including gathering statewide input, obtaining detailed qualitative feedback, supporting community-based participation, and validating findings and recommendations. Table A-1 summarizes the primary engagement goals and corresponding engagement approaches.

Table A-1. Engagement Design Framework

Engagement Goal	Primary Approach
Gather broad statewide perspectives	Statewide survey
Obtain detailed feedback	Interviews and targeted discussions
Support community-based participation	Community Connector partnerships and community engagement activities
Respect Tribal sovereignty and gather Tribal perspectives	Government-to-Government consultation and Tribal engagement
Validate findings and recommendations	Public and Tribal comment periods

A.5. Priority Audiences and Communities

The Engagement Plan identified several priority audiences whose perspectives were considered important to understanding how a recycling refunds program may affect communities across Washington. These audiences included residents, community-based organizations, Tribal Nations, local governments, recycling system participants, retailers, producers, and other interested parties.

Table A-2. Primary Engagement Audiences

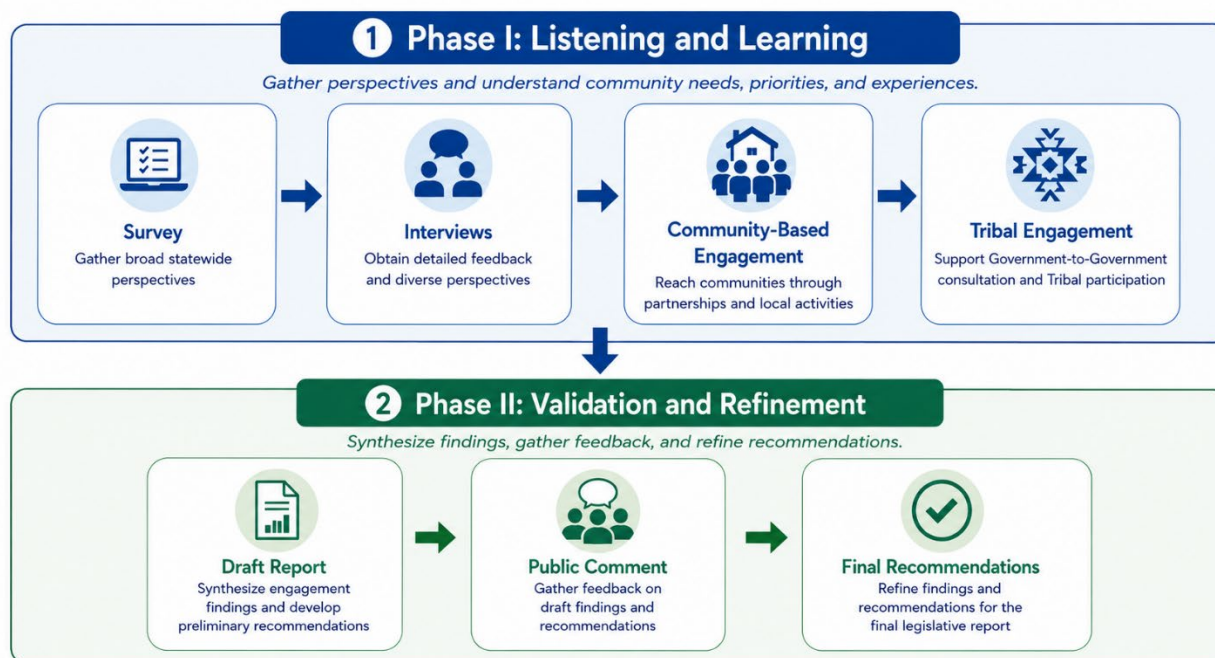
Audience Category	Primary Purpose
Residents and community members	Understand convenience, accessibility, participation, and user experience
Community-based organizations	Identify barriers, community needs, and equity considerations
Tribal Nations	Gather Tribal perspectives and support Government-to-Government consultation
Local governments	Understand infrastructure, siting, planning, and implementation considerations
Recycling system operators	Assess operational impacts and system integration considerations
Retailers and potential site hosts	Evaluate feasibility and site-level considerations
Producers and producer responsibility organizations	Understand implementation, funding, and operational considerations

The Engagement Plan also identified King, Spokane, and Yakima Counties as priority locations for focused engagement activities. These counties were selected because they reflect a diverse range of population densities, community types, socioeconomic conditions, and transportation contexts. Statewide engagement activities supplemented county-focused efforts to ensure participation from communities throughout Washington.

A.6. Planned Engagement Process

The Engagement Plan established a two-phase engagement process as outlined in [Figure A-1](#) below.

Figure A-1. Two-Phase Engagement Process



A.7. Implementation and Adaptation

While the Engagement Plan established the initial framework for engagement, implementation evolved throughout the study in response to participation levels, stakeholder interest, Tribal engagement opportunities, and lessons learned during Phase I.

Several elements of the engagement process expanded beyond the original planning assumptions. Community Connector partnerships supported additional outreach activities within priority communities. Outreach materials were translated into six languages to improve accessibility. Additional engagement opportunities were developed to encourage participation from underrepresented audiences and communities.

The project team also refined engagement questions and analytical approaches as findings emerged. While the overall objectives of the Engagement Plan remained consistent, implementation remained flexible to ensure that engagement activities continued to reflect community needs and participation opportunities throughout the study period.

This adaptive approach helped maximize participation, strengthen representation across audiences, and improve the overall quality of information collected through the Engagement Study.

A.8. Relationship to the Findings Presented in this Report

The Engagement Plan established the analytical framework used throughout the Engagement Study. Ten analytical topic areas were identified to guide development of survey questions, interview guides, community engagement activities, Tribal engagement activities, and subsequent analysis. These topic areas provided a consistent structure for evaluating findings across engagement methods and comparing community perspectives with assumptions and recommendations from the Model Study.

The findings presented in this report reflect the implementation of the Engagement Plan and the perspectives gathered through surveys, interviews, community-based engagement activities, Tribal engagement, public comment, and Tribal comment activities conducted throughout the study.

Appendix B: Survey Methodology and Respondent Characteristics

This section describes the methodology used to design, distribute, and analyze the statewide survey conducted as part of the Recycling Refunds Engagement Study. The survey served as one component of a broader engagement effort that also included interviews, Community Connector partnerships, community-based engagement activities, Tribal engagement, and public review opportunities.

The purpose of this section is to document how the survey was conducted, who participated, and how survey responses were analyzed. It summarizes survey development, outreach and distribution activities, respondent characteristics, and analytical methods used to interpret survey findings. Findings from the survey are presented throughout Section E and were evaluated alongside information gathered through other engagement activities.

B.1. Survey Overview

The Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology) conducted a statewide survey as part of the Recycling Refunds Engagement Study to gather perspectives on a potential recycling refunds program in Washington. The survey was designed to provide quantitative and qualitative information regarding public awareness, access, convenience, participation, equity, governance, implementation considerations, and potential benefits and challenges associated with a recycling refunds program.

The survey served as one component of a broader engagement effort that also included interviews, Community Connector partnerships, community-based engagement activities, Tribal engagement, and public review opportunities. Together, these activities were intended to help Ecology evaluate how assumptions and recommendations from the Phase I Model Study aligned with community experiences, priorities, and expectations.

The survey was administered online using the Qualtrics platform and was open from April 10 through May 22, 2026. The study team distributed the survey statewide through a combination of public outreach, targeted stakeholder outreach, community-based engagement activities, Tribal outreach, and supplemental residential panel recruitment. Survey participation was voluntary.

The survey was designed to gather input from a broad range of participants, including:

- Residents and community members
- Community-based organizations
- Tribal governments, Tribal organizations, and Tribal community members
- Local and county governments
- Recycling system operators
- Retailers and potential redemption site hosts
- Producers and industry representatives

Survey findings informed evaluation of the Phase I Model Study recommendations and provided insight into how participants viewed issues related to access, convenience, participation, equity, implementation, governance, and potential program outcomes.

B.2. Survey Development and Design

The study team developed the survey using a modular design that allowed participants to answer questions most relevant to their experiences and roles. The survey used logic-based routing to direct respondents to different question pathways based on how they identified themselves at the beginning of the survey.

This approach reduced unnecessary questions, improved respondent experience, and allowed the study team to gather information tailored to different audiences while maintaining a consistent analytical framework across respondent groups.

The survey included pathways for:

- Residents and community members
- Community-based organizations
- Tribal governments, Tribal organizations, and Tribal community members
- Local and county governments
- Recycling system operators
- Retailers and potential redemption site hosts
- Producers and industry representatives

Survey questions were organized around ten analytical topic areas that were developed to support evaluation of assumptions and recommendations from the Phase I Model Study. These topic areas also provided the framework used to analyze survey responses and integrate findings across engagement activities.

Table B-1. Survey Topic Areas

Topic Area	Purpose
Baseline Context and System Understanding	Understand existing recycling behaviors, awareness, and knowledge of recycling refunds programs
Access, Travel, and Proximity	Evaluate travel expectations, transportation patterns, and access considerations
Convenience Beyond Distance	Understand factors that influence convenience beyond travel distance alone
Site Types and Location Preferences	Identify preferred redemption site types and locations
Participation and Financial Considerations	Evaluate factors that influence participation and financial considerations
Equity and Access Gaps	Identify barriers that may affect participation across different populations and communities
System Integration and Operations	Understand how a recycling refunds program may interact with existing recycling systems

Topic Area	Purpose
Governance and Implementation	Explore perspectives regarding program administration, oversight, and implementation
Risks, Barriers, and Conditions for Success	Identify concerns, implementation challenges, and factors that may influence program success
Benefits and Outcomes	Understand perceived environmental, economic, and community benefits and outcomes

B.2.1. Translation and Language Access

To support broad participation, the study team translated the survey and outreach materials into multiple languages commonly spoken in Washington. Translated versions of the survey were made available through the Qualtrics platform, allowing participants to complete the survey in their preferred language.

Translation efforts were intended to reduce language barriers and support participation from communities that may not otherwise have been able to engage through an English-language survey.

B.2.2. Survey Testing and Quality Assurance

Before launch, the study team conducted multiple rounds of review, programming, testing, and quality assurance. The survey instrument underwent internal review by the project team, review by Ecology, Qualtrics programming and logic testing, and targeted pre-testing to verify survey functionality and respondent pathways.

The study team also reviewed translated survey versions and conducted additional quality assurance testing before making the survey available to participants statewide.

B.3. Survey Distribution and Outreach

The study team used multiple outreach methods to promote the survey and encourage participation from residents, organizations, governments, Tribal Nations, and other interested parties throughout Washington. The outreach approach was designed to support broad statewide participation while also increasing participation among communities that may face barriers to engagement.

The survey was distributed through Ecology's website, email distribution lists, social media channels, partner organizations, and project team networks. The study team developed outreach materials that organizations and stakeholders could share through their own communication channels to help expand awareness of the survey.

The study team conducted targeted outreach to stakeholder groups identified in the Engagement Plan, including local governments, community-based organizations, retailers, recycling system operators, producers, industry associations, and other organizations with an interest in recycling systems and waste management.

Targeted outreach helped ensure that the survey captured perspectives from organizations and stakeholders that may be affected by or involved in implementation of a recycling refunds program.

The study team partnered with Community Connectors and community-based organizations to promote the survey within priority communities. Community-based outreach activities included sharing survey

information through trusted local organizations, community events, meetings, and existing community networks.

This approach was intended to support participation from communities that may be underrepresented in traditional public engagement processes and to help identify barriers, priorities, and perspectives that may not otherwise be captured through statewide outreach alone.

The study team conducted Tribal outreach through direct communications, coordination with Tribal organizations, and engagement with Tribal Nations throughout Washington. Tribal outreach efforts were designed to support participation by Tribal governments, Tribal staff, Tribal enterprises, and Tribal community members.

Survey outreach was coordinated with broader Tribal engagement activities conducted as part of the Recycling Refunds Engagement Study.

In addition to open survey distribution, the study team used supplemental residential panel recruitment through Qualtrics. The purpose of panel recruitment was to increase participation among populations and geographic areas that may have been underrepresented through open survey distribution alone.

Panel recruitment was used only for residential respondents and was intended to supplement, rather than replace, responses received through public outreach and community-based engagement.

The combined outreach approach helped generate responses from participants representing a broad range of geographic regions, community types, demographic groups, and stakeholder perspectives across Washington.

B.4. Respondent Characteristics

A total of 2,616 survey responses were received during the survey period. Respondents represented residents, Tribal participants, local governments, community-based organizations, recycling system operators, retailers, producers, and other interested parties from across Washington.

B.4.1. Respondent Types

Most survey responses were received from residents and community members. Additional responses were received from local governments, community-based organizations, recycling system operators, retailers, producers, and Tribal participants.

Table B-2. Summarizes participation by respondent type.

Respondent Type	Responses
Residents	2,436
Recycling system operators	41
City and local governments	40
Community-based organizations	33
County governments	30
Retailers and commercial property owners	16
Producers and beverage industry representatives	12
Tribal participants	8
Total	2,616

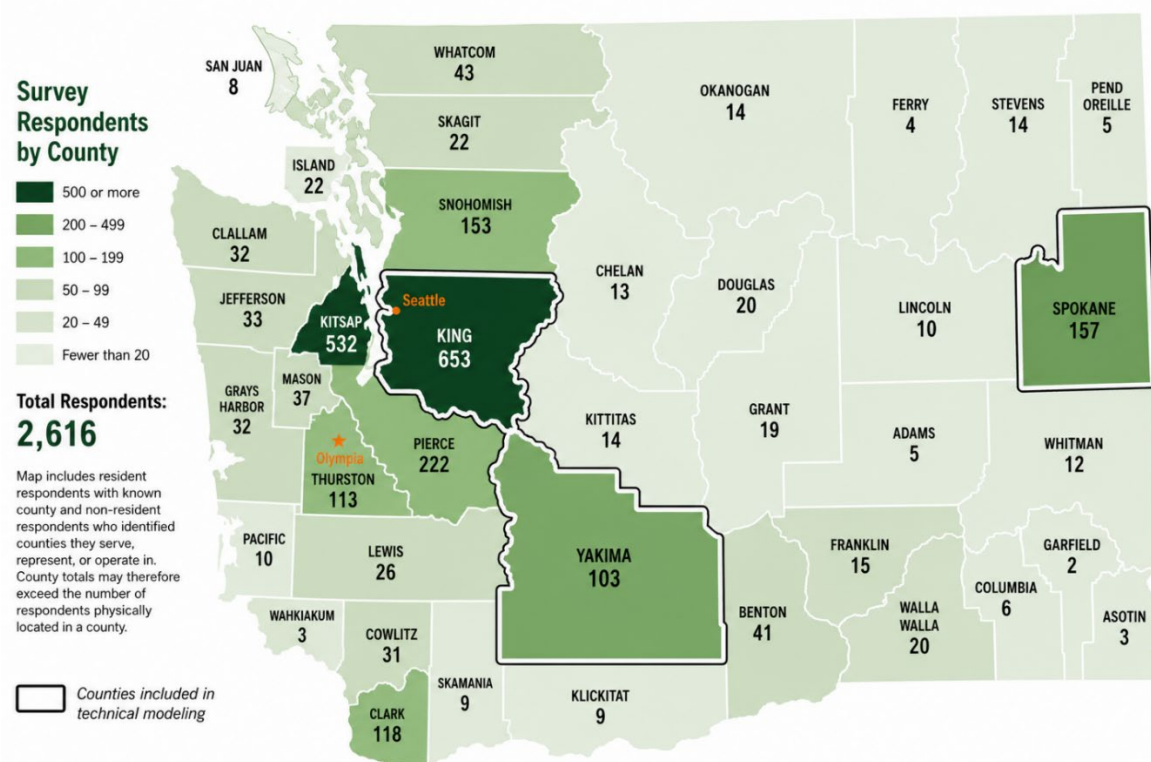
Approximately 56% of resident responses were collected through supplemental Qualtrics panel recruitment (1,376 responses), while approximately 44% were collected through open survey distribution and outreach activities (1,060 responses).

B.4.2. Geographic Distribution

Survey responses were received from communities throughout Washington. Resident responses were received from every region of the state, including the three priority counties identified in the Engagement Plan: King, Spokane, and Yakima Counties. The largest numbers of resident responses were received from King County (653 responses), Kitsap County (532 responses), Pierce County (222 responses), Spokane County (157 responses), Snohomish County (153 responses), Clark County (118 responses), Thurston County (111 responses), and Yakima County (103 responses).

Community-based organizations, local governments, county governments, retailers, recycling system operators, producers, and Tribal participants also represented a broad range of counties and service areas throughout Washington.

Figure B-1. Map of Survey Respondents by County



B.4.3. Community Type

Resident respondents represented a range of community types across Washington.

Figure B-2. Resident Respondents by Community Type

Community Type	Responses	Percent
Suburban	998	41%
Urban	753	31%
Rural	463	19%
Dense Urban	131	5%
Remote or Very Rural	43	2%
Multiple / Varies by Location	26	1%
Not Sure	20	1%
Total	2,434	100%

The large number of responses from suburban, urban, rural, and remote communities supported comparison of accessibility, travel patterns, participation preferences, and implementation considerations across different geographic contexts.

B.4.4. Demographic Characteristics

The survey collected demographic information from resident respondents to better understand who participated in the survey and to support analysis across different populations and communities. Respondents represented a broad range of ages, income levels, educational backgrounds, household sizes, and racial and ethnic groups.

Survey participation included respondents from all adult age groups. Respondents aged 35 to 64 represented just over half of all resident respondents (52%), while respondents aged 65 and older represented 29% of respondents. Younger adults aged 18 to 34 represented 19% of respondents.

Figure B-3. Resident Respondents by Age Group

Age Range	Percent	Count
18–24	5%	118
25–34	14%	350
35–44	18%	441
45–54	17%	412
55–64	17%	407
65 or older	29%	699
Prefer not to say	<1%	2

Fifty-seven percent of respondents identified as female and 40% identified as male. Approximately 3% selected another gender identity or preferred not to answer.

Figure B-4. Resident Respondents by Gender

Gender	Percent	Count
Female	57%	1,377
Male	40%	978
Other	1%	16
Prefer not to say	2%	55

Respondents represented a broad range of household income levels. Forty-three percent of respondents reported household incomes of \$100,000 or more, while approximately 34% reported household incomes below \$70,000.

Figure B-5. Resident Respondents by Household Income

Household Income	Percent	Count
Less than \$10,000	4%	95
\$10,000–\$49,999	23%	515
\$50,000–\$99,999	31%	719
\$100,000–\$149,999	22%	506
\$150,000 or more	21%	486
Prefer not to say	1%	18

Race and Ethnicity

Most respondents identified as White (81%). Additional respondents identified as Hispanic or Latino (8%), Asian (7%), Black or African American (6%), American Indian or Alaska Native (3%), Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander (1%), Middle Eastern or North African, or another race or ethnicity. Because respondents could select more than one race or ethnicity, percentages do not total 100%.

Figure B-6. Resident Respondents by Race and Ethnicity

Race and Ethnicity	Percent	Count
White	81%	1,929
Hispanic or Latino	8%	188
Asian	7%	169
Black or African American	6%	132
American Indian or Alaska Native	3%	78
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	1%	29
Other	2%	57

Educational Attainment

Survey respondents reported relatively high levels of educational attainment. More than half of respondents (55%) reported holding a bachelor's degree or higher, while 17% reported some college coursework and 14% reported a high school diploma or equivalent as their highest level of education.

Household Size

Respondents represented a range of household sizes. The most common household sizes were one-person households (19%) and two-person households (37%). Approximately 41% of respondents reported living in households with three or more people.

Taken together, these findings suggest that survey participants represented a diverse range of demographic characteristics and household circumstances. These demographic data were used throughout the analysis to better understand how perspectives varied across different populations and communities.

Participation from Overburdened Communities

The study team placed particular emphasis on engaging residents from overburdened communities and populations that may face barriers to accessing redemption services. Survey responses were linked to geographic indicators where possible to evaluate participation from communities identified through Washington's Environmental Health Disparities Map and other equity-focused screening tools.

Participation from overburdened communities supported analysis of equity-related issues, including access, convenience, transportation barriers, participation challenges, and potential program impacts. Additional information regarding participation from overburdened communities is provided in the survey tabulations and supporting data files.

B.5. Analysis Methods

The study team used both quantitative and qualitative analytical methods to evaluate survey responses.

B.5.1. Quantitative Analysis

The study team analyzed closed-ended survey questions using descriptive statistics and cross-tabulations. Analysis focused on identifying overall response patterns as well as differences across

respondent groups, geographic regions, community types, and demographic characteristics where appropriate.

Community density type analysis was used extensively throughout the study to evaluate how transportation patterns, accessibility needs, participation preferences, and other factors varied across different geographic settings.

For selected high-response open-ended questions, including questions related to equity, access, affordability, and implementation considerations, the study team conducted thematic coding to identify recurring themes and recommendations.

B.5.2. Qualitative Analysis

The survey included multiple open-ended questions that allowed respondents to provide additional context, concerns, and recommendations in their own words. The study team conducted thematic coding of open-ended responses to identify recurring themes, priorities, and implementation considerations.

The study team developed a qualitative coding framework that grouped responses into common themes related to accessibility, convenience, participation, equity, governance, implementation, benefits, and barriers. Responses could be assigned to multiple themes when participants discussed more than one issue.

The coding process was used to identify recurring patterns across hundreds of open-ended responses and to supplement quantitative survey findings. Qualitative findings were used throughout the analysis to provide context, explain response patterns, identify issues not captured through closed-ended questions, and highlight considerations that may be important for future program design and implementation.

Illustrative quotations were selected to represent broader themes identified through the coding process. Quotes were not attributed to individual participants or organizations.

B.5.3. Integration with Other Engagement Activities

Survey findings were analyzed alongside information gathered through interviews, Community Connector activities, community-based engagement, and Tribal engagement. This approach allowed the study team to compare findings across engagement methods, identify areas of alignment and difference, and develop a more comprehensive understanding of participant perspectives.

Throughout the analysis, the study team considered both the frequency of responses and the broader context provided by qualitative feedback and other engagement activities.

B.6. Survey Limitations

Several considerations should be considered when interpreting survey findings.

First, the survey was designed to support the objectives of the Recycling Refunds Engagement Study and the legislative direction provided to Ecology. The survey focused on understanding how participants viewed issues related to access, convenience, participation, equity, governance, implementation, and potential outcomes associated with a recycling refunds program. As a result, the survey did not include questions intended to determine whether Washington should adopt a recycling refunds program. Some respondents expressed a desire for additional questions regarding the fundamental merits of a recycling refunds program, including potential implementation costs, interactions with existing curbside recycling systems, relationships with extended producer responsibility (EPR) programs, and whether a recycling refunds program should be pursued at all. While these perspectives were frequently captured through

open-ended responses and engagement activities, the survey was designed to evaluate assumptions and recommendations associated with a potential recycling refunds program rather than assess support for adopting such a program.

Second, participation in the survey was voluntary. As a result, respondents may not be fully representative of Washington's population or of any specific stakeholder group. Individuals with strong opinions, personal experiences, or a particular interest in recycling and waste management issues may have been more likely to participate. Accordingly, survey findings should be interpreted as reflecting the perspectives of survey participants rather than a statistically representative sample of Washington residents or organizations.

Third, response rates varied across respondent groups. While the survey received substantial participation from residents (2,436 responses), some stakeholder groups were represented by relatively small numbers of respondents. For example, responses were received from 41 recycling system operators, 33 community-based organizations, 16 retailers and commercial property owners, 12 producers and beverage industry representatives, and 8 Tribal participants. These responses provided valuable insight into stakeholder perspectives and implementation considerations; however, findings for these groups are best interpreted as qualitative insights rather than statistically representative views of all organizations within those sectors. For this reason, survey findings for organizational respondents were considered alongside information gathered through interviews and other engagement activities.

Fourth, the survey was conducted online. Although the study team implemented multiple outreach strategies, translated survey materials into multiple languages, partnered with Community Connectors, and conducted targeted outreach to priority communities, online participation requirements may have created barriers for some individuals and communities. Residents without reliable internet access, limited digital literacy, or limited awareness of the survey may be underrepresented in the respondent pool despite efforts to broaden participation.

Fifth, survey findings reflect participant perspectives, experiences, expectations, and stated preferences rather than verified behavioral outcomes. Responses represent participant views at the time the survey was conducted and may not necessarily predict future participation rates or actual behavior under a specific recycling refunds program design. For example, stated willingness to travel, use particular redemption locations, or participate in a recycling refunds program may differ from actual behavior once a program is implemented.

Finally, many survey questions asked respondents to react to a hypothetical recycling refunds program rather than a fully developed program design. While the survey incorporated assumptions and recommendations from the Phase I Model Study, many operational details remain unknown and could influence participant perspectives. As a result, responses should be interpreted as reflecting participant reactions to the information available at the time of the survey.

To address these limitations, survey findings were evaluated alongside information gathered through interviews, Community Connector activities, and community-based engagement. Using multiple engagement methods allowed the study team to compare findings across sources, identify areas of consistency and divergence, and develop a more comprehensive understanding of participant perspectives.

Appendix C: Survey Instrument

The statewide survey was developed to gather perspectives regarding a potential recycling refunds program from residents, community-based organizations, Tribal participants, local governments, recycling system operators, retailers, producers, and other interested parties.

The survey was designed to support the objectives of the Engagement Study by:

- Establishing baseline understanding of recycling refunds programs;
- Evaluating perspectives on accessibility, convenience, participation, and equity;
- Identifying preferences regarding redemption site types and locations;
- Understanding perceived benefits, challenges, and implementation considerations;
- Exploring potential impacts on communities, businesses, governments, and recycling systems; and
- Informing evaluation of assumptions and recommendations from the Phase I Model Study.

The survey used a modular design that routed respondents to questions relevant to their role or experience. Modules were developed for residents, community-based organizations, Tribal participants, local governments, recycling system operators, retailers, producers, and beverage industry representatives.

The survey was translated into multiple languages and distributed through statewide outreach, Community Connector partnerships, stakeholder networks, and supplemental respondent recruitment efforts. Additional information on survey administration and respondent characteristics is provided in Appendix B.

The survey instrument was initially developed using 18 analytical topic areas to ensure broad coverage of assumptions, recommendations, and implementation considerations identified through the Phase I Model Study. During analysis, related topics were combined into 10 analytical topic areas that became the main framework for organizing findings throughout this report. Findings were then synthesized into the broader findings categories and cross-cutting themes presented in Sections 3 and 4 of the main report. [Table C-1](#) summarizes the ten primary analytical topic areas reflected in the survey instrument.

Table C-1. Survey Topic Areas and Relationship to the Engagement Study

Analytical Topic Area	Purpose
Baseline Context and System Understanding	Establish familiarity with recycling refunds programs, existing recycling behaviors, and participant context.
Access, Travel, and Proximity	Evaluate travel expectations, transportation patterns, and accessibility assumptions.
Convenience Beyond Distance	Explore factors that influence convenience beyond travel time or distance alone.
Site Types and Location Preferences	Understand preferences regarding redemption site types and locations.
Participation and Financial Considerations	Evaluate likelihood of participation and the role of financial considerations and incentives.
Equity and Community Context	Identify barriers, accessibility needs, and community-specific

Analytical Topic Area	Purpose
	considerations.
System Integration and Operations	Explore interactions with existing recycling systems and operational considerations.
Governance and Implementation	Evaluate perspectives regarding program administration, coordination, and implementation.
Risks, Barriers, and Conditions for Success	Identify potential challenges, concerns, and factors needed to support successful implementation.
Benefits and Outcomes	Understand perceived environmental, community, financial, and system benefits.

The remainder of this appendix contains the complete survey instrument as administered during the Engagement Study.

C.1. Survey Introduction/Welcome Message

The Washington State Department of Ecology is exploring how a potential statewide recycling refunds program (also known as a beverage container deposit return system) could improve recycling, reduce litter, and make it easier for people across Washington to return beverage containers for a refund. This survey gathers input from residents, Tribal nations, community organizations, local governments, and industry partners to inform recommendations to the Washington State Legislature.

Estimated time to complete:

- 10 minutes for residents and individual Tribal members
- 15 minutes for community-based organizations and retailers
- 20 minutes for local governments, Tribal governments, recycling system operators, producers, and beverage industry representatives

Select “**Learn more**” for a brief overview of the program and how your input will be used or select “**Next**” to begin.

C.2. Learn More

Washington state is exploring how to improve our recycling system, reduce litter, and make it easier for people across the state to return cans and bottles through a potential recycling refunds program (sometimes called a bottle deposit return program like in Oregon).

Ecology recently completed a Model Study examining different ways a recycling refunds program could be designed, including how redemption site locations might be distributed across urban, suburban, and rural areas, and Tribal nations. This survey is the next step in Ecology’s community engagement process and gathers input from residents, Tribal Nations, community organizations, local governments, recycling system operators, retailers, and industry partners.

C.3. What is a Recycling Refunds Program?

A recycling refunds program places a refundable deposit on certain beverage containers, such as bottles and cans. While program details vary, they typically work like this:

- When a beverage is purchased, you pay a deposit (for example, 10 cents per container), which is added to the price.
- When you return the empty container to a redemption site, the deposit is refunded back to you.
- You can return containers at redemption centers, retail locations, or other designated sites, depending on how the program is designed.

These programs are intended to increase recycling, reduce litter, improve the quality of what is recycled, and provide convenient return options for communities across the state. Ecology wants to ensure equitable access to this potential system and that program designs reflect local community needs. For example, redemption sites can include express drop sites, express flex sites, staffed redemption centers, mobile or pop-up sites, and approaches tailored for rural communities. Each of those site types is described below.

Express drop site: A place where people can quickly drop off beverage containers for a refund without waiting for cash on site. Containers are collected and sent to a processing facility, and the refund is added to the person's account electronically. Express drop sites may include bag-drop locations, reverse vending machines, or similar drop-off options designed to make returns fast and convenient.

Express flex site: A type of redemption site where people can drop off bottles and cans and have them counted on-site. These sites usually include a kiosk that can issue refunds right away or add the refund to a virtual account. Express flex sites are designed for smaller amounts of containers and work well in places with limited space, such as dense urban areas, remote communities, or islands.

Staffed redemption center: A permanent location where people can bring beverage containers and receive their refund with help from staff. These sites may count containers, provide refunds on site or electronically, and offer assistance to make the return process easier and more accessible.

Mobile or pop-up site: A temporary or traveling location where people can return beverage containers for a refund. These sites may be set up at community events, parking lots, or other local gathering places and are designed to bring return services closer to people who may not live near a permanent site.

Your responses will help Ecology better understand what convenience, access, and equity mean in real-world settings and will inform recommendations to the Washington State Legislature on how a recycling refunds program, if implemented, could be designed to work well across the state.

C.4. About This Survey

The questions you see will vary depending on your role or experience. Your participation in this survey is voluntary, and your input is important. Thank you for taking the time to share your perspective.

Module A – Screening & Routing (All Respondents)

- Identify the respondent's role
- Route respondents to the most relevant survey module

A1. How are you responding to this survey today?

(Please choose the one option that best describes your role. If your organization is not listed, please complete this survey as a resident.)

- A resident completing this survey for myself or my household
- A representative of a community-based organization

- A Tribal member, a representative of a Tribal government, Tribal department, or Tribal business
- A city or other local government employee (non-county)
- A county government employee
- A retailer or commercial property owner or manager
- A recycling system operator (e.g., collector, hauler, processor, material recovery facility, transfer station)
- A producer or beverage industry representative (e.g., product manufacturer, distributor, brand owner)

Module B – Residents

B1. ZIP Code and Location Screening

B1. Do you live in Washington state?

- Yes
- No

B1a. What ZIP code do you currently live in?

- Open text (5 digits)

B2. Area Type

B2. Which option best describes the area you live in and are thinking about when answering this survey?

- Dense urban (downtown or city core with tall buildings, frequent transit, and many nearby services)
- Urban (city neighborhood with mixed housing and nearby shops or services)
- Suburban (primarily residential area outside a city center, where most trips are by car)
- Rural (small town or countryside with fewer services and longer travel distances)
- Remote or very rural (isolated area with limited services and long travel distances to stores or recycling options)
- Multiple / varies by location
- Not sure

B3. Waste Prevention and Recycling Attitudes

B3. Which statement best describes your approach to reducing waste and recycling? (Please choose the option that comes closest.)

- I actively try to reduce waste and recycle whenever possible
- I usually recycle, but it's not always convenient
- I recycle sometimes, depending on what's easiest
- I rarely recycle or try to reduce waste
- Not sure / prefer not to answer

B4. Awareness of Recycling Refund Programs

B4. Before today, how familiar were you with beverage container recycling refund programs? (For this survey, “beverage containers” include bottles and cans for drinks such as water, soda, beer, wine, juice, and sports drinks.)

- Very familiar (I understand how these programs work and/or have participated in one before)

About Recycling Refund Programs – Informational Explainer

A recycling refunds program (sometimes called a bottle deposit program) places a refundable deposit on certain beverage containers, such as bottles and cans.

Here's how it typically works:

- When a beverage is purchased, a deposit (for example, 10 cents) is added to the price.
- When a consumer returns the empty container to a designated return location, the deposit is refunded to the consumer.

Containers can often be returned at redemption centers, retail locations, or other designated sites, depending on how the program is designed.

The goal of these programs is to:

- Increase recycling
- Reduce litter
- Improve the quality of recycled materials
- Provide convenient return options for different communities

Programs can be designed in different ways to reflect local needs, including options for rural areas, express drop-off, staffed sites, or mobile services.

- Somewhat familiar (I know the basic idea but have limited experience or understanding of such a program)
- Have heard of them but don't know how they work
- Not familiar at all

B5. Current Container Recycling and Disposal Behavior

B5a.1 Do you currently have curbside disposal/trash services available in your area?

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

B5a.2. Do you currently have curbside recycling services available in your area?

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

B5. Which methods do you most frequently use to dispose of empty beverage containers in your household?

(Select all that apply.)

- Curbside recycling
- Curbside disposal in garbage/trash
- Recycling dumpster at my apartment complex
- Disposal in garbage/trash dumpster at my apartment complex
- Take them to a recycling drop-off location
- Take them to a dump
- Return containers for refunds in another state with a recycling refunds program (e.g., Oregon)
- Other (please explain):

B6. Likelihood, Convenience, and Barriers

B6b.1. If a recycling refunds program were available in Washington, how would you most likely travel to return beverage containers?

(Please choose the option you would use most often.)

- Drive
- Walk
- Bicycle
- Public transit
- Rely on someone else for transportation
- I would not be willing to travel
- Not sure
- Other

B6b.2. How far would you be willing to travel to return containers for a refund and still consider it convenient?

- 5 minutes
- 10 minutes
- 15 minutes
- More than 15 minutes
- I would not be willing to travel to return containers
- Not sure

B6b.3. If a recycling refunds program were implemented in Washington, which redemption site locations would be most convenient for you?

(Please choose up to three that would be the most convenient)

- Near my home
- Near where I shop or work
- At trusted public places (schools, libraries, community centers, post offices, faith-based sites)
- Near public transit

- In large parking lots (e.g., stadiums or municipal lots)

B6b.3b. Are there any other redemption site locations that would be convenient for you?

- [open ended]

B6b.4. On a scale of 1–5, how convenient would each redemption site option be for you?

- Express drop site
- Express flex site
- Staffed redemption center
- Mobile or pop-up site
- Outdoor kiosk or machine

B6b.5. Are there any other redemption site options that would be convenient for you?

- [open ended]

B6b.6. What factors would make it most difficult or inconvenient for you to return containers for a refund?

(Select your top three.)

- Limited hours of operation at redemption sites
- Long wait times at redemption sites
- Distance to redemption site locations
- Lack of transportation to redemption sites
- Lack of accessibility for mobility needs
- Limited space to store containers at home
- Information not in the language I speak
- None of the above
- Other (please explain):

B7. Reuse/Refill Options

B7. If beverage container redemption sites also offered reuse or refill options, would that be of interest to you?

Reuse or refill options could include refilling bottles, using reusable containers, or other ways to reduce single-use packaging.

- Yes
- Maybe
- No
- Not Sure

B8. Household Financial Costs or Concerns

B8. Thinking about a refundable deposit on beverage containers (for example, 10 cents), what financial costs or concerns, if any, would be most important for your household?

(Select your top three.)

- Paying the deposit up front

- Deposit amount is too high
- Not being able to get deposits back easily
- Impacts on my household budget
- Having to store containers until they can be returned
- No significant financial concerns
- Not sure
- Other (please explain):

B9. Financial Benefits

B9. In what ways, if any, could a recycling refunds program affect your household finances or provide financial value to your community?

(Select up to three.)

- Being able to get deposit money back when containers are returned
- Helping reduce overall household costs if refunds are regularly collected
- Providing an opportunity to earn extra money by returning containers
- Providing income opportunities for people who collect and return containers
- Allowing people to donate returned deposits to charities, schools, or community programs
- Encouraging containers to be returned instead of thrown away (which may help reduce waste-related costs over time)
- No meaningful financial impact expected
- Not sure
- Other (please specify):

B10. Other (Non-Financial) Benefits

B10. What additional benefits could a recycling refunds program provide your household or community?

(Select your top three.)

- Increased recycling
- Reduced litter
- Cleaner neighborhoods or public spaces
- Improved access to recycling services
- Environmental protection
- No significant non-financial benefits anticipated
- Not sure
- Other (please specify): _____

B11. How likely would you be to return containers for a refund, assuming a 10-cent refund, if this program becomes available?

- Very likely
- Somewhat likely
- Not very likely

- Not likely at all
- Not sure

B11a. What are the main reasons you would be likely to return containers for a refund?
(Select your top three.)

- To get money back for containers (e.g., a 10-cent refund per container)
- I want to reduce litter and keep my community clean
- I care about recycling and protecting the environment
- I could return containers while running other errands
- I already save and recycle beverage containers
- Other (please explain): _____

B12. Reasons for Low Likelihood of Participating in a Refunds Program

B12. What are the main reasons you would be unlikely to return containers for a refund?
(Select your top three.)

- It would take too much time
- I don't want to travel to return containers
- I don't have space to store containers
- It feels less convenient than curbside recycling or disposal
- The refund amount is too small
- Other (please explain): _____

Module C – Community-Based Organizations and Community Connectors

C1. Counties Served (Location Context)

C1. Which Washington counties does your organization primarily serve?

- All WA counties drop-down alphabetical list – respondent selects all that apply
- Statewide
- Not based in Washington

C2. Area Type (Context)

C2. Which option best describes the primary type of community or communities your organization serves?

- Dense urban (downtown or city core with tall buildings, frequent transit, and many nearby services)
- Urban (city neighborhood with mixed housing and nearby shops or services)
- Suburban (primarily residential area outside a city center, where most trips are by car)
- Rural (small town or countryside with fewer services and longer travel distances)

- Remote or very rural (isolated area with limited services and long travel distances to stores or recycling options)
- Multiple/varies by location
- Not sure

C3. Organization Focus and Services

Please answer the following questions based on your experience working with the communities you serve or engage with.

C3a. Which best describes your role or perspective in responding to this survey?

(Select one.)

- I work for or represent a nonprofit or community-based organization
- I work for or represent an advocacy organization
- I serve as a community connector, trusted community liaison, or informal community leader
- I work closely with communities in another capacity
- Other (please specify): _____

C3b. Which communities do you primarily work with or serve?

(Select all that apply.)

- Low-income households
- Overburdened communities
- Communities of color
- Rural or remote communities
- Communities with limited transportation access
- Immigrant or refugee communities
- Communities where English is not the primary language
- Communities with elders or people with disabilities
- Youth or families with children
- Indigenous Peoples
- LGBTQIA2S+

Other (please specify): _____

C4. Current Recycling and Waste Reduction Activities

C4. Based on your experience with the communities you serve, how are they participating in waste prevention and recycling activities?

- They are actively engaged in waste reduction and recycling
- They are generally supportive, but facing barriers to participation
- There is mixed awareness or engagement
- There is limited awareness or engagement
- Not sure

C5. Awareness of Recycling Refund Programs

C5. Before today, how familiar were you with beverage container recycling refunds programs (sometimes referred to as deposit return programs)?

("Beverage containers" include bottles and cans for drinks such as water, soda, beer, wine, juice, and sports drinks.)

- Very familiar
- Somewhat familiar
- Have heard of them but don't know how they work
- Not familiar at all

C6. Perceived Costs and Benefits of a Recycling Refunds Program

C6a. Financial Costs or Concerns

C6a. Thinking about a refundable deposit on beverage containers, what financial costs or concerns, if any, would be most important for the communities you serve?

- Paying the deposit up front
- Not being able to get deposits back easily
- Impacts on household budgets in the community
- Having to store containers until they can be returned
- No significant financial concerns
- Not sure
- Other (please explain): _____

C6b Benefits

C6b. Based on your experience working with the communities you serve, what are the top potential benefits participation in a recycling refunds program could provide? (Select your top three.)

- Financial benefits for community members (e.g., getting deposits back paid as a consumer, or canners returning otherwise discarded bottles for a source of income)
- Reduced litter and cleaner neighborhoods
- Improved access to recycling for beverage containers
- Environmental or public health benefits
- Increased awareness or engagement around recycling
- Opportunities to support youth, families, or community programs
- No significant benefits anticipated
- Not sure
- Other (please specify): _____

C7. Access, Equity, and Convenience Considerations

C7. Based on your experience working with the communities you serve, what factors would make it most difficult or inconvenient for community members to return containers for a refund?

(Select your top five.)

- Limited hours of operation
- Long wait times
- Distance to redemption site locations
- Lack of transportation to a redemption site
- Safety or lighting concerns
- Accessibility challenges (e.g., mobility needs)
- Limited space to store containers prior to bringing them to a redemption site
- Information not available in the language community members use
- None of the above
- Other (please explain): _____

C7a. Which of the strategies below would most help ensure equitable access to redemption sites and services in your community?

(Select your top five.)

- Locating redemption sites in or near underserved or overburdened communities
- Using mobile or pop-up redemption sites to support access in remote areas
- Co-locating redemption sites at trusted community destinations (e.g., faith-based places, schools, libraries)
- Providing extended hours at redemption sites (evenings and weekends)
- Ensuring accessibility for people with disabilities or mobility needs
- Providing multilingual signage and outreach materials
- Partnering with community-based organizations or trusted messengers to support community participation
- Offering transportation support or solutions
- Coordinating redemption sites within existing recycling infrastructure
- Other (please describe): _____

C8. Preferred Program Design and Participation

C8. Based on your experience, what factors would make community members more likely to return beverage containers for a refund?

(Select your top five.)

- The opportunity to get money back for containers (e.g., a refundable deposit)
- Convenience of redemption sites (location, hours, ease of use)
- Ability to return containers while running other errands
- A quick and simple return process

- Clear and easy-to-understand instructions
- Outreach or education provided by trusted community organizations
- Familiarity with similar programs in other states
- Seeing others in the community participate
- Other (please specify): _____

C9. Convenience and Travel Time (Community Perspective)

C9. Thinking about the communities you serve, how far would community members be willing to travel to a redemption site location and still consider it convenient?

- 5 minutes
- 10 minutes
- 15 minutes
- More than 15 minutes
- It varies widely across the communities we serve
- Not sure

C10. Return Options

C10. If a recycling refund program were implemented in Washington which redemption site locations would be most convenient for the communities you serve?

(Please choose up to three that would be the most convenient)

- Near where people live
- Near where people shop or work
- At trusted public places (schools, libraries, community centers, post offices, faith-based sites)
- Near public transit
- In large parking lots (e.g., stadiums or municipal lots)

C10a. Are there any other redemption site locations that would be convenient for the communities you serve?

- [Open-ended]

C10b. On a scale of 1–5 (1 = Least convenient, 5 = Most convenient), how convenient do you believe each redemption site option would be for the communities you serve?

- Express drop site
- Express flex site
- Staffed redemption center
- Mobile or pop-up site
- Outdoor kiosk or machine

C10b.c. Are there any other redemption site options that would be convenient for you?

- [open ended]

C11. Reuse/Refill Options

C11. From your perspective, would reuse or refill options be beneficial for the communities you serve if offered at beverage container redemption sites?

Reuse or refill options could include refilling bottles, using reusable containers, or other ways to reduce single-use packaging.

- Yes
- Maybe
- No
- Not Sure

C12. Supports Needed for Participation

C12. What types of support would help your community participate in a recycling refunds program?

(Select all that apply.)

- Translation or interpretation services
- Culturally tailored outreach materials
- Plain-language educational materials
- Transportation support
- Trusted messengers or community ambassadors
- Other (please explain): _____

C13. Interest in Outreach Support

C13. Would your organization be interested in helping Ecology with outreach or engagement related to a recycling refunds program, if one were implemented in Washington?

- Yes
- Maybe
- No

Module D1a – Cities and Towns (Local Governments)

D1a-1. County (Location and context)

D1a-1. Which Washington county is your city or town located in?

(Select one.)

- [dropdown list of 39 counties]

D1a-2. City or Town

D1a-2. Which city or town do you represent?

(Select one.)

- [conditional dropdown list based on selected county]

D1a-3. Area Type

**D1a-3. Which option best describes the city or town you represent
(Select one)**

- Dense urban (downtown or city core with tall buildings, frequent transit, and many nearby services)
- Urban (city neighborhood with mixed housing and nearby shops or services)
- Suburban (primarily residential area outside a city center, where most trips are by car)
- Rural (small town or countryside with fewer services and longer travel distances)
- Remote or very rural (isolated area with limited services and long travel distances to stores or recycling options)
- Multiple / varies by location
- Not sure

D1a-4 Responding Department or Function

D1a-4. What department or function are you responding on behalf of?

- Solid waste or recycling program
- Public works or utilities
- Planning, zoning, or permitting
- Sustainability, climate, or environmental programs
- City or local government administration or management
- Elected official or policy staff
- Other (please specify): _____

D1a-5 Local Government Perspectives on Waste Prevention and Recycling

D1a-5a. How important is recycling to your jurisdiction's goals or plans?

- Very important
- Somewhat important
- Not very important
- Not important at all
- Not sure

**D1a-5b. How would you describe your jurisdiction's current recycling system performance?
(Thinking about factors such as resident participation, access to recycling services,
contamination levels, service reliability, and overall program effectiveness.)**

- Performing well overall
- Performing well in some areas but not others
- Facing significant challenges
- Not sure

D1a-6 Awareness of Recycling Refund Programs

D1a-6. Before today, how familiar were you with beverage container recycling refund programs? (“Beverage containers” include bottles and cans for drinks such as water, soda, beer, wine, juice, and sports drinks.)

- Very familiar (I understand how these programs work and have worked with or planned for similar programs)
- Somewhat familiar (I know the basic idea but have limited experience)
- Have heard of them but don’t know how they work
- Not familiar at all

D1a-7 Potential Impacts on Existing Recycling and Solid Waste Programs and Systems

For each item below, please indicate how you think a program would affect your jurisdiction.

D1a-7a. Changes in volume of materials collected through curbside recycling or other existing services

- Very positive impact
- Somewhat positive impact
- No significant impact
- Somewhat negative impact
- Very negative impact
- Not applicable / not sure

D1a-7b. Quality of materials remaining in curbside recycling

- Very positive impact
- Somewhat positive impact
- No significant impact
- Somewhat negative impact
- Very negative impact
- Not applicable / not sure

D1a-7c. Local government solid waste or recycling revenues

- Very positive impact
- Somewhat positive impact
- No significant impact
- Somewhat negative impact
- Very negative impact
- Not applicable / not sure

D1a-7d. Government staff workload or administrative effort

- Very positive impact
- Somewhat positive impact

- No significant impact
- Somewhat negative impact
- Very negative impact
- Not applicable / not sure

D1a-7e. Existing recycling or solid waste contracts

- Very positive impact
- Somewhat positive impact
- No significant impact
- Somewhat negative impact
- Very negative impact
- Not applicable / not sure

D1a-8. Potential Benefits of a Recycling Refunds System

D1a-8. Which of the following would you consider to be the top benefits of a recycling refunds program for your city or local jurisdiction?

(Select your top five.)

- Reduced litter and cleanup costs in public spaces
- Improved recycling rates for beverage containers
- Higher-quality recyclable materials
- Reduced contamination in curbside recycling
- Support for local equity or environmental goals
- Improved public awareness or engagement around recycling
- Reduced pressure on existing recycling services
- No significant benefits anticipated
- Not sure
- Other (please specify): _____

D1a-9. Anticipated Challenges

D1a-9. What are the top potential challenges your jurisdiction might face if a recycling refunds program were implemented in Washington?

(Select your top five.)

- Siting or permitting redemption sites
- Traffic or parking impacts
- Community concerns or confusion about how to participate
- Enforcement or compliance needs associated with siting and operation of redemption sites
- Staff capacity or administrative burden
- Coordination with a Producer Responsibility Organization (PRO) tasked with managing and operating a recycling refunds program
- Negative impacts to curbside recycling revenues

- None anticipated
- Other (please specify): _____

D1a-10 Communities Facing Barriers

D1a-10. Which communities in your jurisdiction do you feel may face the greatest barriers to participating in a recycling refunds system?

(Select all that apply.)

- Low-income households
- Overburdened communities
- Residents without access to a car
- Seniors or people with disabilities
- Immigrant or multilingual communities
- Other (please specify): _____

D1a-11 Appropriate and Inappropriate Locations

D1a-11. Are there locations in your jurisdiction where redemption sites would be especially appropriate or problematic? If so, please describe.

[Open-ended]

D1a-12 Equity Strategies

D1a-12a. Which of the strategies below would most help ensure equitable access to redemption sites and services in your jurisdiction?

(Select your top five.)

- Locating redemption sites in or near underserved or overburdened communities
- Using mobile or pop-up redemption sites to support access in remote areas
- Co-locating redemption sites at trusted community destinations (e.g., faith-based places, schools, libraries)
- Providing extended hours at redemption sites (evenings and weekends)
- Ensuring accessibility for people with disabilities or mobility needs
- Providing multilingual signage and outreach materials
- Partnering with community-based organizations or trusted messengers to support community participation
- Offering transportation support or solutions
- Coordinating redemption sites within existing recycling infrastructure
- Other (please describe): _____

D1a-13 Coordination Needs

D1a-13. What types of coordination would be most important between the state, a PRO, and your jurisdiction?

(Select your top three)

- Siting and permitting coordination for redemption sites
- Data sharing
- Public education and outreach
- Contract coordination
- Enforcement or compliance roles
- Funding for residual costs
- Ongoing communication and planning
- Other (please specify): _____

D1a-14 Readiness and Capacity

D1a-14. How prepared do you think your jurisdiction is to plan for or coordinate with a recycling refunds program, if one were implemented in Washington?

- Very prepared
- Somewhat prepared
- Not very prepared
- Not prepared at all
- Not sure

D1a-15 Support Needs

D1a-15. What support would your jurisdiction need to effectively support or coordinate with a recycling refunds program?

(Select all that apply.)

- Technical assistance
- Funding or grants
- Staff training
- Clear guidance on roles and responsibilities of the city/local government, PRO, site operators, etc.
- Time to plan and coordinate before the program goes into effect
- Other (please specify): _____

D1a-16 Advice to the State

D1a-16. What advice would you offer the state on designing a recycling refunds program that works well for cities and local governments?

[Open-ended]

Understand county-level perspectives on recycling system performance and regional coordination.

Assess anticipated impacts on unincorporated areas and county-managed recycling systems.
Identify rural, remote, and equity-related access challenges and mitigation strategies.
Inform county-specific coordination and planning needs.

D1b-1. County (location and context)

D1b-1. Which Washington county do you represent? (*Select one.*)

[dropdown list of 39 counties]

D1b-2. Area Type (Context)

D1b-2. Which option best describes the areas within the county you are primarily thinking about when answering this survey?

Dense urban (downtown or city core with tall buildings, frequent transit, and many nearby services)
Urban (city neighborhood with mixed housing and nearby shops or services)
Suburban (primarily residential area outside a city center, where most trips are by car)
Rural (small town or countryside with fewer services and longer travel distances)
Remote or very rural (isolated area with limited services and long travel distances to stores or recycling options)
Multiple / varies by location
Not sure

D1b-3. Responding Department or Function

D1b-3. What county department or function are you responding on behalf of?

- Solid waste planning or administration
- Environmental health or permitting
- Public works or utilities
- Sustainability, climate, or environmental programs
- County administration or management
- Elected official or policy staff
- Other (please specify): _____

D1b-4. County Perspectives on Waste Prevention and Recycling

D1b-4a. How important are waste prevention and recycling to your county's goals or plans?

- Very important
- Somewhat important
- Not very important
- Not important at all
- Not sure

D1b-4b. How would you describe recycling system performance across your county as a whole?

(Thinking about factors such as resident participation, access to recycling services, contamination levels, service reliability, and overall program effectiveness.)

- Performing well overall

- Facing significant challenges countywide
- Not sure

D1b-5 Awareness of Recycling Refund Programs

D1b-5 Before today, how familiar were you with beverage container recycling refund programs? (“Beverage containers” include bottles and cans for drinks such as water, soda, beer, wine, juice, and sports drinks.)

- Very familiar (I understand how these programs work and have planned for or coordinated with similar systems)
- Somewhat familiar (I know the basic idea but have limited experience)
- Have heard of them but don’t know how they work
- Not familiar at all

D1b-6 Regional Impacts

D1b-6. A recycling refunds program could affect recycling and solid waste systems across your county. For each item below, please indicate how you think a program would affect your county.

**D1b-6a. Recycling system performance across incorporated areas
(Thinking about factors such as resident participation, access to recycling services, contamination levels, service reliability, and overall program effectiveness.)**

- Very positive impact
- Somewhat positive impact
- No significant impact
- Somewhat negative impact
- Very negative impact
- Not applicable / not sure

D1b-6b. Recycling access in unincorporated or rural areas

- Very positive impact
- Somewhat positive impact
- No significant impact
- Somewhat negative impact
- Very negative impact
- Not applicable / not sure

D1b-6c. County-managed solid waste management facilities or infrastructure

- Very positive impact
- Somewhat positive impact
- No significant impact
- Somewhat negative impact
- Very negative impact

- Not applicable / not sure

D1b-6d County administrative workload

- Very positive impact
- Somewhat positive impact
- No significant impact
- Somewhat negative impact
- Very negative impact
- Not applicable / not sure

D1b-6e Regional coordination across jurisdictions

- Very positive impact
- Somewhat positive impact
- No significant impact
- Somewhat negative impact
- Very negative impact
- Not applicable / not sure

D1b-7. Potential Benefits of a Recycling Refunds Program

D1b-7. What are the top potential benefits that a recycling refunds program could provide at the county or regional level?

(Select your top three.)

- Reduced litter across unincorporated and rural areas
- Improved regional recycling performance (e.g., resident participation, access to recycling services, contamination levels, service reliability, and overall program effectiveness)
- Higher-quality recyclable materials
- Better service to rural or hard-to-serve communities
- Reduced contamination or pressure on existing recycling systems
- Support for county-wide equity or environmental objectives
- Improved data or understanding of material flows
- No significant benefits anticipated
- Not sure
- Other _____

D1b-8. Anticipated Challenges

D1b-8. What potential challenges might your county face if a recycling refunds program were implemented?

(Select your top five.)

- Siting or permitting redemption sites
- Limited available space
- Traffic or parking impacts

- Community concerns or confusion
- Enforcement or compliance needs
- Staff capacity or administrative burden
- Coordination with a Producer Responsibility Organization (PRO)
- Impacts to curbside recycling revenues
- None anticipated

Other (please specify): _____

D1b-9. Communities Facing Barriers

D1b-9. Which communities in your county do you feel may face the greatest barriers to participating in a recycling refunds system?

(Select all that apply.)

- Low-income households
- Overburdened communities
- Residents without access to a car
- Seniors or people with disabilities
- Immigrant or multilingual communities
- Rural or remote residents
- Other (please specify): _____

D1b-10. Equity Strategies (Select + Prioritize)

D1b-10a. Which of the below strategies would most help ensure equitable access to redemption sites and services in your county?

(Select your top five.)

- Regional siting of redemption hubs
- Mobile or event-based redemption sites
- Serving unincorporated areas through shared facilities
- Coordinating services across multiple jurisdictions
- Extended hours or seasonal operations
- Accessibility-focused site design
- Multilingual outreach and education
- Partnering with community-based organizations
- Other (please describe): _____

D1b-11. Coordination Needs

D1b-11. What coordination would be most important for counties if a recycling refunds program were implemented?

- (Select all that apply.)
- Coordination with cities and towns
- Coordination with Tribal governments

- Coordination with the state or PRO
- Data sharing and reporting
- Regional planning alignment
- Public education and outreach
- Other (please specify): _____

D1b-12. Readiness and Capacity

D1b-12. How prepared do you think your county is to plan for or coordinate with a recycling refunds program, if one were implemented in Washington?

- Very prepared
- Somewhat prepared
- Not very prepared
- Not prepared at all
- Not sure

D1b-13. Support Needs

D1b-13. What support would your county need to effectively implement a recycling refunds program?
(Select all that apply.)

- Technical assistance
- Funding or grants
- Planning tools or data
- Staff training
- Clear guidance on roles and responsibilities
- Time to coordinate regionally
- Other (please specify): _____

D1b-14. Advice to the State

D1b-14. What advice would you offer the state on designing a recycling refunds program that works well for counties and regional systems?

Open ended

Module D2 – Recycling System Operators

D2-1. Washington Operations (Screening)

D2-1. Does your organization currently operate material collection, recycling, processing, or waste management services in Washington State?

- Yes
- No

D2-2. Counties Served (Location Context)

D2-2. Which Washington counties does your organization provide recycling or waste management services in?

(Select all that apply.)

- [drop down list of All WA counties, alphabetical]
- All
- Other (not listed) _____

D2-3. Area Type (Context)

D2-3. Which option best describes the primary type of area where your organization provides services?

- Dense urban (downtown or city core with tall buildings, frequent transit, and many nearby services)
- Urban (city neighborhood with mixed housing and nearby shops or services)
- Suburban (primarily residential area outside a city center, where most trips are by car)
- Rural (small town or countryside with fewer services and longer travel distances)
- Remote or very rural (isolated area with limited services and long travel distances to stores or recycling options)
- Multiple / varies by location
- Not sure

D2-4. Operator Role and Services

D2-4. Which best describes your organization's role in the recycling system?

(Select all that apply.)

- Residential curbside collection
- Multi-family residential collection
- Commercial collection
- Processing or material recovery facility (MRF)
- Transfer station or drop-off facility
- Transportation or logistics provider
- Other (please specify): _____

D2-5 Perspectives on Waste Prevention and Recycling

D2-5a. How important are waste prevention and recycling to your organization’s goals or business model?

- Very important
- Somewhat important
- Not very important
- Not important at all
- Not sure

D2-5b. How would you describe current recycling system performance in the areas you serve? (Thinking about factors such as resident participation, access to recycling services, contamination levels, service reliability, and overall program effectiveness.)

- Performing well overall
- Performing well in some areas but not others
- Facing significant challenges
- Not sure

D2-6. Awareness of Recycling Refund Programs

D2-6. Before today, how familiar were you with beverage container recycling refund programs? (“Beverage containers” include bottles and cans for drinks such as water, soda, beer, wine, juice, and sports drinks.)

- Very familiar (I understand how these programs work and have operated within or alongside similar systems)
- Somewhat familiar (I know the basic idea but have limited direct experience)
- Have heard of them but don’t know how they work
- Not familiar at all

D2-7. Operational Impacts of a Shift to a Dedicated Beverage Container/Recycling Refund System

A recycling refunds program would shift some beverage containers (such as metal, plastic, and glass bottles and cans) from curbside recycling, curbside garbage, and non-deposit drop-off collection into a separate system focused only on those beverage containers. The program could also use existing operators or systems, rather than relying solely on commingled curbside collection.

D2-7. How would a shift like this affect your operations in the following areas?
(For each impact area, please select one response)

D2-7a. Changes in material volumes collected through curbside or other existing services

- Very positive impact
- Somewhat positive impact
- No significant impact
- Somewhat negative impact

- Very negative impact
- Not applicable / not sure

D2-7b. Changes in the composition or quality of remaining materials in commingled recycling streams

- Very positive impact
- Somewhat positive impact
- No significant impact
- Somewhat negative impact
- Very negative impact
- Not applicable / not sure

D2-7c. Operational efficiency at collection, transfer, or processing facilities

- Very positive impact
- Somewhat positive impact
- No significant impact
- Somewhat negative impact
- Very negative impact
- Not applicable / not sure

D2-7d. Staffing needs and labor requirements

- Very positive impact
- Somewhat positive impact
- No significant impact
- Somewhat negative impact
- Very negative impact
- Not applicable / not sure

D2-7e. Equipment, facility, or technology needs

- Very positive impact
- Somewhat positive impact
- No significant impact
- Somewhat negative impact
- Very negative impact
- Not applicable / not sure

D2-7f. Contractual or business relationships (e.g., with jurisdictions, customers, or partners)

- Very positive impact
- Somewhat positive impact
- No significant impact
- Somewhat negative impact
- Very negative impact
- Not applicable / not sure

D2-7g. Opportunities to provide new or expanded services (e.g., redemption, transport, processing)

- Very positive impact
- Somewhat positive impact
- No significant impact
- Somewhat negative impact
- Very negative impact
- Not applicable / not sure

D2-8. Reuse/Refill Integration

D2-8. If a recycling refunds program included optional reuse or refill components at some redemption sites, how feasible would it be for operators to support or integrate those services?

Reuse or refill options could include refilling bottles, using reusable containers, or other ways to reduce single-use packaging.

- Very feasible
- Somewhat feasible
- Not very feasible
- Not feasible
- Not sure

D2-9. Benefits of a Recycling Refunds Program

D2-9. Financial Benefits

**D2-9. What are the top potential financial benefits that a recycling refunds program could provide for your organization?
(Select your top three.)**

- New or expanded service opportunities
- Increased revenue or cost recovery
- Improved material quality or market value
- Reduced contamination management costs
- No significant financial benefits anticipated
- Not sure
- Other (please specify): _____

D2-10. Other (Non-Financial) Benefits

**D2-10. Beyond financial considerations, what other top benefits could a recycling refunds program provide?
(Select your top three.)**

- Clearer system roles and responsibilities

- Improved coordination across the recycling system
- Environmental or litter reduction benefits
- Improved public understanding of recycling
- No significant non-financial benefits anticipated
- Not sure
- Other (please specify): _____

D2-11 Priority Concerns About Implementation

D2-11. Thinking about the potential implementation of a recycling refunds program, what would be your *greatest concerns* from a recycling system operator perspective?

(Select your top five.)

- Loss of valuable materials from existing curbside recycling streams
- Increased operational complexity or coordination challenges
- Impacts on existing contracts, service agreements, or revenue models
- Uncertainty about roles and responsibilities between operators, the state, and the PRO
- Capital or infrastructure costs needed to adapt systems
- Changes in collection routes, volumes, or logistics
- Data reporting, tracking, or compliance requirements
- Workforce or staffing challenges
- Financial risks or uncertainty during system transition
- Impacts on smaller or rural operations
- Timing and pace of implementation
- No significant concerns
- Other (please specify): _____

D2-12 Feasibility of Operating or Supporting Redemption Sites and Services

D2-12. Would your organization consider operating or supporting container redemption sites and services (e.g., express redemption sites, processing, logistics services) if a recycling refunds program were implemented?

- Yes
- Maybe
- No
- Not sure

D2-12a. What factors would most influence your ability or willingness to operate or support redemption services?

(Select your top five.)

What factors would most influence your ability or willingness to operate or support redemption services?

(Select your top five.)

- Capital costs or funding availability
- Space or siting availability
- Staffing availability
- Contract terms or compensation structure

- Technology or equipment requirements
- Regulatory or permitting requirements
- Liability or operational risk
- Other (please specify): _____

D2-13. Equity and Access Considerations

D2-13. From a recycling system operator perspective, what factors do you think are most important to ensuring equitable access to redemption sites and services?

(Select your top five.)

- Strategic siting to reduce travel distances
- Serving rural or remote areas
- Designing redemption sites to be accessible for people with disabilities
- Extended hours of operation
- Multilingual signage and instructions
- Safety, lighting, and site design
- Coordinating with community-based organizations
- Other (please specify): _____

D2-14 Coordination and Governance Needs

D2-14. What types of coordination would be most important between the state, a Producer Responsibility Organization (PRO), and recycling system operators?

(Select your top three.)

- Contracting and compensation structures
- Data sharing and reporting
- Facility siting and permitting
- Public education and outreach
- Enforcement or compliance roles
- Ongoing communication and planning
- Other (please specify): _____

D2-15. Readiness and Capacity

D2-15. How prepared is your organization to plan for or participate in a recycling refunds program in Washington?

- Very prepared
- Somewhat prepared
- Not very prepared
- Not prepared at all
- Not sure

D2-16. Support Needs

D2-16. What support would your organization most need to effectively participate in or adapt to a recycling refunds program?

(Select your top three.)

- Technical assistance
- Funding or financial incentives
- Clear operational standards or guidance
- Staff training
- Time to plan and transition before the program goes into effect
- None
- Other (please specify): _____

D2-17. Advice to the State

D2-17. What advice would you offer the state on designing a recycling refunds program that works well for recycling system operators?

- [Open-ended]

Module D3 – Retailers & Potential Site Hosts

D3-1. Washington Operations (Screening)

D3-1. Does your organization currently operate retail locations or commercial properties in Washington State?

- Yes
- No

D3-2. Counties of Operation (Location Context)

D3-2. Which Washington counties do your retail locations operate in? (Select all that apply.)

- Dropdown list of all counties, ability to select more than one
- All counties

D3-3. Area Type (Context)

D3-3. Which option best describes the primary type of area where your retail or commercial locations operate?

- Dense urban (downtown or city core with tall buildings, frequent transit, and many nearby services)
- Urban (city neighborhood with mixed housing and nearby shops or services)
- Suburban (primarily residential area outside a city center, where most trips are by car)
- Rural (small town or countryside with fewer services and longer travel distances)
- Remote or very rural (isolated area with limited services and long travel distances to stores or recycling options)
- Multiple / varies by location
- Not sure

D3-4. Retailer / Site Host Role

D3-4. Which best describes your role or organization?

- Grocery store
- Convenience store
- Big-box or general merchandise retailer
- Shopping center or commercial property owner/manager
- Other retailer or commercial site
- Other (please specify): _____

D3-5. Number and Location of Sites

D3-5. How many retail or commercial sites do you operate in Washington State?

- One location
- 2–5 locations
- 6–20 locations
- More than 20 locations

D3-6. Perspectives on Waste Prevention and Recycling

D3-6a. How important are waste prevention and recycling to your organization's goals or operations?

- Very important
- Somewhat important
- Not very important
- Not important at all
- Not sure

D3-6b. How would you describe your current approach to recycling at your sites?

- We actively manage and promote recycling
- We provide recycling where required or feasible
- We have limited recycling services
- We do not currently provide recycling
- Not sure

D3-7. Awareness of Recycling Refund Programs

D3-7. Before today, how familiar were you with beverage container recycling refund programs? ("Beverage containers" include bottles and cans for drinks such as water, soda, beer, wine, juice, and sports drinks.)

- Very familiar (I understand how these programs work and have hosted or coordinated with them)
- Somewhat familiar (I know the basic idea but have limited experience)
- Have heard of them but don't know how they work
- Not familiar at all

D3-8. Willingness to Host Redemption Sites and Services

D3-8. If a recycling refunds program were implemented in Washington and your organization chose to serve as a redemption site, would you consider hosting beverage container redemption services at one or more of your locations?

- Yes
- Maybe
- No
- Not sure

D3-9. Conditions That Would Influence Participation

D3-9. What factors would most influence your willingness or ability to host redemption sites or support redemption services?

(Select your top five.)

- Space availability
- Customer traffic and parking impacts
- Staffing requirements
- Equipment or infrastructure needs
- Health and safety considerations

- Compensation or financial incentives
- Clear operational standards and expectations
- Liability or risk considerations
- Coordination with a Producer Responsibility Organization (PRO)
- Other (please specify): _____

D3-10. Potential Impacts on Retail Operations

D3-10. In many recycling refunds programs, retailers collect the refundable deposit at the point of sale. If a similar approach were used in Washington, how manageable would this be for your organization?

- Very manageable
- Somewhat manageable
- Neither manageable nor unmanageable
- Somewhat challenging
- Very challenging
- Not sure / would need more information

D3-11. Operational Impacts

D3-11. If a recycling refunds program were implemented, and if your organization *chose* to host beverage container return services at one or more locations, what operational impacts would you anticipate?

(Please answer hypothetically. Participation as a redemption site would be voluntary, and program details have not been finalized.)

D3-11a. Customer experience or convenience

What does it mean to “host redemption services”?

Hosting redemption services would mean allowing beverage container returns to take place at or near one or more of your retail or commercial locations if you chose to participate.

This could include options such as an express drop area, a reverse vending machine, or a staffed redemption site area operated by you or by a program partner. Hosting would not automatically require handling cash, managing refunds directly, or operating the system alone—many operational details, equipment, and compensation structures would be determined through the program design and coordination with a Producer Responsibility Organization (PRO).

This survey is asking about your perspectives on potential impacts and considerations, not to commit your organization to participation.

- Very positive impact
- Somewhat positive impact
- No significant impact
- Somewhat negative impact
- Very negative impact
- Not applicable / not sure

D3-11b. Staffing needs

- Very positive impact
- Somewhat positive impact

- No significant impact
- Somewhat negative impact
- Very negative impact
- Not applicable / not sure

D3-11c. Store layout or use of space

- Very positive impact
- Somewhat positive impact
- No significant impact
- Somewhat negative impact
- Very negative impact
- Not applicable / not sure

D3-11d. Operating costs

- Very positive impact
- Somewhat positive impact
- No significant impact
- Somewhat negative impact
- Very negative impact
- Not applicable / not sure

D3-11e. Customer traffic or footfall

- Very positive impact
- Somewhat positive impact
- No significant impact
- Somewhat negative impact
- Very negative impact
- Not applicable / not sure

D3-11f. Overall business operations

- Very positive impact
- Somewhat positive impact
- No significant impact
- Somewhat negative impact
- Very negative impact
- Not applicable / not sure

D3-12. Reuse/Refill Services

D3-12. In addition to container return services, some programs explore optional reuse or refill options. If participation were voluntary, would your organization be interested in hosting or supporting these types of services at one or more locations?

Reuse or refill options could include refilling bottles, using reusable containers, or other ways to reduce single-use packaging.

- Yes
- Maybe
- No

- Not Sure

D3-13. Potential Benefits of a Recycling Refunds Program

D3-13. What are the top potential benefits that participating in a recycling refunds program could provide your organization?

(Select your top three.)

- Increased customer visits or foot traffic
- Alignment with sustainability or corporate responsibility goals
- Compensation or revenue opportunities
- Improved public image or customer trust
- Opportunities to partner with the state, PRO, or local organizations
- Increased customer engagement while running other errands
- No significant benefits anticipated
- Not sure
- Other (please specify): _____

D3-14. Accessibility and Equity Considerations

D3-14. What features would be most important to ensure redemption services at retail or commercial sites are accessible and equitable?

(Select your top three.)

- Convenient locations near where people shop
- Extended hours of operation (early mornings, late evenings, and weekends)
- Safe and well-lit redemption sites
- Accessibility for people with disabilities
- Multilingual signage and instructions
- Coordination with community-based organizations
- Serving rural or underserved areas
- Other (please specify): _____

D3-15. Coordination and Support Needs

D3-15. What types of coordination or support would be most important if retailers or site hosts were involved in a recycling refunds program?

(Select your top three.)

- Clear guidance on roles and responsibilities
- Standardized equipment or design requirements
- Financial or technical assistance
- Clear permitting or regulatory pathways
- Ongoing communication with the state or PRO
- Other (please specify): _____

D3-16. Advice to the State

D3-16. What advice would you offer the state on designing a recycling refunds program that works for retailers and site hosts?

- [Open-ended]

D4-1. Washington Market Participation

D4-1a Does your organization manufacture, distribute, or sell beverages in Washington State?

- Yes
- No

D4-1b. Which Washington counties does your company operate in or distribute to?
(Select all that apply.)

- [dropdown of 39 counties]
- Statewide

D4-2. Producer / Industry Role

D4-2. Which best describes your role or organization?

- Beverage manufacturer
- Beverage distributor
- Brand owner
- Industry association
- Other producer or beverage industry role
- Other (please specify): _____

D4-3. Beverage Types

D4-3. Which types of beverages does your organization place into the Washington market?
(Select all that apply.)

- Water
- Soft drinks / soda
- Beer
- Wine
- Spirits
- Juice
- Kombucha
- Sports or energy drinks
- Ready-to-drink coffee or tea
- Other (please specify): _____

D4-4. Container Types and Materials

D4-4. Which container types or materials does your organization use for covered beverages in Washington? (Select all that apply.)

- Aluminum cans
- Glass bottles
- PET plastic bottles
- Other plastics
- Refillable containers
- Other (please specify): _____

D4-5. Perspectives on Waste Prevention and Recycling

D4-5a. How important are waste prevention and recycling to your organization's goals or business strategy?

- Very important
- Somewhat important
- Not very important
- Not important at all
- Not sure

D4-5b. How would you describe your organization's current efforts related to recyclable or recycled-content packaging?

- Actively investing in recyclable or recycled-content packaging
- Taking some steps, but with limitations
- Limited involvement to date
- Not sure

D4-6. Awareness of Recycling Refund Programs

D4-6. Before today, how familiar were you with beverage container recycling refund programs (deposit return systems)? (*"Beverage containers" include bottles and cans for drinks such as water, soda, beer, wine, juice, and sports drinks.*)

- Very familiar (I understand how these programs work and have operated within them in other jurisdictions)
- Somewhat familiar (I know the basic concept but have limited direct experience)
- Have heard of them but don't know how they work
- Not familiar at all

D4-7. Program Design Elements

D4-7a. Which Recycling Refunds program design elements would be most important from a producer or beverage industry perspective? (Select your top five.)

- Clear and predictable program requirements
- Efficient and convenient redemption network
- Cost transparency and predictability

- Administrative simplicity
- Alignment with existing recycling or extended producer responsibility (EPR) programs
- Data transparency and reporting clarity
- Flexibility to adapt over time
- Clear roles and responsibilities for producers, PROs, and the state
- Other (please specify): _____

D4-8. Potential Impacts on Producer Operations

D4.8. A recycling refunds program could affect producer and beverage industry operations in several ways. For each item below, please indicate how you think a program would affect your organization.

(For each item, select one response.)

D4-8a. Packaging or labeling requirements

- Very positive impact
- Somewhat positive impact
- No significant impact
- Somewhat negative impact
- Very negative impact
- Not applicable / not sure

D4-8b. Distribution or logistics operations

- Very positive impact
- Somewhat positive impact
- No significant impact
- Somewhat negative impact
- Very negative impact
- Not applicable / not sure

D4-8c. Compliance, reporting, or administrative workload

- Very positive impact
- Somewhat positive impact
- No significant impact
- Somewhat negative impact
- Very negative impact
- Not applicable / not sure

D4-8d. Overall program costs or financial impacts

- Very positive impact
- Somewhat positive impact
- No significant impact
- Somewhat negative impact
- Very negative impact
- Not applicable / not sure

D4-8e. Ability to meet recycling or sustainability goals

- Very positive impact

- Somewhat positive impact
- No significant impact
- Somewhat negative impact
- Very negative impact
- Not applicable / not sure

D4-8f. Brand reputation or consumer trust

- Very positive impact
- Somewhat positive impact
- No significant impact
- Somewhat negative impact
- Very negative impact
- Not applicable / not sure

D4-8g. Coordination with retailers, operators, or a Producer Responsibility Organization (PRO)

- Very positive impact
- Somewhat positive impact
- No significant impact
- Somewhat negative impact
- Very negative impact
- Not applicable / not sure

D4-9. Potential Benefits of a Recycling Refunds Program

D4-9. What are the top potential benefits participating in a recycling refunds program could offer to your organization?

(Select your top five.)

- Improved recycling rates and material recovery outcomes
- Higher-quality recycled materials for use in packaging
- Increased consumer trust or brand reputation
- Greater consistency across recycling systems
- Clearer accountability for container recycling outcomes
- Opportunities for innovation in packaging or logistics
- Alignment with corporate sustainability goals
- Reduced litter or environmental impacts associated with beverage containers
- No significant benefits anticipated
- Not sure
- Other (please specify): _____

D4-10. Equity and Consumer Access Considerations

D4-10. From a producer perspective, what factors are most important to ensuring consumers have equitable access to redemption services?

(Select your top three.)

- Convenient redemption site locations
- Reasonable travel distances
- Extended hours of operation

- Options for rural or remote communities
- Accessibility for people with disabilities
- Clear, simple consumer communication
- Multilingual information
- Other (please specify): _____

D4-11. Coordination and Governance

D4-11. What types of coordination would be most important if a recycling refunds program were implemented in Washington?

(Select your top five.)

- Coordination among producers
- Coordination with a Producer Responsibility Organization (PRO)
- Coordination with the state
- Coordination with retailers and redemption operators
- Data reporting and verification
- Consumer education and outreach
- Other (please specify): _____

D4-12. Support Needs

D4-12. What would help your organization successfully participate in a recycling refunds program?

(Select all that apply.)

- Clear guidance on roles and responsibilities
- Phased implementation timelines
- Consistent statewide standards
- Opportunities for stakeholder input over time
- Alignment with other regulatory requirements
- Other (please specify): _____

D4-13. Advice to the State

D4-13. What advice would you offer the state on designing a recycling refunds program that works for producers and the beverage industry?

- [Open-ended]

Module E – Tribal Governments, Departments, or Enterprises

Module E Introduction

This section welcomes responses from both individual Tribal members and individuals responding in an official Tribal government, department, or enterprise role. Participation by Tribal nations in any future recycling refunds program would be voluntary. These questions are intended to understand interest, priorities, and considerations so Ecology can better understand how a program could align—or not align—with Tribal goals and local decision-making.

E-0. Tribal Affiliation (optional)

E-0a. Are you a member of or affiliated with a specific Tribal Nation?

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to answer

E-0b. Which Tribal nation are you a member of or affiliated with?

- Drop-down list of federally recognized Tribes in Washington
- Another Tribe (not listed)
- Prefer not to answer

E1. Tribal Role or Perspective (*Required*)

E1. Which best describes the primary perspective you are responding from today?
(Select one. If you hold multiple roles, please choose the perspective you are most drawing from.)

- Individual Tribal community member
- Tribal government or Tribal department (e.g., environmental, natural resources, solid waste)
- Tribal enterprise or business (e.g., retail, hospitality, gaming, commercial operations)

Please answer the next questions thinking about your household and daily activities.

EA Individual Tribal Member Perspective

EA1. Community Context

EA1. Which areas are you mainly thinking about as you respond to this survey?
(Select all that apply.)

- Reservation or trust lands
- Tribal fee lands
- Off-reservation Tribal facilities or businesses
- Nearby non-Tribal communities
- Other

EA2. Perspectives on Waste Prevention and Recycling

EA2a. How important are waste prevention and recycling for your household or community?

- Very important
- Somewhat important
- Not very important
- Not important at all
- Not sure

EA2b. How would you describe current recycling access and participation in your community?

- Recycling is widely available and commonly used
- Recycling is available, but access or participation is limited
- Recycling access is limited or inconsistent
- Recycling is not currently available
- Not sure

EA3. Awareness of Recycling Refund Programs

EA3. Before today, how familiar were you with beverage container recycling refund programs? (“Beverage containers” include bottles and cans for drinks such as water, soda, beer, wine, juice, and sports drinks.)

- Very familiar (I understand how these programs work and have experience with them)
- Somewhat familiar (I know the basic idea but have limited experience)
- Have heard of them but don’t know how they work
- Not familiar at all

EA4. Access & Convenience (Household Perspective)

EA4a. If your Tribe chose to participate in a recycling refunds program, and hosted a redemption site, how convenient do you think returning beverage containers for a refund would be for your household?

- Very convenient
- Somewhat convenient
- Neither convenient nor inconvenient
- Somewhat inconvenient
- Very inconvenient
- Not sure

EA4b. What factors would most affect convenience for your household?

(Select up to five.)

- Distance to redemption site locations
- Availability of transportation
- Hours of operation
- Ability to return containers quickly (e.g., express options)
- Accessibility for elders or people with disabilities
- Safety, lighting, or comfort of redemption site locations
- Ability to return containers while running other errands

- Other (please specify): _____

EA4c. How would you most often travel to a redemption site location?

(Select up to two. Please choose the two options that you think would be used most often.)

- Drive
- Walk
- Bicycle
- Public transit
- Get a ride from someone else
- Not sure

EA4d. Thinking about those usual ways of getting around, how far would you be willing to travel to a redemption site location and still consider it convenient?

(Select one.)

- 5 minutes
- 10 minutes
- 15 minutes
- More than 15 minutes
- It depends on the situation or location
- Not sure

EA4e. If a recycling refund program were implemented in Washington, which redemption site locations would be most convenient for you or your community?

(Please choose up to three that would be most convenient)

Near where people live

- Near where people shop or work
- At trusted community locations (community centers, schools, Tribal facilities, faith-based sites)
- Near public transit
- In large parking lots (e.g., stadiums or municipal lots)

EA4f. Are there any other redemption site locations that would be convenient for you or your community?

EA4g. On a scale of 1–5, how convenient would each redemption site option be for you or your community?

(1 = Least convenient, 5 = Most convenient)

- Express drop site
- Express flex site
- Staffed redemption center
- Mobile or pop-up site
- Outdoor kiosk or machine

EA5. Benefits and Impacts Related to a Deposit Return Program

EA5a. Thinking about paying a refundable deposit on beverage containers (for example, 10-cents), what financial considerations would be most important for your household?

(Select your top five.)

- Paying more upfront at the time of purchase

- Being able to get deposits back quickly
- Having to travel or spend money (for gas, transit, etc.) to return containers
- Needing space to store containers until they are returned
- Having enough containers to make returning them “worth the trip”
- Access to cash refunds versus electronic refunds
- Whether refunds are easy to track or understand
- Impacts on overall household spending or budgeting
- Not sure
- Other (please explain): _____

EA5b. What top potential financial benefits do you think a recycling refunds program would provide your household or community?

(Select your top five.)

- Getting money back from returned containers
- Extra income for households that return containers regularly
- Opportunities for youth, elders, or community groups to collect containers for fundraising or programs
- Reduced household costs related to waste or recycling services
- Potential economic opportunities for local businesses or Tribal enterprises
- Support for Tribal programs or community services
- No significant financial benefits anticipated
- Not sure
- Other (please specify): _____

EA5c. Beyond financial benefits, what are the top benefits a recycling refunds program could provide your household or community?

(Select your top five.)

- Increased recycling
- Reduced litter
- Cleaner communities and public spaces
- Improved access to recycling services
- Greater local control over how recycling services are provided
- Alignment with Tribal environmental or stewardship values
- Support for youth, elder, or community programs
- No significant benefits anticipated
- Not sure
- Other (please specify): _____

EA6. Reuse / Refill Options

EA6. If a recycling refund program were available in your community, would beverage redemption site locations that also support reuse or refill options be of interest? (Any future participation or design would be voluntary and determined by each Tribe.)

Reuse or refill options could include refilling bottles, using reusable containers, or other ways to reduce single-use packaging.

- Yes
- Maybe
- No

- Not sure

EA7. Final Input and Interest in Learning More

EA7a. What guidance would you offer to help ensure a recycling refunds program works well for your Tribe? Please share any recommendations that may be specific to your Tribe's traditions or culture.

- [Open-ended]

EA7b. As an individual Tribal member or person living on the reservation, how interested would *you personally* be in learning more about a recycling refunds program or how it might work with your Tribe?

- Very interested
- Somewhat interested
- Not very interested
- Not interested at all
- Not sure

Please answer the following questions thinking about Tribal members, people living on your reservation, Tribal facilities, and Tribal programs. Participation in any recycling refunds program would be voluntary and determined by each Tribe.

EB1. Community Context

EB1. Which areas are you mainly thinking about as you respond to this survey?
(Select all that apply.)

- Reservation or trust lands
- Tribal fee lands
- Off-reservation Tribal facilities or businesses
- Nearby non-Tribal communities
- Other _____

EB2. Perspectives on Waste Prevention and Recycling

EB2a. How important are waste prevention and recycling within Tribal lands, facilities, or programs you are familiar with?

- Very important
- Somewhat important
- Not very important
- Not important at all
- Not sure

EB2b. How would you describe current recycling access and participation in these areas?

- Recycling is widely available and commonly used
- Recycling is available, but access or participation is limited
- Recycling access is limited or inconsistent
- Recycling is not currently available
- Not sure

EB3. Awareness of Recycling Refund Programs

EB3. Before today, how familiar were you with beverage container recycling refund programs? (“Beverage containers” include bottles and cans for drinks such as water, soda, beer, wine, juice, and sports drinks.)

- Very familiar (I understand how these programs work and have experience with them)
- Somewhat familiar (I know the basic idea but have limited experience)
- Have heard of them but don’t know how they work
- Not familiar at all

EB4. Access & Convenience (Governments and Departments Perspective)

EB4a. If your Tribal community Tribe chose to participate in a recycling refunds program, how convenient do you think returning beverage containers for a refund would be for Tribal members or Tribal facilities?

- Very convenient
- Somewhat convenient
- Neither convenient nor inconvenient
- Somewhat inconvenient
- Very inconvenient
- Not sure

EB4b. What factors do you think would most affect convenience for Tribal members or people living on your reservation or Tribal facilities?
(Select your top three.)

- Distance to redemption site locations
- Availability of transportation
- Hours of operation
- Ability to return containers quickly (e.g., express options)
- Accessibility for elders or people with disabilities
- Safety, lighting, or comfort of redemption site locations
- Ability to return containers while running other errands
- Other (please specify): _____

EB4c. How do you think Tribal members, people living on your reservation, or facility users would most often travel to a redemption site location?
(Please choose the two options that you think would be used most often.)

- Drive
- Walk
- Bicycle
- Public transit
- Get a ride from someone else
- Not sure

EB4d. Thinking about your community, how far would community members be willing to travel to a redemption site location and still consider it convenient?

(Select one.)

- 5 minutes
- 10 minutes
- 15 minutes
- More than 15 minutes
- It varies widely across the communities we serve
- Not sure

EB4e. Which redemption site locations would be most convenient for you or your community?

(Please choose up to three that would be most convenient)

- Near where people live
- Near where people shop or work
- At trusted community locations (community centers, schools, Tribal facilities, faith-based sites)
- Near public transit
- In large parking lots (e.g., stadiums and municipal lots)

EB4f. Are there any other locations that would be convenient for you or your community?

- [Open-ended]

EB4g. On a scale of 1–5, how convenient would each redemption site option be for you or your community?

(1 = Least convenient, 5 = Most convenient)

- Express drop site
- Express flex site
- Staffed redemption center
- Mobile or pop-up site
- Outdoor kiosk or machine

EB5. Benefits and Impacts Related to a Deposit Return Program

EB5a. Thinking about paying a refundable deposit on beverage containers (for example, 10-cents), what financial considerations would be most important for Tribal members, people living on your reservation, or Tribal programs?

(Select your top five.)

- Paying more up front for beverages purchased for Tribal programs or facilities
- Whether community members are able to get deposits back easily
- Timing of when deposits are refunded (for example, needing to wait to receive refunds)
- Potential impacts on Tribal program or facility budgets
- Potential impacts on household affordability for Tribal community members
- Administrative costs associated with managing deposits or refunds
- Whether refunds are provided as cash or electronically
- Whether refund amounts and processes are clear and easy for community members to understand
- Not sure
- Other (please explain): _____

EB5b. What potential financial benefits do you think a recycling refunds program could provide Tribal members, people living on your reservation, or Tribal programs?

(Select your top five.)

- Getting money back from returned containers
- Opportunities to support Tribal programs or services through container collection or fundraising
- Reduced costs related to waste disposal or recycling services
- Potential revenue or cost recovery from hosting or supporting return services
- Economic opportunities for Tribal enterprises or local businesses
- Reduced litter cleanup or public works costs
- Potential funding or partnership opportunities related to program participation
- No significant financial benefits anticipated
- Not sure
- Other (please specify): _____

EB5c. Beyond financial benefits, what other top benefits could a recycling refunds program provide your Tribal members, people living on your reservation, or facilities?

(Select your top three.)

- Increased recycling
- Reduced litter
- Cleaner communities and public spaces
- Improved access to recycling services
- Greater local control over how recycling services are provided
- Alignment with Tribal environmental or stewardship values
- Support for youth, elder, or community programs
- No significant benefits anticipated
- Not sure
- Other (please specify): _____

EB6. Equity and Access Strategies

EB6. What strategies could help ensure recycling refunds programs would be accessible and appropriate for Tribal members or people living on your reservation?

(Select your top five.)

- Locating services close to Tribal communities
- Mobile or pop-up redemption services
- Flexible or culturally appropriate service models
- Accessible design for elders or people with disabilities
- Clear and plain-language communication (including how deposits and refunds work)
- Community-led outreach or education
- Coordination with Tribal programs or enterprises
- Other (please specify): _____

EB7. Reuse / Refill Options

EB7. If a recycling refund program were available in your community, would beverage redemption site locations that also support reuse or refill options be of interest? (Any future participation or design would be voluntary and determined by each Tribe.)

Reuse or refill options could include refilling bottles, using reusable containers, or other ways to reduce single-use packaging.

- Yes
- Maybe
- No
- Not sure

EB8. Final Input

EB8a. What types of participation in a recycling refunds program, if any, do you think your Tribe or Tribal organization might be interested in exploring?

(Select all that apply.)

- Hosting redemption site locations
- Operating or managing return services
- Partnering with neighboring communities or jurisdictions
- Participating through Tribal enterprises
- Supporting community outreach or education
- Exploring options in the future, but not now
- Other (please specify): _____

EB8b. What guidance would you offer the state to help ensure a recycling refunds program respects Tribal priorities, sovereignty, and local decision-making?

[Open-ended]

Please answer the following questions thinking about the Tribal business or enterprise you represent (for example, retail, hospitality, gaming, or other commercial operations). Participation in any recycling refunds program would be voluntary and determined by each Tribe.

EC1. Community Context

EC1. Which areas are you mainly thinking about as you respond to this survey?

(Select all that apply.)

- Reservation or trust lands
- Tribal fee lands
- Off-reservation Tribal facilities or businesses
- Nearby non-Tribal communities
- Other

EC2. Perspectives on Waste Prevention and Recycling

EC2a. How important are waste prevention and recycling for your business operations?

- Very important
- Somewhat important

- Not very important
- Not important at all
- Not sure

EC2b. How would you describe current recycling access and participation in the community or communities surrounding your business?

- Recycling is widely available and commonly used
- Recycling is available, but access or participation is limited
- Recycling access is limited or inconsistent
- Recycling is not currently available
- Not sure

EC3. Awareness of Recycling Refund Programs

EC3. Before today, how familiar were you with beverage container recycling refund programs? (“Beverage containers” include bottles and cans for drinks such as water, soda, beer, wine, juice, and sports drinks.)

- Very familiar (I understand how these programs work and have experience with them)
- Somewhat familiar (I know the basic idea but have limited experience)
- Have heard of them but don’t know how they work
- Not familiar at all

EC4. Access & Convenience (Tribal businesses perspective)

EC4a. If your business chose to participate in a recycling refunds program, how convenient do you think returning beverage containers for a refund would be for your customers or employees?

- Very convenient
- Somewhat convenient
- Neither convenient nor inconvenient
- Somewhat inconvenient
- Very inconvenient
- Not sure

E4b. What factors would most affect convenience for customers or employees at your business?

(Select your top five)

- Distance to redemption site locations
- Availability of transportation
- Hours of operation
- Ability to return containers quickly (e.g., express site options)
- Accessibility for elders or people with disabilities
- Safety, lighting, or comfort of redemption site locations
- Ability to return containers while running other errands
- Operational impacts on your business (e.g., space, staffing, customer flow)
- Other (please specify): _____

EC4c. How would customers or employees most often travel to a redemption site location?
(Please choose the two options that you think would be used most often.)

- Drive
- Walk
- Bicycle
- Public transit
- Get a ride from someone else
- Not sure

EC4d. Thinking about your customers and employees, how far would community members be willing to travel to a redemption site location and still consider it convenient?
(Select one.)

- 5 minutes
- 10 minutes
- 15 minutes
- More than 15 minutes
- It varies widely across the communities we serve
- Not sure

EC4e. Which redemption site locations would be most convenient for you or your community?

(Please choose up to three that would be most convenient)

- Near where people live
- Near where people shop or work
- At trusted community locations (community centers, schools, Tribal facilities, faith-based sites)
- Near public transit
- In large parking lots (e.g., stadiums and municipal lots)

EC4f. Are there any other locations that would be convenient for you or your community?

- Open ended

EC4g. On a scale of 1–5, how convenient would each redemption site option be for you or your community?
(1 = Least convenient, 5 = Most convenient)

- Express drop site
- Express flex site
- Staffed redemption center
- Mobile or pop-up site
- Outdoor kiosk or machine

EC5. Benefits and Impacts Related to a Recycling Refunds Program

EC5a. Thinking about a refundable deposit on beverage containers (for example, 10-cents), what potential financial considerations would be most important for your business?
(Select all that apply.)

- Potential impacts on customer purchasing behavior or sales
- Whether customers are able to get deposits back easily

- Potential impacts on operating costs or cash flow
- Administrative costs associated with managing deposits or refunds
- Whether refund amounts and processes are clear and easy for customers or staff to understand
- Not sure
- Other (please explain): _____

EC5b. What are the top potential financial or operational benefits a recycling refunds program could provide your business?

(Select your top five.)

- Opportunities to host or support return services
- Increased customer visits, foot traffic, or sales
- Potential revenue or compensation related to program participation
- Reduced litter or cleanup costs near business locations
- Improved recycling services for customers or employees
- Alignment with sustainability, stewardship, or brand goals
- Opportunities to partner with Tribal government, the state, or program operators
- No significant financial or operational benefits anticipated
- Not sure
- Other (please specify): _____

EC5c. What other top benefits could a potential recycling refunds program provide your business or the communities it serves?

(Select your top three.)

- Increased recycling
- Reduced litter near business locations
- Cleaner public spaces
- Improved access to recycling services for customers or employees
- Alignment with Tribal environmental or stewardship values
- No significant benefits anticipated
- Not sure
- Other (please specify): _____

EC6. Equity and Access Strategies

EC6. If redemption sites were located at or near your Tribal business, what would help ensure they are easy to use, appropriate, and workable for your customers, employees, and business operations?

(Select your top five.)

- Mobile or pop-up redemption sites
- Flexible service models that work with business operations (for example, limited space or peak customer hours)
- Accessible design for elders or people with disabilities
- Clear and plain-language communication (including how deposits and refunds work)
- Coordination with Tribal enterprises or business associations
- Other (please specify): _____

EC7. Reuse / Refill Options

EC7 If a recycling refund program were available in your community, would beverage redemption site locations that also support reuse or refill options be of interest at or near your enterprise? (Any future participation or design would be voluntary and determined by each Tribe.)

Reuse or refill options could include refilling bottles, using reusable containers, or other ways to reduce single-use packaging.

- Yes
- Maybe
- No
- Not sure

EC8. Final Input

EC8a. What types of participation in a recycling refunds program, if any, do you think your business might be interested in exploring?
(Select all that apply.)

- Hosting redemption site locations
- Operating or managing return services
- Partnering with neighboring communities or jurisdictions
- Participating through Tribal enterprises
- Supporting community outreach or education
- Exploring options in the future, but not now
- No interest in participation
- Other (please specify): _____

EC8b What guidance would you offer the state to help ensure a recycling refunds program works well for Tribal businesses and respects Tribal priorities and local decision-making?

[Open-ended]

Module F – Final Questions (All Respondents)

F1. Priorities Based on *Your* Experience

F1. Based on your own experience, which of the following issues feel *most important* to get right if a recycling refunds program were implemented in Washington?

(Select your top three.)

- Convenience of redemption site locations (distance, hours, ease of use)
- Affordability and ability to get the deposit back easily (e.g., a 10-cent deposit)
- Access for rural, remote, or transportation-limited communities
- Services tailored for inclusion of low-income households, elders, or people with disabilities
- Clear and simple information about how the program works
- Environmental benefits (reduced litter, higher recycling rates)
- Impacts on local communities, businesses, or services
- None of these stand out
- Other (optional): _____

F2. Language Access for Information and Services

F2. Which language(s) do you think information and services about a recycling refunds program should be provided in so that they are accessible for the residents of Washington?

(Select all that apply.)

- English
- Spanish
- Chinese (Mandarin or Cantonese)
- Vietnamese
- Korean
- Russian
- Tagalog
- Ukrainian
- Another language (please specify): _____
- Not sure
- Prefer not to answer

F3. Equity and Access Reflection

F3. Based on your experience, what guidance, if any, would you offer the state related to ensuring equity, access, and affordability considerations shape the design of any recycling refunds program?

For the purpose of this survey, equity is defined as making sure programs and services work well for people with different needs and circumstances, especially those who may face greater barriers to access.

[Open-ended]

F4. Final Thoughts on Program Design

F4. If Washington were to consider implementing a recycling refunds program, are there any additional thoughts or advice you would like to share about how the program could be designed to work well for you, your community, or your organization's potential role in the system?

[Open-ended text box]

F5. Demographic Questions

What is your age range?

- 18 to 24
- 25 to 34
- 35 to 44
- 45 to 54
- 55 to 64
- 65 or older

What is your gender?

- Male
- Female
- Non-binary/Other
- Prefer not to say

What was your entire household income in 2025 before taxes?

- Less than \$10,000
- \$10,000 to \$19,999
- \$20,000 to \$29,999
- \$30,000 to \$39,999
- \$40,000 to \$49,999
- \$50,000 to \$59,999
- \$60,000 to \$69,999
- \$70,000 to \$79,999
- \$80,000 to \$89,999
- \$90,000 to \$99,999
- \$100,000 to \$149,999
- \$150,000 or more

Choose one or more races that you consider yourself to be:

- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Asian
- Black or African American
- Hispanic or Latino
- Middle Eastern or North African
- Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
- White
- Other, please specify

What is the highest level of school you have completed or the highest degree you have received?

- Less than high school degree
- High school graduate (high school diploma or equivalent including GED)
- Some college but no degree
- Associate degree in college (2-year)
- Bachelor's degree in college (4-year)
- Master's degree
- Doctoral degree
- Professional degree (JD, MD)

Including yourself, how many people are in your household?

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- More than 6

F6. Interest in Continued Engagement

F6. Would you be interested in staying informed about this work or providing additional input in the future?

- Yes
- Maybe
- No

F6a. [Shown if “Yes” or “Maybe” selected in F5] What types of engagement regarding a potential recycling refunds program in Washington would you be interested in?
(Select all that apply.)

- Receiving updates or summaries
- Participating in future surveys
- Participating in virtual feedback sessions
- Participating in community meetings
- Other (optional): _____

F6b. [Shown if “Yes” or “Maybe” selected in F5] If you would like to be contacted for future engagement, you may provide your contact information below.
(Providing this information is optional and will not be linked to your survey responses.)

- Name (optional): _____
- Organization (optional): _____
- Email address (optional): _____
- Phone number (optional): _____

F6c. Would you like to be entered into a raffle to win a \$50 gift card?

- Yes
- No

Closing Message - Thank You for Sharing Your Input

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. Your input is an important part of Washington State's effort to better understand recycling access, convenience, equity, and potential approaches to a recycling refunds (deposit return) program.

The information you shared will help inform ongoing analysis and future recommendations. Responses will be reviewed alongside other community, Tribal, local government, and stakeholder input.

Learn More

If you would like to learn more about the Recycling Reform Act or stay informed as this study progresses, please visit: <https://ecology.wa.gov/waste-toxics/reducing-recycling-waste/our-recycling-programs/recycling-reform-act>

Thank you again for your time and participation.

Appendix D. Interview and Community-Based Engagement Summary

Interviews and community-based engagement activities provided an important complement to the statewide survey by creating opportunities for more detailed conversations with community members, organizations, governments, industry representatives, and recycling system stakeholders. While the survey provided broad quantitative and qualitative input from participants across Washington, interviews allowed participants to discuss issues in greater depth, provide context for survey findings, and identify considerations that may not be fully captured through structured survey questions.

The Engagement Study also recognized that different stakeholder groups bring different experiences, responsibilities, and perspectives to discussions about a potential recycling refunds program. Community organizations, local governments, retailers, producers, recyclers, and other stakeholders each interact with Washington's recycling system in different ways and may experience different opportunities, challenges, and implementation considerations. Interviews provided an opportunity to better understand these perspectives and to identify issues that may be important for future program design and implementation.

In addition to interviews, the project team conducted community-based engagement activities through Community Connector partnerships and other outreach efforts designed to reach communities that may face barriers to traditional engagement processes. Together, these activities helped ensure that findings reflected a broad range of experiences, perspectives, and community contexts from across Washington.

D.1. Purpose and Approach

The Engagement Study used interviews and other engagement activities to supplement the statewide survey and provide additional context regarding accessibility, convenience, participation, equity, implementation considerations, governance, and interactions with existing recycling systems. Interviews were designed to complement quantitative survey data by providing qualitative insights into community experiences, operational considerations, and factors that may influence participation in a potential recycling refunds program.

Interview guides were tailored to specific audience groups but were developed around a common set of analytical topics. Across audiences, interviews explored issues such as:

- Familiarity with recycling refunds programs;
- Access, travel, and convenience considerations;
- Redemption site preferences and location considerations;
- Participation drivers and barriers;
- Equity and community-specific needs;
- Perceived benefits and outcomes;
- Operational and implementation considerations;
- Governance and system integration considerations; and
- Conditions needed to support participation and long-term program success.

The study team used interviews to better understand how perspectives varied across communities, organizations, and stakeholder groups. Findings from interviews were analyzed alongside survey results, Community Connector activities, and other engagement efforts throughout the study.

D.2. Interview Participation Summary

The project team conducted interviews with a range of organizations and interested parties representing community, government, industry, and recycling system perspectives. Several interviews included multiple participants from a single organization or association.

Table D-1. Interview Participation Summary

Audience Group	Number of Interviews	Approximate Participants*
Community-Based Organizations	2	6
Local Governments and Government Associations	3	22
Retailers and Retail Associations	3	17
Producers, Distributors, and Beverage Industry Associations	1	1
Collectors, Haulers, Recyclers, and Recycling Associations	5	13+
Cross-Cutting Recycling System Stakeholders	1	3
Total	15	62+

*Participant counts are approximate because several interviews involved multiple representatives from a single organization or association.

D.3. Organizations Represented through Interviews

Organizations represented through interviews included community organizations, government associations, retailers, distributors, recycling system participants, industry associations, and other interested parties. [Figure D-1](#) summarizes the organizations interviewed.

Figure D-1. Organizations Represented through Interviews



To encourage candid participation, findings are presented in aggregate throughout this report and are not attributed to individual participants or organizations.

D.4. Perspectives by Audience Group

Interview participants brought a wide range of perspectives to the Engagement Study. While many topics were discussed across audiences, each group tended to focus on issues most relevant to its experiences, responsibilities, and relationship to Washington's recycling system. The perspectives summarized in this section are intended to provide context regarding the types of issues emphasized by different interview audiences. Detailed findings from interviews and other engagement activities are presented throughout Section E and organized according to the ten analytical topic areas used for the Engagement Study.

D.4.1. Community-Based Organizations and Community Connectors

Community-based organizations and Community Connectors primarily focused on participant experiences, access barriers, transportation challenges, language access, equity considerations, and community-specific needs. Participants frequently emphasized that convenience extends beyond distance and highlighted the importance of trusted locations, culturally appropriate outreach, multilingual materials, and flexible redemption options.

Participants also emphasized that transportation availability, community infrastructure, and existing recycling access vary significantly across Washington communities. Many noted that successful program design should account for differences among urban, suburban, rural, remote, and underserved communities.

D.4.2. Local Governments and Government Associations

Local government participants focused primarily on implementation considerations, local coordination needs, siting challenges, and potential community impacts. Participants frequently discussed how accessibility expectations and redemption site needs may differ across jurisdictions and emphasized the importance of flexibility in future program design.

Local government representatives also discussed interactions with existing solid waste and recycling systems, local planning considerations, public education needs, and the relationship between a recycling refunds program and other ongoing policy initiatives.

D.4.3. Retailers and Retail Associations

Retail participants focused heavily on operational feasibility, customer experience, staffing, site management, sanitation considerations, and potential site-hosting responsibilities. Participants frequently discussed the practical realities of operating redemption services within retail environments, including space constraints, employee responsibilities, customer traffic, and safety considerations.

Many participants also referenced experiences from Oregon and other states with recycling refunds programs and emphasized the importance of understanding operational impacts on retail businesses when evaluating future program design options.

D.4.4. Producers, Distributors, and Beverage Industry Representatives

Producer and beverage industry participants focused primarily on governance, funding structures, operational responsibilities, system management, and lessons learned from existing recycling refunds programs. Participants discussed how program design decisions may influence efficiency, participation, accountability, and long-term system performance.

Several participants also provided perspectives based on direct experience with deposit return systems in other jurisdictions and discussed considerations related to producer responsibility, funding mechanisms, and program administration.

D.4.5. Collectors, Haulers, Recyclers, and Recycling Associations

Collectors, haulers, recyclers, and recycling organizations focused on material flows, recycling infrastructure, operational impacts, system costs, and interactions with existing recycling services. Participants frequently discussed how a recycling refunds program could affect curbside collection systems, processing facilities, commodity values, contamination levels, and broader recycling system performance.

Participants also discussed implementation challenges, infrastructure needs, and potential interactions between a recycling refunds program and Washington's Recycling Reform Act. While perspectives varied regarding potential outcomes, participants consistently emphasized the importance of evaluating impacts across the broader recycling system.

D.4.6. Cross-Cutting Recycling System Stakeholders

Cross-cutting stakeholders focused on broader system performance, recycling outcomes, governance considerations, and interactions between recycling refunds programs and extended producer responsibility (EPR) policies. Participants frequently emphasized the importance of evaluating recycling refunds programs within the context of Washington's broader recycling system and policy landscape.

These participants often discussed lessons learned from other jurisdictions and highlighted both opportunities and challenges associated with integrating multiple recycling policy approaches.

D.5. Community-Based Engagement Activities

In addition to interviews, the Engagement Study included community-based engagement activities designed to reach residents through trusted community organizations and existing community networks. Community-based engagement efforts included:

- Partnerships with Community Connector organizations in King, Spokane, and Yakima Counties;
- Distribution of multilingual outreach materials;
- Community conversations and outreach activities conducted by Community Connectors;
- Survey promotion through community networks and events; and
- Targeted outreach to overburdened and underserved communities.

These activities were intended to complement the statewide survey and help ensure participation from communities that may face barriers to traditional engagement processes.

Table D-2. Community Connector Participation Summary

Community Connector Partner	Location	Participants	Engagement Format
Duwamish Valley Sustainability Association (DVSA)	King County	27	Community event conducted primarily in Spanish
Latino Community Fund (LCF)	Yakima County	20	Hybrid discussion activity
Nuestras Raíces	Spokane County	9	Community discussion activity
Total	—	56 Participants	—

Community Connector activities provided opportunities to hear directly from community members who may not otherwise participate in traditional public engagement processes. Findings from these activities were incorporated throughout the Engagement Study and helped inform understanding of access, convenience, participation, and equity considerations.

D.6. Tribal Engagement Activities

Tribal engagement activities were conducted separately from broader public engagement efforts and included both formal Government-to-Government consultation opportunities and broader Tribal outreach activities. Tribal engagement activities included:

- Government-to-Government consultation initiated by Ecology in December 2025;
- Outreach through the Tribal Solid Waste Advisory Network (TSWAN);
- Tribal survey participation; and
- Outreach to Tribal environmental and solid waste staff

Tribal perspectives and engagement activities are described in greater detail in Section 4.0 of the main report, Tribal Perspectives and Considerations. Because Tribal engagement remains ongoing, additional Tribal perspectives may be incorporated into future project deliverables and the final legislative report.

D.7. Public Review and Validation Activities

The Engagement Study was designed as a two-phase process that includes opportunities for public and Tribal review of draft findings and recommendations. Following release of the draft report, Ecology and the project team will conduct additional engagement activities to validate findings and gather feedback.

Planned activities include:

- Public comment opportunities
- Virtual information sessions
- In-person information sessions
- Advisory Council review and
- Additional outreach activities, as appropriate.

Input received through these activities will be considered during preparation of the final legislative report and will help inform refinement of findings, recommendations, and implementation considerations.

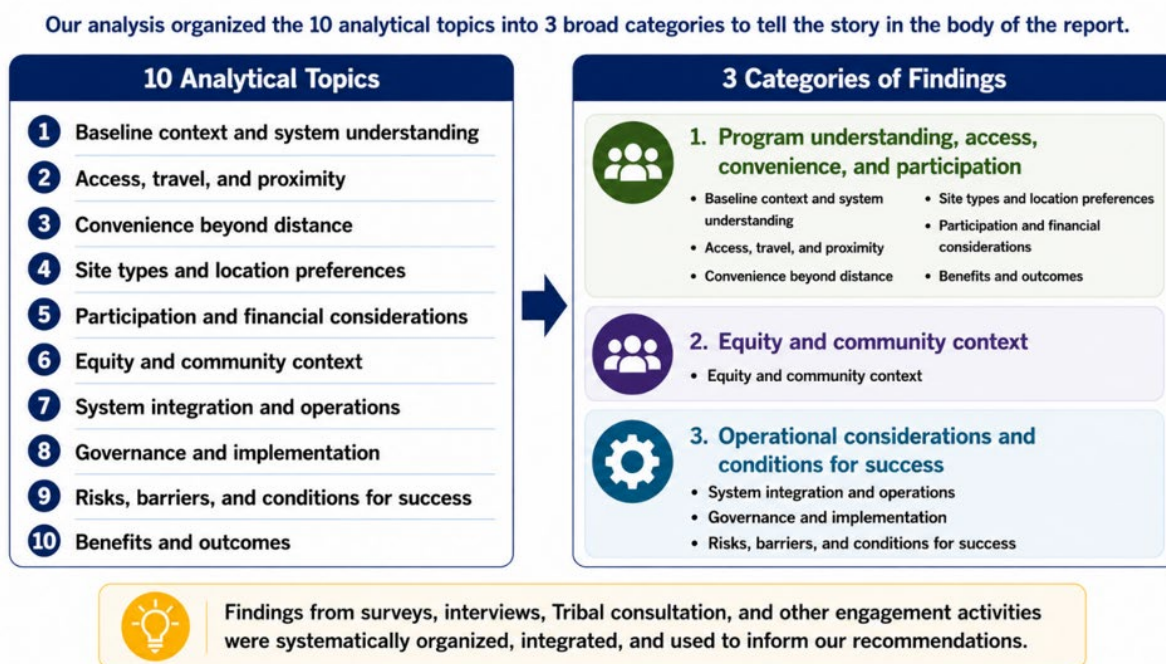
Appendix E. Detailed Engagement Findings

This section provides detailed findings from surveys, interviews, Community Connector activities, Tribal engagement, public comments, and other engagement conducted during the study period. These findings informed the topic-based findings presented in Section 3 of the main report, the Tribal findings presented in Section 4, the cross-cutting themes presented in Section 5, and the validation analysis and recommendations presented in Sections 6 and 7.

To support consistent analysis across engagement activities, the study team organized data collection and analysis around ten analytical topic areas. These topics were used to develop survey questions, interview guides, Community Connector activities, Tribal engagement activities, and the analytical framework used throughout the study.

The ten analytical topic areas served as the foundation for the broader findings categories presented in Section 3 of the report. Findings from individual topic areas were synthesized into three overarching categories: (1) Understanding, Access, Convenience, and Participation; (2) Equity and Community Context; and (3) Operational Considerations and Conditions for Success. These findings were then further synthesized into the cross-cutting themes presented in Section 5 and used to inform the validation analysis and recommendations presented in Sections 6 and 7.

Figure E-1. Relationship Between Analytical Topic Areas and Findings Categories



For each topic area, this appendix presents:

- Key takeaways
- Survey findings, including quantitative and open-ended responses
- Interview and engagement findings from community members, organizations, governments, businesses, and other participants

Together, these findings provide the detailed evidence that supports the conclusions, themes, and recommendations presented in the main report.

E.1. Baseline Context and System Understanding

This topic explored how familiar participants were with recycling refunds programs and what existing behaviors and experiences may shape participation. The study team used the results to provide context for interpreting engagement findings and identifying outreach and education needs.

E.1.1. Key Takeaways

- Most participants were familiar with the concept of a recycling refunds program, but familiarity did not necessarily translate into understanding how a Washington-specific program would operate.
- Participants frequently identified a need for additional information regarding redemption locations, eligible containers, refund processes, and program administration.
- Existing recycling behaviors, particularly reliance on curbside recycling, strongly influenced how participants evaluated a potential recycling refunds program.
- Awareness and understanding varied across audiences, with retailers, producers, recycling system operators, and government representatives generally reporting greater familiarity than residents and community-based organizations.
- Participants frequently compared a potential recycling refunds program to Washington's existing recycling system and evaluated how the two systems might interact.
- Findings suggest that public education and outreach will be important if Washington moves forward with a recycling refunds program.

E.1.2. Survey Findings

Survey findings showed that many respondents entered the study with strong interest in recycling and waste reduction, but varying levels of familiarity with recycling refunds programs. Familiarity generally increased among retailers, producers, recycling system operators, and government representatives, while residents and community-based organizations reported more varied levels of awareness.

1 **Baseline Context and System Understanding**



Key questions

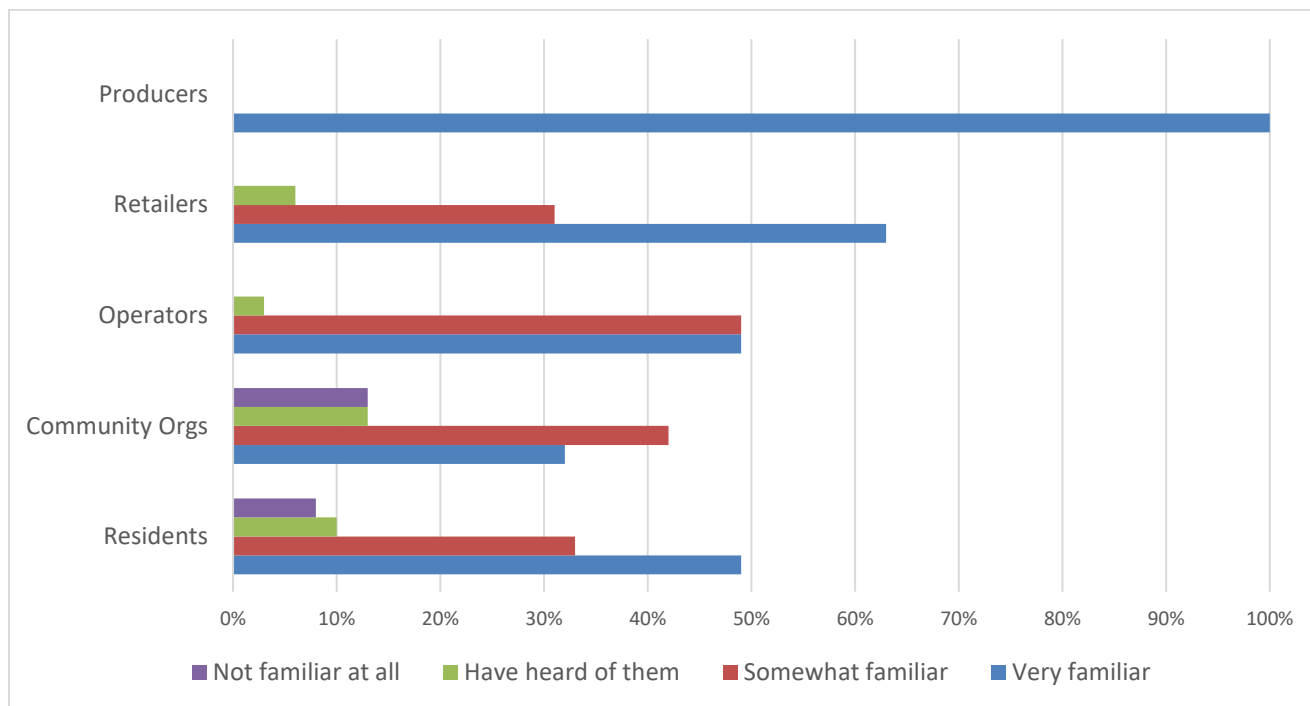
- How familiar are people with recycling refunds programs?
- How do people currently manage beverage containers?
- What questions or information gaps do people have?
- What existing experiences may shape participation?

**Model Study Recommendation Connection**

Informs outreach, education, and communication strategies to build awareness and understanding.

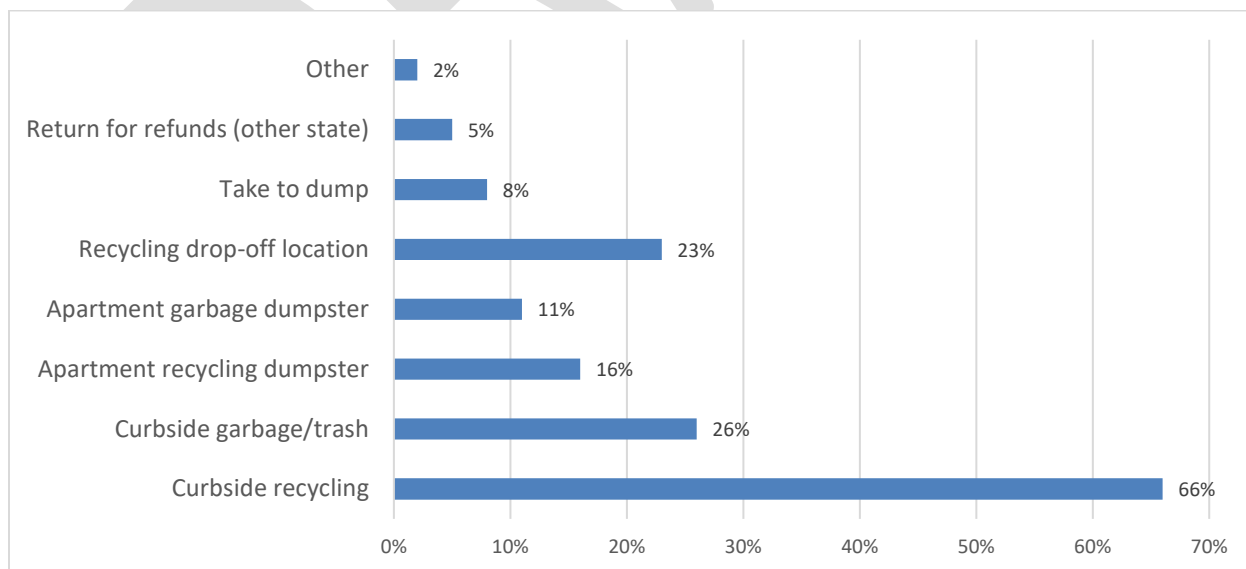
Figure E-2. Baseline Context and System Understanding: Key Questions and Connection to Model Study

Figure E-3. Familiarity with Recycling Refunds Programs by Respondent Type



Many respondents indicated they currently manage beverage containers through existing curbside recycling programs, drop-off locations, apartment recycling systems, or other recycling services. These existing behaviors appeared to influence how respondents evaluated convenience, participation, accessibility, and the potential role of a recycling refunds program within Washington's broader recycling system.

Figure E-4. Current Beverage Container Management Practices



Open-ended survey responses demonstrated that many participants understood the basic concept of a recycling refunds program but still had questions regarding how a Washington-specific system would operate. [Figure E-5](#) describes common questions identified in the survey responses.

These findings suggest that familiarity with the general concept of recycling refunds programs does not necessarily translate into understanding how a Washington-specific program would function.

E.1.3. Interview and Engagement Findings

Interview findings showed that awareness and understanding of recycling refunds programs varied considerably across audiences. Among community members interviewed, 47% reported at least some prior awareness of recycling refunds programs, while 50% reported no prior awareness. Prior awareness was generally higher among government representatives and business operators. Most recycling system operators and retailers interviewed indicated they were already familiar with recycling refunds systems and had experience implementing programs in other states, such as Oregon.

Participants also demonstrated varying levels of understanding regarding how a recycling refunds program would operate in Washington, which is understandable given the legislation is still in draft form. While some participants were familiar with the concept of paying a deposit and receiving a refund, others had questions regarding redemption site types, collection methods, operational responsibilities, and how the system would interact with existing curbside recycling programs.

One community member specifically noted confusion regarding flexible collection locations and how they would operate. Government representatives frequently sought additional clarification regarding ownership, operation, and maintenance responsibilities. Two government representatives raised questions regarding who would own redemption equipment, who would maintain it, and how associated costs would be covered.

Interview findings also highlighted existing recycling behaviors that may influence future participation. Among community members interviewed, 62% reported that they do not currently recycle. Business operators generally described existing recycling behavior as strongly influenced by curbside recycling systems. Seven of the ten business operators interviewed noted that residents in the communities they serve typically manage beverage containers through curbside recycling. Several participants emphasized that Washington is different from other states where recycling refunds programs have been implemented, primarily because Washington already has a well-established curbside recycling system, strong recycling rates, and that many residents are accustomed to existing collection methods.

Together, these findings suggest that future outreach and education efforts may need to address both basic awareness and practical implementation questions regarding how a recycling refunds program would function within Washington's existing recycling system, and this outreach will need to include all

	Which containers would be eligible?	Participants wanted clarity on which beverage containers would be included and any exceptions.
	Where could containers be returned?	Participants asked about the number, location, and types of return locations.
	How would refunds be issued?	Participants wanted to know refund payment methods (e.g., cash, digital, store credit).
	Would refunds be immediate?	Participants asked whether refunds would be provided immediately at drop-off.
	How would the program interact with curbside recycling?	Participants wanted to understand how the program would complement or affect existing services.
	Who would operate and oversee the system?	Participants asked who would manage the program and ensure accountability.

Figure E-5. Common Questions Raised in Open-Ended Survey Responses

parties involved (e.g., residents and communities, governments, retailers, recycling system operators, etc.).

E.2. Access, Travel, and Proximity

This topic explored how participants evaluate access to redemption services and whether the Model Study's assumptions about travel distance and accessibility reflected community experiences. The study team used these findings to evaluate assumptions related to geographic coverage, travel expectations, transportation patterns, and access across different community types.

E.2.1. Key Takeaways

- Convenient access to redemption opportunities emerged as one of the most important factors influencing potential participation.
- Participants generally preferred redemption locations near home and near destinations they already visit.
- Accessibility was shaped by transportation options, geography, and community context.
- Transportation expectations varied across community types, with urban residents more likely to rely on walking, biking, or transit and rural residents more likely to drive.
- Participants in rural and remote communities generally reported greater willingness to travel longer distances than participants in more urbanized areas.
- Participants emphasized that accessibility should reflect how people travel within their communities rather than distance alone.
- Findings suggest that access standards may need to account for differences among urban, suburban, rural, remote, and Tribal communities.

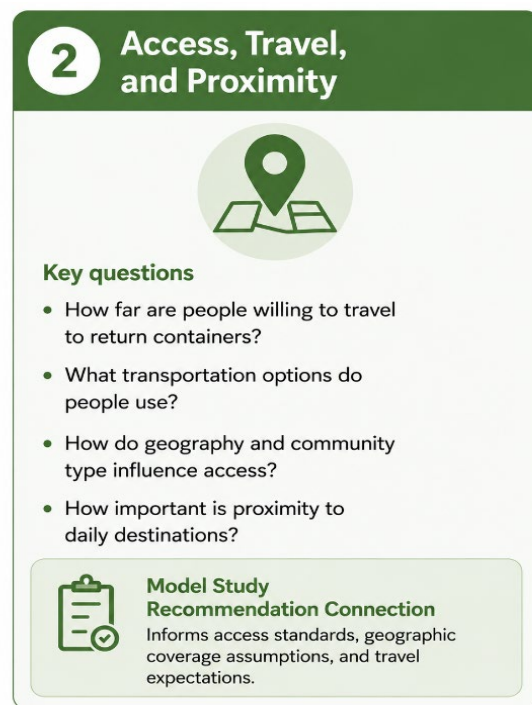


Figure E-6. Access, Travel and Proximity: Key Questions and Connection to Model Study Recommendations

E.2.2. Survey Findings

Survey findings showed that access to redemption opportunities would be an important factor influencing participation in a recycling refunds program.

When asked where they would prefer to return containers, 76% of respondents selected locations near home, making it the most frequently selected location preference. Nearly half (48%) preferred locations near places they already shop or work, while 40% preferred trusted public locations such as libraries, community centers, schools, and other public facilities. Far fewer respondents selected locations near transit stops (10%) or large parking lots (12%).

Survey findings also showed that many respondents would be willing to travel farther than their preferred distance to access redemption services. Approximately 76% of respondents reported they would be willing to travel 10 minutes or more to return containers, while approximately one-quarter preferred travel times of less than 10 minutes.

Travel expectations varied across community types. Respondents living in rural and remote communities generally reported greater willingness to travel longer distances than respondents living in more urbanized areas. Approximately 38% of respondents living in remote communities indicated they would be willing to travel more than 15 minutes to access redemption services, compared with approximately 13% to 18% of respondents living in dense urban, urban, suburban, and small-town communities.

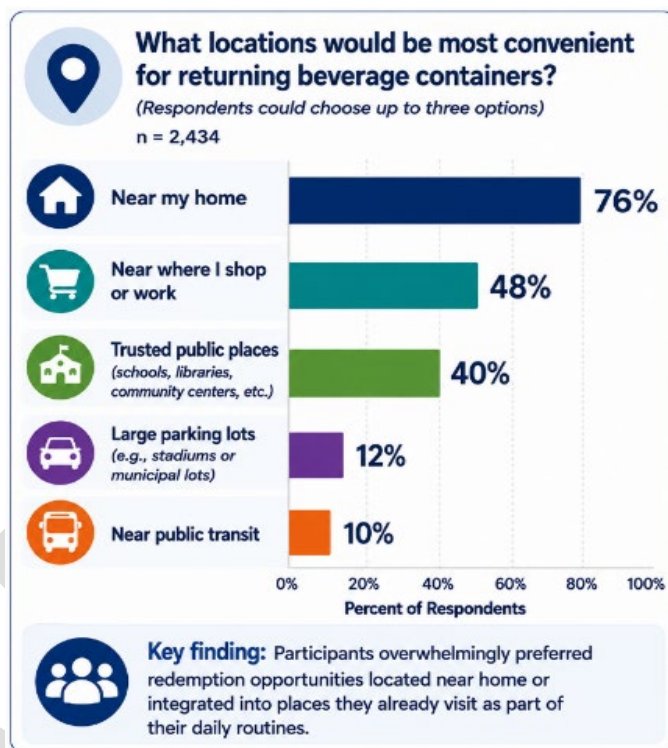
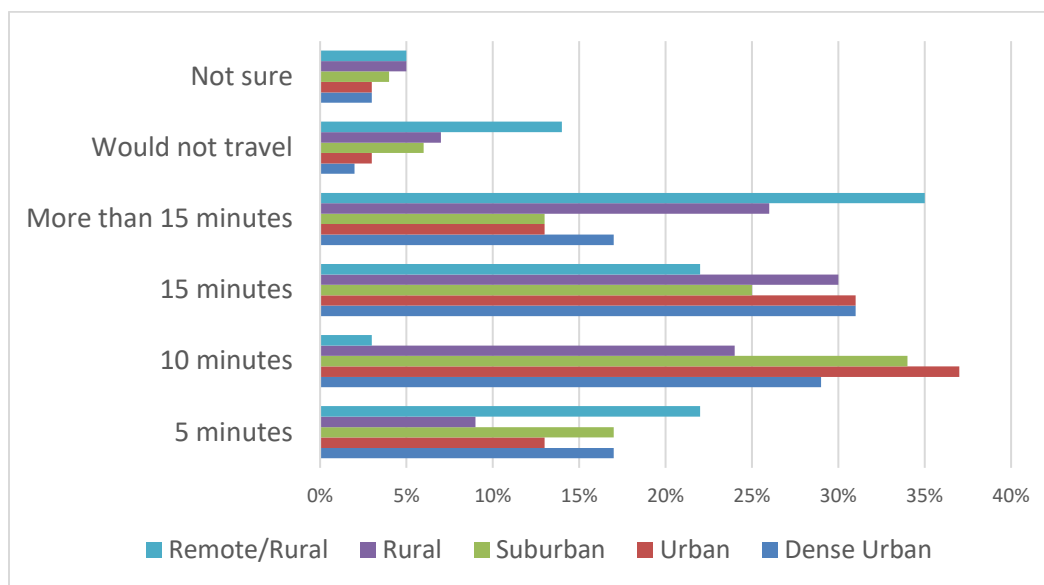


Figure E-7. Most convenient locations identified by survey participants

Figure E-8. Travel Time Willingness by Community Type



Transportation patterns also varied significantly across community types. Driving was the dominant transportation mode overall but became increasingly important as population density decreased. Among respondents living in rural communities, approximately 80% indicated they would drive to a redemption location. In contrast, only 50% of respondents living in dense urban communities expected to drive.

Respondents living in dense urban communities were much more likely to anticipate walking, biking, or using transit. Twenty-three percent indicated they would walk to a redemption location and 13% reported they would use transit. In comparison, only 2% of rural respondents reported they would walk and 1% reported they would use transit. These findings suggest that transportation options and community context influence how residents experience accessibility and convenience.

Location preferences remained relatively consistent across community types. Returning containers near home was the most frequently selected option across all community types. Locations near places people already shop or work also ranked highly regardless of geography. However, trusted public locations were particularly important among respondents living in rural and remote communities.

Open-ended survey responses reinforced these findings. Respondents frequently described convenient access as a combination of proximity and practicality. Many emphasized that redemption opportunities should be located near destinations they already visit, such as grocery stores, shopping centers, community centers, schools, and other commonly visited locations. Respondents also frequently referenced transportation limitations, travel burdens, and the importance of minimizing special trips.

E.2.3. Interview and Engagement Findings

Interview and engagement findings strongly reinforced survey results regarding the importance of access and proximity.

Across interviews, participants consistently emphasized that convenient access is necessary to support participation. However, participants frequently noted that what constitutes "convenient access" varies across communities. Community-based organizations, local governments, retailers, and recycling system operators all emphasized that transportation options, geography, and community context influence how residents access services.

Community-based organizations frequently discussed transportation barriers, particularly for residents without reliable vehicle access. Participants emphasized that access depends not only on distance but also on whether residents have access to a car, public transit, safe walking routes, or other transportation options.

Local governments often emphasized differences among urban, suburban, rural, remote, and Tribal communities. Participants noted that travel times considered reasonable in rural areas may differ substantially from travel expectations in dense urban communities. Several participants emphasized that a single statewide accessibility standard may not reflect the realities of all communities.

Interview participants also frequently discussed the importance of locating redemption opportunities near destinations people already visit. Grocery stores, shopping centers, community facilities, schools, workplaces, transit-accessible locations, and other established destinations were repeatedly identified as locations that may support participation because they align with existing travel patterns.

Business operators generally agreed that integrating redemption opportunities into existing travel patterns would support participation. Several noted that collocating redemption sites with existing destinations may be more important than minimizing travel distance alone.

Across engagement activities, participants generally supported the goal of providing redemption opportunities throughout Washington while recognizing that accessibility may look different across communities. These findings reinforce the importance of community-specific approaches that account for transportation options, travel patterns, and geographic context when evaluating accessibility and participation.

E.3. Convenience Beyond Distance

This topic explored what factors beyond distance influence participation and convenience. The study team used the results to evaluate whether convenience assumptions in the Model Study reflected community experiences and preferences and to identify factors that may influence participation in a recycling refunds program.

E.3.1. Key Takeaways

- Participants consistently described convenience as more than proximity to a redemption location.
- Wait times, operating hours, ease of use, reliability, safety, cleanliness, and accessibility were frequently identified as important components of a convenient redemption experience.
- Many participants emphasized the importance of integrating container returns into existing errands and daily routines.
- Respondents frequently indicated they would be willing to travel farther if redemption opportunities were reliable, efficient, and easy to use.

3 Convenience Beyond Distance



Key questions

- What makes a redemption trip convenient?
- How important are hours, wait times, ease of use, and site reliability?
- How do people define a “good experience”?
- What factors influence whether people will actually participate?

**Model Study Recommendation Connection**
Informs convenience assumptions and operational expectations for redemption sites.

Figure E-9. Convenience Beyond Distance: Key Questions and Connection to Model Study Recommendations

- Convenience expectations varied across communities and populations, reinforcing the importance of flexible redemption options.
- Findings suggest that convenience standards should consider both geographic access and user experience.

E.3.2. Survey Findings

Survey findings showed that convenience extends beyond travel distance and proximity. While respondents consistently identified location as an important factor, they also identified a range of operational and user-experience factors that would influence whether they choose to participate in a recycling refunds program.

Residents frequently expressed a preference for redemption opportunities that can be incorporated into existing daily routines. As discussed in Topic 2, 74% of respondents preferred locations near home and 54% preferred locations near places they already shop or work. Open-ended responses frequently emphasized the importance of minimizing special trips and locating redemption opportunities near destinations people already visit regularly.

Many respondents described convenience as the ability to complete container returns quickly and efficiently while conducting other activities such as grocery shopping, commuting, or running errands. Open-ended responses frequently referenced:

- Convenient operating hours
- Short wait times
- Easy-to-use equipment
- Reliable site availability
- Clean and well-maintained facilities
- Safe locations
- Accessibility for people with disabilities
- Sufficient parking and storage space
- Fast and simple refund processes

Several respondents noted that a nearby location would not necessarily be convenient if equipment was frequently out of service, wait times were excessive, operating hours were limited, or the location felt unsafe. Conversely, some respondents indicated they would be willing to travel farther if redemption opportunities were reliable, efficient, and integrated into existing routines.

Respondents also emphasized flexibility in how returns could be completed. Some preferred quick self-service options, while others preferred staffed locations that could provide assistance and immediate refunds. Many respondents expressed interest in having multiple redemption options available to accommodate different needs and preferences.

Overall, survey findings suggest that convenience is influenced by both location and user experience. Respondents consistently viewed convenience as the ability to return containers quickly, easily, and as part of existing routines rather than solely as a function of travel distance.

E.3.3. Interview and Engagement Findings

Interview and engagement findings strongly reinforced survey results and consistently expanded the definition of convenience beyond geographic proximity.

Among community members interviewed, 47% stated that locating redemption opportunities near places they already travel would help a recycling refunds program fit into their daily lives. In addition, 67% said the ability to combine container returns with other routine trips, such as grocery shopping, visits to community centers, or trips to gas stations, would be an important feature of a convenient system. More than half of community members (55%) indicated that an ideal redemption trip would be between 10 and 15 minutes from home.

One resident explained: "The easier we can make it the better... It's very important that this be a single trip."

The same participant suggested locating redemption opportunities at grocery stores, transit stations, bus stops, gas stations, and other destinations people already visit as part of daily routines.

Business operators and government representatives similarly emphasized that convenience depends on how well redemption opportunities fit into existing travel patterns. Four of the ten business operators interviewed identified co-location with destinations people already visit as a key design consideration, while another four emphasized that convenient access would likely vary across urban, suburban, rural, and remote communities.

Government representatives also emphasized that convenience should reflect community-specific transportation patterns and access needs. One representative noted: "The solutions for different populations will be different... There's no golden answer, but the design cannot be one-size-fits-all."

Interview participants also identified several operational factors that influence convenience, including operating hours, wait times, ease of use, site reliability, safety, cleanliness, and accessibility. Across audience groups, participants frequently emphasized that convenience should be evaluated from the user's perspective rather than solely through geographic measures.

A recurring finding across all engagement activities was the importance of locating redemption opportunities near destinations people already visit. Grocery stores were the most frequently cited example across audience groups. Participants also consistently emphasized the importance of short wait times, safe and well-maintained facilities, and redemption locations that can be integrated into existing travel patterns and daily routines.

Taken together, these findings suggest that convenience is multidimensional. Participants consistently described convenience as a combination of location, user experience, reliability, and the ability to integrate container returns into everyday activities. These findings support expanding future convenience standards beyond travel distance alone to include behavioral and operational factors that influence participation.

E.4. Site Types and Location Preferences

This topic explored what types of redemption sites and locations would be most usable, trusted, and convenient. The study team used the results to evaluate the Model Study's assumptions related to redemption site types, placement, and overall system design.

E.4.1. Key Takeaways

- Participants consistently preferred redemption opportunities located at destinations they already visit regularly.
- Grocery stores emerged as one of the most frequently preferred redemption locations across engagement activities.
- Trusted public locations, including community centers, libraries, schools, and other public facilities, were also commonly identified as desirable locations.
- Participants generally supported providing multiple redemption site types rather than relying on a single model.
- Many participants expressed interest in both self-service and staffed redemption options depending on their needs and preferences.
- Findings suggest that familiarity, visibility, and integration into existing travel patterns may be important considerations when designing a redemption network.

E.4.2. Survey Findings

Survey findings showed strong interest in locating redemption opportunities at destinations people already visit as part of their daily routines. Respondents consistently preferred locations that were familiar, convenient, and integrated into existing travel patterns.

As discussed in Topics 2 and 3, locations near home were the most preferred redemption locations among resident respondents, followed by locations near places they already shop or work. Many respondents also expressed interest in trusted public destinations such as libraries, community centers, schools, and other publicly accessible facilities.

Open-ended survey responses provided additional insight into preferred site characteristics. Respondents frequently identified grocery stores, shopping centers, community centers, transit-accessible locations, and other high-traffic destinations as desirable redemption locations. Many respondents emphasized that redemption opportunities should be easy to find, easy to use, and located in places that feel safe and familiar.

Respondents also expressed interest in having multiple redemption options available. While some respondents preferred self-service options that allow quick returns, others preferred staffed facilities that can provide

4 Site Types and Location Preferences



Key questions

- What types of sites do people prefer (e.g., retail, staffed centers, public facilities, mobile units)?
- Where should sites be located?
- How important are immediate refunds and staffed assistance?
- What locations do people trust and use most?



Model Study Recommendation Connection

Informs recommended site types, co-location strategies, and network design.

Figure E-10. Site Types and Location Preferences: Key Questions and Connection to Model Study Recommendations

assistance, answer questions, and support individuals who may need additional help using the system. Several respondents noted that site design should accommodate different community contexts. Participants emphasized that site types and locations that work well in dense urban areas may differ from those that work best in suburban, rural, remote, or Tribal communities.

Figure E-11. Frequently Mentioned Preferred Redemption Locations



E.4.3. Interview and Engagement Findings

Interview findings reinforced survey results and provided additional detail regarding preferred site types and location characteristics.

Among community members interviewed, 67% emphasized the importance of locating redemption opportunities in places they already visit as part of daily routines. Grocery stores, transit stations, shopping destinations, gas stations, and other frequently visited locations were among the most commonly identified preferences.

Community members also expressed preferences regarding how redemption opportunities should operate. Approximately 28% preferred staffed return centers, while 25% specifically mentioned the importance of immediate cash refunds. Approximately 20% expressed interest in locations that provide 24-hour access.

Government representatives similarly emphasized the importance of locating redemption opportunities at destinations people already know and visit. Seven of the seventeen government representatives interviewed identified co-location with existing destinations as a preferred siting strategy. Several also emphasized the importance of a quick and efficient drop-off process.

One government representative explained:

"Sites need to be in heavily trafficked, well-known areas, with public transit access to reach residents without vehicles. The strategy should be to identify what areas people already know and go to, and locate sites there."

Business operators also frequently emphasized the importance of co-location. Three of the ten business operators interviewed identified locating redemption opportunities near destinations people already visit as a key consideration. Another three preferred locating redemption opportunities at businesses that already sell beverage containers. Other commonly identified site characteristics included safe and clean facilities, short wait times, and site designs tailored to community needs.

Across all audience groups, grocery stores emerged as one of the most consistently preferred locations for redemption opportunities. Participants also frequently referenced transit-accessible locations, shopping destinations, community facilities, and other trusted public locations. These findings suggest that familiarity, visibility, and integration with existing travel patterns may be important factors when selecting future redemption locations.

Participants generally supported maintaining multiple redemption site types rather than relying on a single model. Interview findings suggest that a mix of staffed redemption centers, self-service options, retailer-based collection opportunities, and community-specific approaches may better accommodate the differing needs and preferences of Washington residents.

E.5. Participation and Financial Considerations

This topic explored the conditions under which residents may choose to participate in a recycling refunds program and how financial considerations may influence participation. The study team used the results to evaluate assumptions related to participation potential, financial incentives, affordability, and program design.

E.5.1. Key Takeaways

- Participation appears likely to be influenced by a combination of convenience, accessibility, financial incentives, and overall program design.
- Recovering deposit money, supporting recycling, and reducing litter were among the most frequently identified motivations for participation.
- Participants frequently emphasized that financial incentives alone may not be sufficient to drive participation if redemption opportunities are not convenient and easy to use.

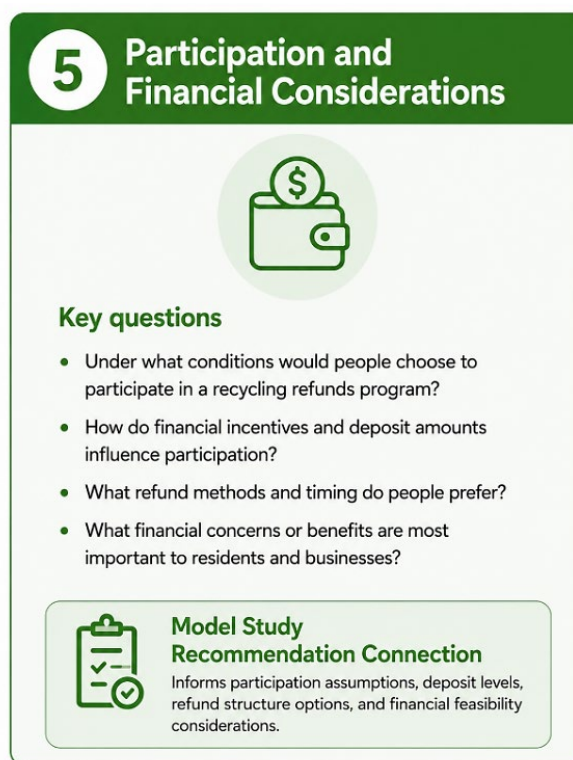


Figure E-12. Participation and Financial Considerations: Key Questions and Connection to Model Study Recommendations

- Respondents expressed differing perspectives regarding deposit values, affordability, refund methods, and potential impacts on household costs.
- Confidence that refunds can be obtained quickly and easily emerged as an important factor influencing participation.
- Findings suggest that participation is shaped by both financial considerations and the overall redemption experience.

E.5.2. Survey Findings

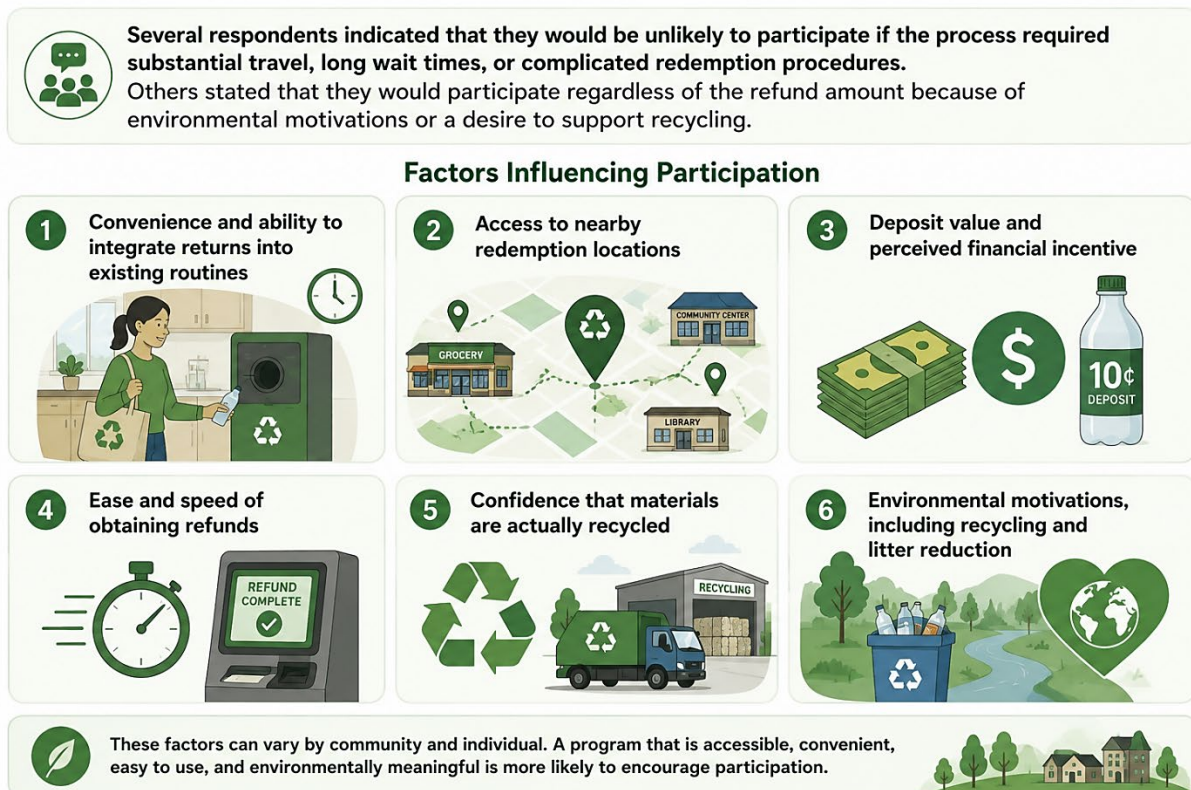
Survey findings suggest that participation in a recycling refunds program would depend on a combination of convenience, accessibility, financial incentives, and overall program design.

Many respondents indicated that participation would be influenced by whether container returns could be completed conveniently and integrated into existing routines. Respondents frequently noted that participation would be more likely if redemption opportunities were located near home or near destinations they already visit regularly.

Open-ended survey responses demonstrated differing views regarding the role of financial incentives. Some respondents viewed the refund as a meaningful incentive that would encourage participation and increase recycling. Others indicated that participation would depend on the size of the deposit, the ease of obtaining refunds, and the time required to return containers.

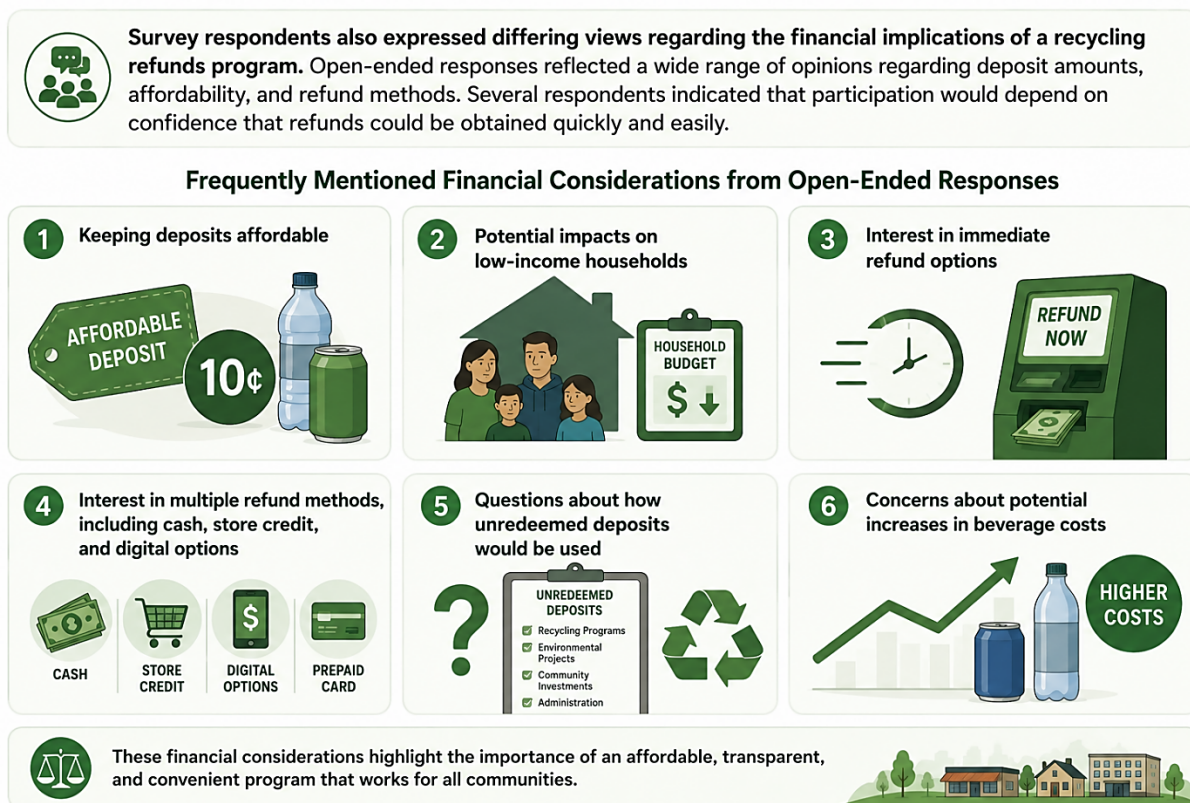
Several respondents indicated that they would be unlikely to participate if the process required substantial travel, long wait times, or complicated redemption procedures. Others stated that they would participate regardless of the refund amount because of environmental motivations or a desire to support recycling.

Figure E-13. Factors Influencing Participation



Survey respondents also expressed differing views regarding the financial implications of a recycling refunds program. Open-ended responses reflected a wide range of opinions regarding deposit amounts, affordability, and refund methods. Several respondents indicated that participation would depend on confidence that refunds could be obtained quickly and easily.

Figure E-14. Frequently Mentioned Financial Considerations from Open-Ended Responses



Overall, survey findings suggest that participation is influenced by more than financial incentives alone. Respondents consistently identified convenience, accessibility, ease of use, and confidence in the system as important factors affecting participation decisions.

E.5.3. Interview and Engagement Findings

Interview findings highlighted differing perspectives regarding participation and the role of financial incentives.

Many community members indicated that participation would depend on convenience, ease of use, and confidence that refunds could be obtained quickly and reliably. Participants frequently noted that a program would be more attractive if container returns could be integrated into existing errands and daily routines.

Financial considerations also emerged as an important factor. Forty percent of community members interviewed indicated that the financial impact of a deposit would depend on the amount charged. Thirty-three percent expressed concern that a deposit could create financial challenges for some households, while 22% indicated that a deposit would not create financial difficulties. Several participants noted that delayed refunds could create additional financial burdens.

One participant explained: "If the deposit were to exceed the price of the product, it would be unfair."

Interview participants suggested a wide range of potential deposit values. Suggested amounts ranged from approximately \$0.05 to \$1.00 per container, with \$0.25 being the most frequently mentioned value among community members interviewed.

Business operators expressed mixed views regarding likely participation rates. Half of the business operators interviewed were not supportive of implementing a recycling refunds program in Washington. Several suggested that participation may be limited because many residents already have access to curbside recycling services and may not view separate container returns as worthwhile. Other business operators argued that meaningful financial incentives would likely increase participation and improve material recovery. Three business operators specifically noted that higher deposit values would likely encourage greater participation.

Producer representatives generally emphasized the role of financial incentives in driving participation and increasing recovery rates. One participant stated: "The whole reason we're here is that the existing curbside system has failed."

Another participant noted: "There are very few other systems that can source as clean of material from the marketplace."

Participants also discussed broader financial implications associated with implementation. Several business operators indicated that retailers may incur operational and infrastructure costs associated with implementation and suggested that some costs may ultimately be passed on to consumers. Others raised concerns regarding potential overlap with existing recycling and producer responsibility programs.

Across engagement activities, participants generally agreed that participation is likely to depend on multiple factors rather than financial incentives alone. Convenience, accessibility, deposit values, refund methods, trust in the system, and confidence that materials are being recycled were all identified as factors that may influence participation decisions.

E.6. Equity and Access Gaps

This topic explored which populations may face barriers to participation and how accessibility needs may vary across communities. The study team used the results to evaluate the Model Study's equity assumptions and identify opportunities to improve accessibility across different communities, including urban, suburban, rural, remote, Tribal, and overburdened communities.

Engagement activities explored potential barriers to participation, transportation needs, accessibility challenges, and differences across community types. Participants were also asked how local conditions, geography, existing services, and household circumstances may influence participation in a recycling refunds program.

6 Equity and Access Gaps



Key questions

- What barriers could make participation difficult for some residents or communities?
- Which populations may face greater challenges accessing redemption services?
- How do transportation, mobility, language, technology, and financial factors influence participation?
- What strategies could reduce barriers and support equitable participation?
- How should equity considerations influence future program design and implementation?



Model Study Recommendation Connection

Informs equity assumptions, accessibility strategies, outreach approaches, and program design decisions to support equitable access across Washington.

Figure E-15. Equity and Access Gaps: Key Questions and Connection to Model Study Recommendations

Understanding these factors is important because redemption networks that appear accessible on paper may not be equally accessible in practice. Findings from this topic help inform future decisions regarding site placement, accessibility requirements, outreach strategies, service models, and community-specific implementation approaches.

E.6.1. Key Takeaways

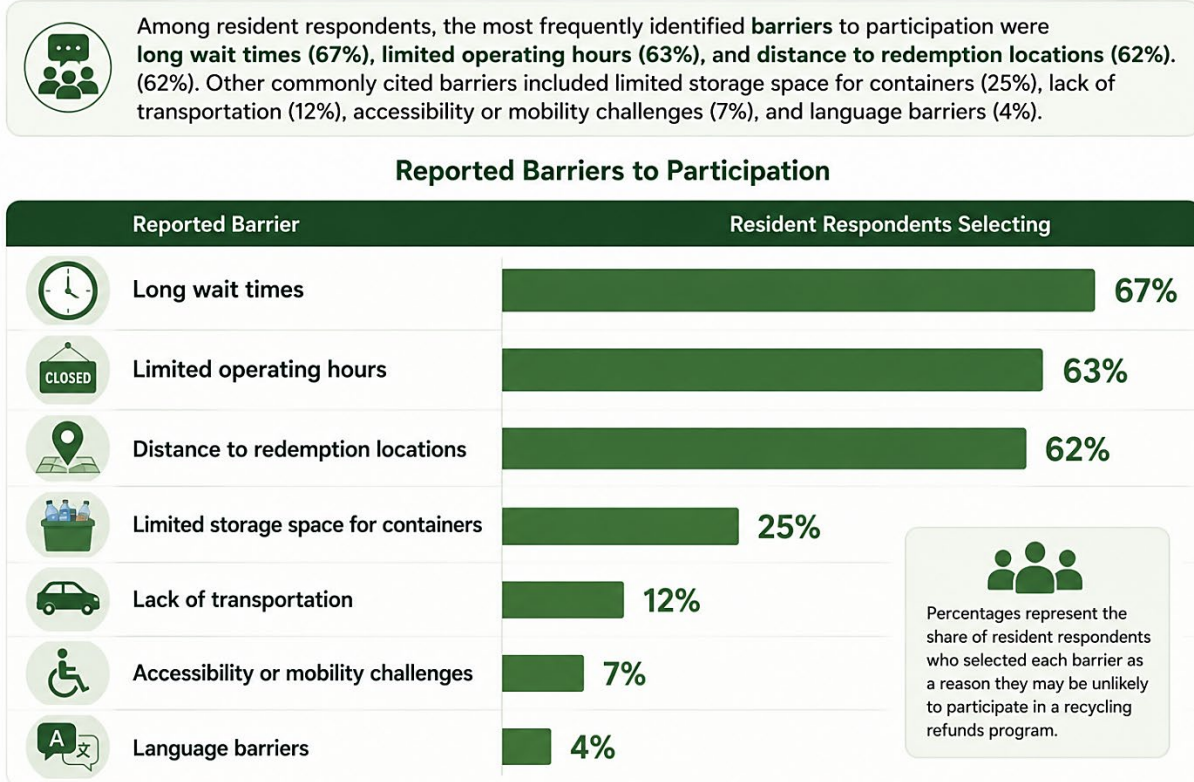
- Participants consistently emphasized that accessibility is influenced by more than distance alone.
- Long wait times, limited operating hours, and distance to redemption locations were the most frequently identified barriers to participation.
- Community-based organizations identified additional barriers related to transportation access, language access, mobility limitations, technology access, and household circumstances.
- Accessibility needs varied across urban, suburban, rural, remote, Tribal, and overburdened communities.
- Participants frequently emphasized that a one-size-fits-all approach may not effectively address the needs of all communities.
- Findings suggest that equitable access will depend on designing redemption opportunities that reflect local transportation patterns, community conditions, and accessibility needs.

E.6.2. Survey Findings

Survey findings suggest that accessibility is influenced by more than distance alone. Respondents identified a range of factors that could affect participation, including wait times, operating hours, transportation options, mobility limitations, language access, and household circumstances.

Among resident respondents, the most frequently identified barriers to participation were long wait times (67%), limited operating hours (63%), and distance to redemption locations (62%). Other commonly cited barriers included limited storage space for containers (25%), lack of transportation (12%), accessibility or mobility challenges (7%), and language barriers (4%).

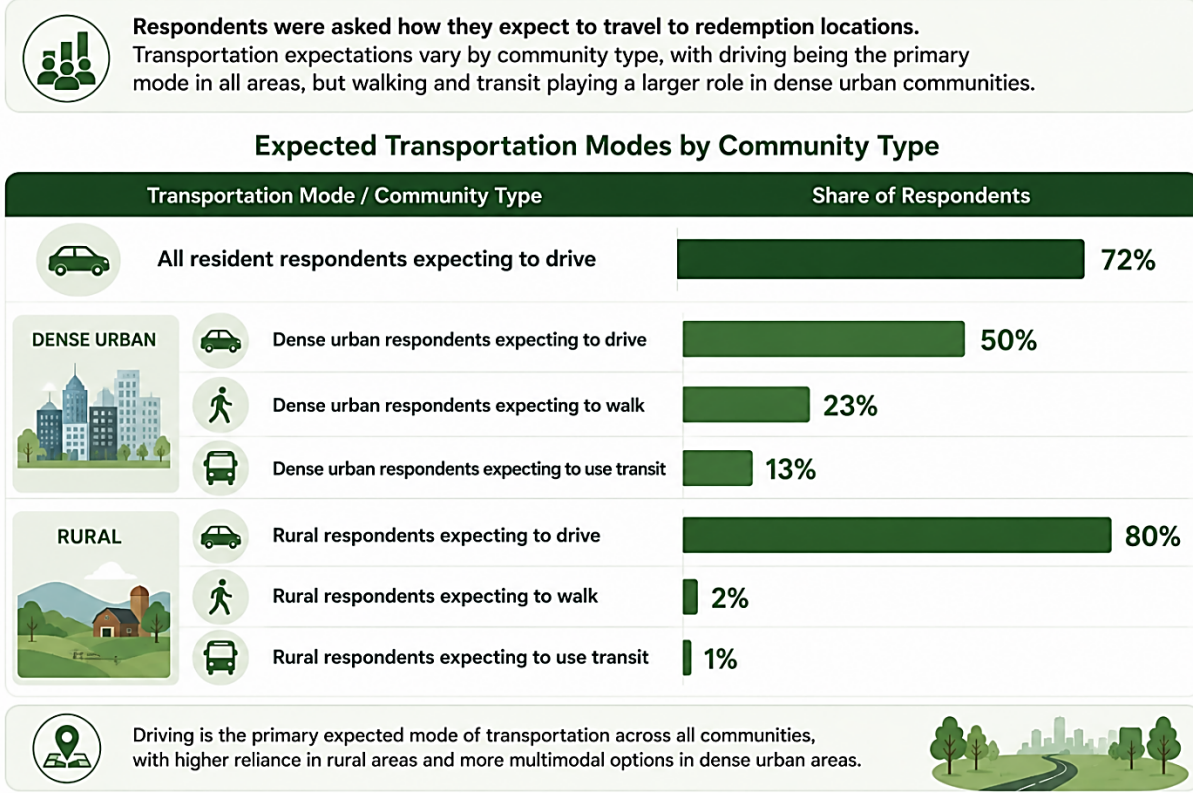
Figure E-16. Reported Barriers to Participation



These findings suggest that participants evaluated accessibility broadly and frequently considered whether container returns could be incorporated into existing routines without requiring significant additional travel, time, or effort.

Transportation patterns varied substantially across community types. Most survey respondents expected to access redemption services by personal vehicle (72%). However, transportation preferences differed across geographic settings. Respondents living in dense urban communities more frequently identified walking, biking, and public transit as transportation options, while respondents in rural and remote communities generally expected to drive and reported greater willingness to travel longer distances to access redemption services.

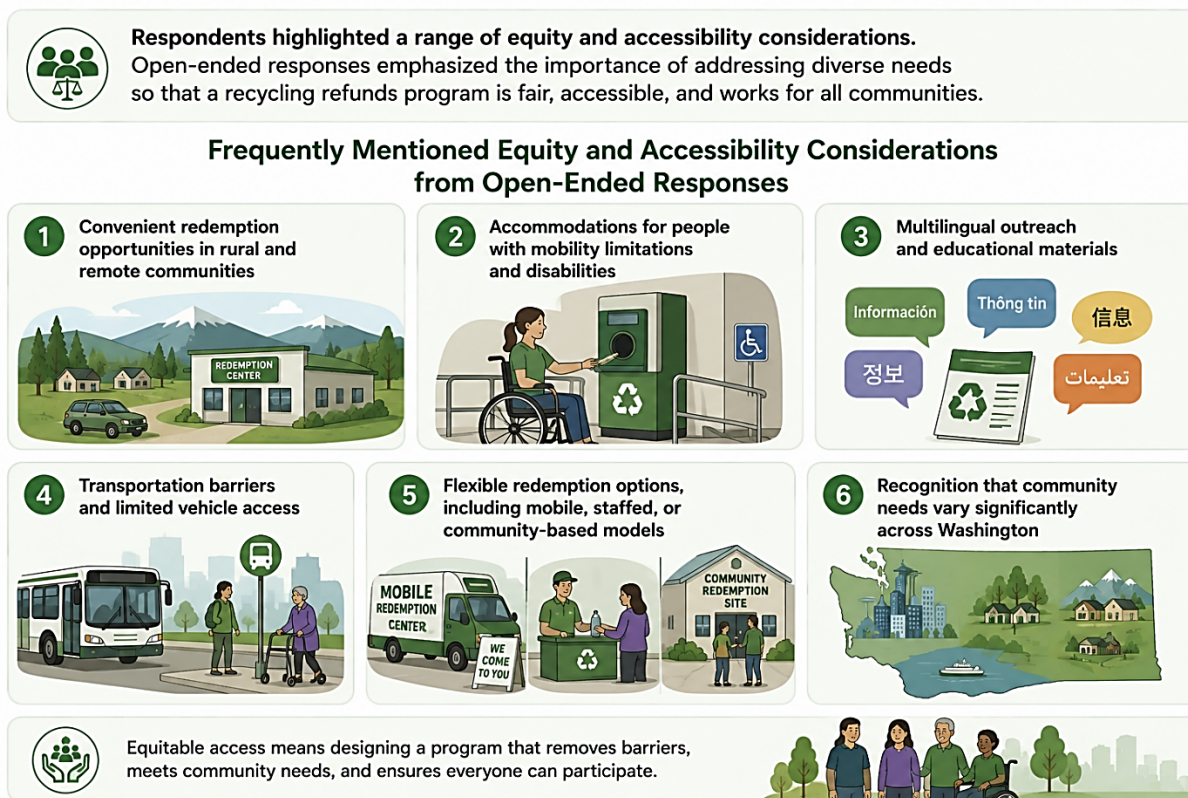
Figure E-17. Expected Transportation Modes by Community Type



Open-ended survey responses further highlighted the importance of tailoring accessibility approaches to local conditions. To better understand equity, access, and affordability considerations, the study team reviewed and coded responses to identify recurring themes and recommendations. Findings reinforced the importance of recognizing differences in geography, transportation availability, population density, community resources, and existing service infrastructure.

Respondents frequently noted that accessibility expectations may differ across communities and emphasized that a one-size-fits-all approach may not effectively address the needs of all Washington residents. Many respondents highlighted the importance of ensuring that redemption services are accessible to older adults, individuals with disabilities, households without reliable transportation, and residents living in communities with limited retail or recycling infrastructure. Others emphasized the importance of language access, culturally appropriate outreach, and clear communication to support participation among historically underserved populations. Several recurring themes emerged from the coded responses as described in [Figure E-18](#).

Figure E-18. Frequently Mentioned Equity and Accessibility Considerations from Open-Ended Responses



Overall, open-ended responses suggest that accessibility depends on more than physical proximity to a redemption location. Respondents consistently emphasized the importance of transportation options, affordability, operating conditions, awareness, and community-specific needs. These findings reinforce broader survey and engagement results indicating that equitable access may require flexible approaches tailored to different populations and communities across Washington.

E.6.3. Interview and Engagement Findings

Interview and engagement findings reinforced the importance of community context in shaping accessibility and participation. Across interviews, participants frequently emphasized that accessibility depends on more than distance to a redemption site. Transportation options, mobility needs, language access, technology access, household circumstances, and local service conditions were all identified as factors that could affect participation.

Community-based organizations and community members identified several barriers that may not be fully captured by traditional measures of geographic access. Participants discussed challenges that could affect individuals with mobility limitations, limited access to transportation, limited familiarity with automated technology, and households without reliable internet access. Participants also highlighted the importance of language access, culturally appropriate outreach, and redemption options that provide immediate refunds.

Government representatives similarly emphasized that accessibility should be evaluated within the context of how people travel and access services in their communities. Several representatives expressed concern that communities that rely on public transit or have limited vehicle access could be underserved if redemption locations are not integrated into existing travel patterns. Others noted that

rural communities may face challenges if residents are required to pay deposits but have fewer opportunities to recover them. To address these concerns, several participants emphasized the importance of locating redemption sites near destinations people already visit regularly.

One government representative explained: “The solutions for different populations will be different: for urban residents without a car, the best access point is a nearby drop-off facility. For suburban and rural residents, curbside is most convenient... There’s no golden answer, but the design cannot be one-size-fits-all.”

Participants frequently emphasized that accessibility needs vary across communities. Interviewees discussed differences between urban, suburban, rural, remote, and Tribal communities and noted that transportation options, existing infrastructure, and travel patterns may influence how residents access redemption services. Several participants cautioned against relying on a single statewide approach and instead supported flexible service models that can respond to local conditions while maintaining consistent access goals.

Business operators also identified potential equity considerations. Several participants noted that low-income households and individuals relying on SNAP benefits could be disproportionately affected by deposit costs, particularly if refunds are difficult to obtain quickly. Business operators also identified barriers that may affect rural residents and households without reliable transportation.

Language access emerged as a recurring theme across multiple engagement activities. Community members identified language barriers as a potential obstacle to participation, while government representatives emphasized the importance of ensuring that information and outreach materials are accessible to communities with different cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

Taken together, interview and engagement findings suggest that accessibility is shaped by a combination of geographic, social, economic, and community-specific factors. Participants consistently emphasized that equitable access requires more than meeting minimum distance requirements. Successful implementation may depend on designing redemption services that reflect how people travel, communicate, access information, and navigate daily life within their communities.

E.7. System Integration and Operations

This topic explored how a recycling refunds program may interact with existing recycling systems, material flows, infrastructure, contracts, and operations. The study team used the results to identify operational considerations, opportunities, and potential impacts that may not have been fully addressed in the Model Study.

Engagement activities explored how a recycling refunds program may affect existing collection systems, material recovery facilities, transportation networks, retailers, local governments, and future producer responsibility programs. Participants were also asked to identify operational challenges, infrastructure needs, and implementation considerations that could affect long-term program performance.

Understanding these considerations is important because a recycling refunds program would operate alongside existing recycling and waste management systems. Findings from this topic help inform future decisions regarding network design, infrastructure investments, operational responsibilities, system integration, and long-term program sustainability.

E.7.1. Key Takeaways

- Participants generally supported improving beverage container recovery but frequently emphasized the importance of understanding how a recycling refunds program may affect existing recycling systems.
- System integration emerged as a significant consideration across surveys, interviews, and engagement activities.
- Participants identified potential operational benefits, including cleaner material streams, increased recovery rates, and reduced contamination.
- Participants also identified concerns regarding material flows, infrastructure investments, operational complexity, and potential duplication with existing programs.
- Operational feasibility, including siting, staffing, transportation, servicing, and long-term maintenance, was consistently identified as an important implementation consideration.
- Participants frequently emphasized the importance of balancing accessibility goals with practical operational realities.

E.7.2. Survey Findings

Survey findings indicate that many participants evaluated a potential recycling refunds program within the broader context of Washington's existing recycling system. Respondents frequently discussed how a recycling refunds program could interact with curbside recycling, drop-off recycling programs, material recovery facilities, and the state's recently enacted Recycling Reform Act.



Figure E-19. System Integration and Operations: Key Questions and Connection to Model Study Recommendations

Open-ended survey responses revealed differing perspectives regarding system integration. Some respondents viewed a recycling refunds program as an opportunity to improve beverage container recovery rates, reduce contamination, and provide cleaner material streams. Others expressed concern that creating a separate redemption system could duplicate existing services or remove valuable materials from current recycling programs.

Participants frequently identified operational considerations from open-ended responses are described in [Figure E-20](#).

Figure E-20. Frequently Mentioned Operational Considerations from Open-Ended Responses



Several respondents also emphasized the importance of minimizing confusion for residents. Participants frequently noted that any future recycling refunds program should be designed in a way that is easy to understand and clearly coordinated with existing recycling services.

Overall, survey findings suggest that participants generally support efforts to improve beverage container recovery but frequently emphasized the importance of understanding how a recycling refunds program may affect existing recycling systems, infrastructure investments, and local operations.

E.7.3. Interview and Engagement Findings

Interview and engagement findings provided additional insight into how participants believe a recycling refunds program could interact with existing recycling systems.

Participants frequently discussed the relationship between a recycling refunds program and existing curbside recycling systems. Some participants viewed the programs as complementary and suggested that a recycling refunds program could improve recovery rates and provide cleaner material streams. Others expressed concern that diverting beverage containers from curbside programs could affect revenues, contracts, and existing recycling infrastructure.

One participant explained: "If the deposit program pulls aluminum cans out of the transfer station revenue stream and into kiosks instead, it could become a point of loss in the system, especially because we already have curbside recycling."

Participants also discussed how a recycling refunds program may interact with Washington's Recycling Reform Act and future producer responsibility programs. Several participants noted that Washington is entering a period of significant change in the recycling system and emphasized the importance of understanding how multiple policy initiatives may interact over time.

Operational feasibility emerged as a recurring theme across interviews. Participants frequently discussed challenges associated with siting redemption locations, staffing facilities, transporting materials, maintaining equipment, and ensuring consistent servicing of redemption sites.

One participant summarized this concern by stating: "The key operational question is who is responsible for these kiosks and who empties them and gets them to the designated drop point. These questions need to be answered clearly before any steps are taken."

Participants also identified practical implementation considerations related to retailer participation, storage space, transportation logistics, infrastructure readiness, and long-term operational sustainability. Several participants noted that successful implementation would likely require significant coordination among organizations involved in collection, transportation, processing, and program administration.

At the same time, participants identified several potential operational benefits. These included increased recovery of beverage containers, reduced contamination, improved material quality, greater recycling consistency, and potential reductions in litter. Several participants also noted that beverage containers represent one of the highest-value recyclable material streams and may be particularly well suited for dedicated collection systems.

Across engagement activities, participants consistently emphasized the importance of balancing accessibility goals with operational realities. One participant summarized this perspective by stating:

"Ecology should not build a system based only on convenience or only on operations—both matter."

Taken together, interview and engagement findings suggest that successful implementation will depend on thoughtful integration with existing recycling systems, clear operational responsibilities, adequate infrastructure, and ongoing coordination among organizations involved in collection, processing, transportation, and program administration.

E.8. Governance and Implementation

This topic explored whether proposed roles, responsibilities, and administrative structures could effectively support implementation of a recycling refunds program. The study team used the results to evaluate implementation assumptions, identify governance considerations, and better understand how participants believe responsibilities should be assigned across organizations involved in program administration and oversight.

Engagement activities explored governance structures, implementation responsibilities, oversight, coordination needs, funding administration, accountability, and implementation support. Participants were also asked to identify factors that may facilitate or hinder implementation and to describe what types of guidance, resources, and organizational structures may be needed to support successful program operation.

Understanding these considerations is important because governance structures influence how programs are administered, how responsibilities are assigned, and how organizations coordinate to achieve program goals. Findings from this topic help inform future decisions regarding oversight, accountability, implementation planning, stakeholder coordination, and long-term program management.

E.8.1. Key Takeaways

- Participants consistently emphasized the importance of clearly defined roles, responsibilities, and accountability structures.
- Local governments identified guidance, funding, technical assistance, and implementation support as important needs.
- Participants frequently discussed the importance of coordinating a recycling refunds program with the Recycling Reform Act and future producer responsibility programs.
- Clear communication, transparency, and stakeholder coordination were identified as important implementation considerations.
- Participants emphasized the need to allow sufficient time for planning, coordination, infrastructure development, and public education before implementation.
- Successful implementation may depend on clearly defining responsibilities for administration, operations, oversight, enforcement, and performance monitoring.



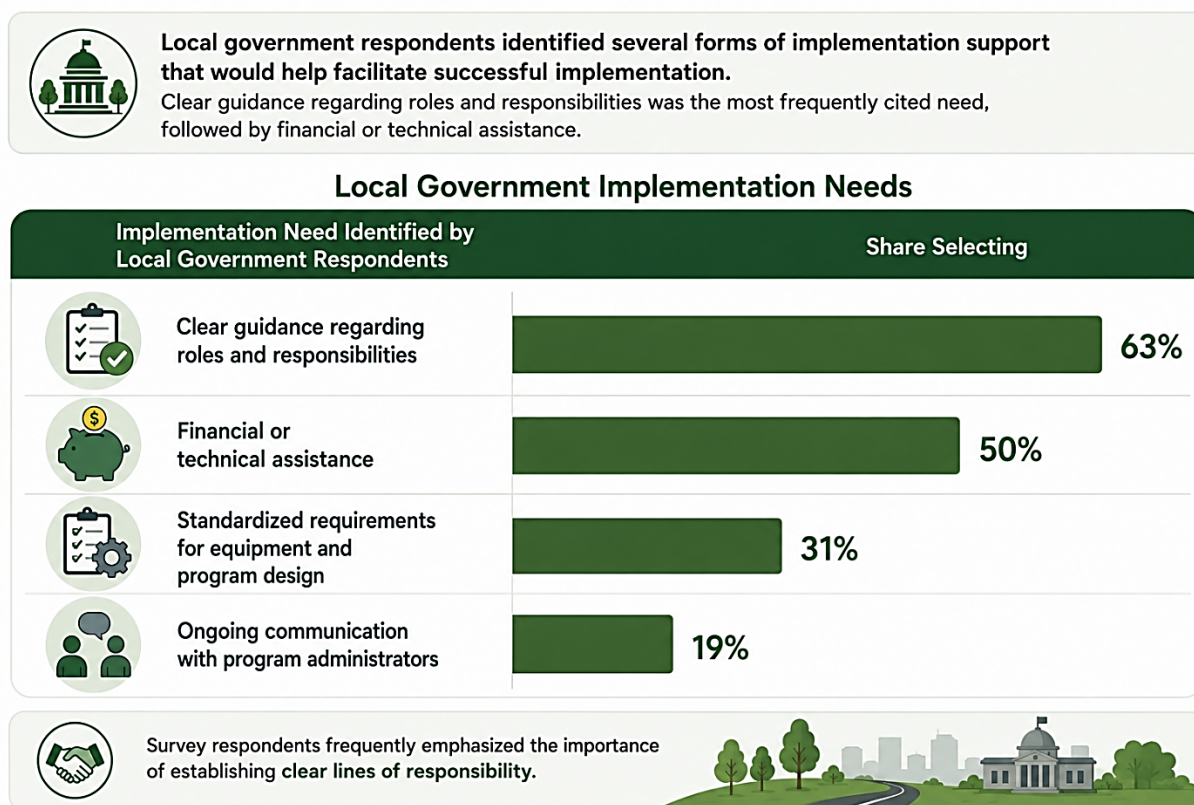
Figure E-21. Governance and Implementation: Key Questions and Connection to Model Study Recommendations

E.8.2. Survey Findings

Survey findings indicate that participants view governance and implementation planning as important factors influencing the success of a recycling refunds program.

Local government respondents identified several forms of implementation support that would help facilitate successful implementation. Sixty-three percent identified clear guidance regarding roles and responsibilities as an important need, while 50% identified financial or technical assistance. Additional priorities included standardized requirements for equipment and program design (31%) and ongoing communication with program administrators (19%).

Figure E-22. Local Government Implementation Needs



Survey respondents frequently emphasized the importance of establishing clear lines of responsibility among organizations involved in program implementation. Open-ended responses frequently referenced questions regarding administration, oversight, enforcement, reporting, funding management, and coordination with existing recycling programs. Participants also frequently discussed implementation timing and transition planning. Several respondents noted that adequate planning time may be needed to support infrastructure development, public education, stakeholder coordination, and integration with existing recycling systems. Open-ended responses further highlighted interest in transparency and accountability. Participants frequently expressed interest in understanding how program performance would be measured, how funds would be managed, and how organizations would be held accountable for meeting performance expectations.

Figure E-23. Frequently Mentioned Governance and Implementation Considerations from Open-Ended Responses



Overall, survey findings suggest that participants view governance structures and implementation planning as important components of program success. Respondents consistently emphasized the importance of clarity, accountability, coordination, and implementation support.

E. 8.3. Interview and Engagement Findings

Interview and engagement findings reinforced the importance of establishing clear governance structures and implementation responsibilities.

Participants frequently discussed uncertainty regarding who would be responsible for operating redemption infrastructure, managing logistics, administering funds, overseeing performance, and coordinating implementation activities. Several participants noted that these decisions could significantly affect local governments, retailers, recycling system operators, and other organizations involved in program implementation.

One participant explained: “The key operational question is who is responsible for these kiosks and who empties them and gets them to the designated drop point. These questions need to be answered clearly before any steps are taken, because the answer defines a lot.”

Participants also emphasized the importance of coordinating a recycling refunds program with existing and emerging recycling policies. Several noted that implementation decisions should consider how the program would interact with the Recycling Reform Act and future producer responsibility programs. Participants frequently discussed the importance of avoiding conflicting requirements and ensuring that responsibilities are clearly aligned across programs.

Local government representatives frequently emphasized the importance of implementation support. Participants identified technical assistance, funding, guidance, stakeholder coordination, and sufficient planning time as important factors that could help facilitate implementation. Several noted that local governments may play a role in permitting, siting, education, and responding to community concerns regardless of their formal responsibilities under a future program.

Transparency and accountability also emerged as recurring themes. Participants frequently emphasized the importance of clearly communicating program goals, performance expectations, reporting requirements, and organizational responsibilities. Several noted that public trust may depend on confidence that the program is being managed effectively and that materials are being collected and recycled as intended.

Across engagement activities, participants consistently emphasized that governance decisions will influence many aspects of implementation, including operational responsibilities, stakeholder coordination, funding management, performance oversight, and long-term program administration.

Taken together, interview and engagement findings suggest that successful implementation will depend on clearly defined responsibilities, effective coordination among participating organizations, adequate implementation support, and governance structures that provide transparency, accountability, and flexibility over time.

E.9. Risks, Barriers, and Conditions for Success

This topic explored what challenges could affect implementation and what factors participants believe would be necessary to support successful operation of a recycling refunds program. The study team used the results to identify implementation risks, potential barriers, mitigation strategies, and opportunities to improve program performance.

Engagement activities explored operational risks, participation barriers, implementation challenges, public acceptance, education and outreach needs, and factors that may influence long-term program success. Participants were also asked to identify concerns about program design and implementation and to share perspectives on what would be needed to build trust and support participation over time.

Understanding these considerations is important because even well-designed systems may struggle to achieve desired outcomes if significant barriers are not addressed. Findings from this topic help identify factors that may influence participation, operational performance, public acceptance, and long-term program effectiveness.

9 Risks, Barriers, and Conditions for Success



Key questions

- What challenges or risks could affect implementation?
- What might prevent people from participating?
- What conditions are most important for a successful program?
- How can trust, transparency, and education be built?
- What factors could help ensure long-term participation and program sustainability?



Model Study Recommendation Connection

Informs assumptions about participation, operational feasibility, public acceptance, and factors needed to achieve program goals.

Figure E-24. Risks, Barriers, and Conditions for Success: Key Questions and Connection to Model Study Recommendations

E.9.1. Key Takeaways

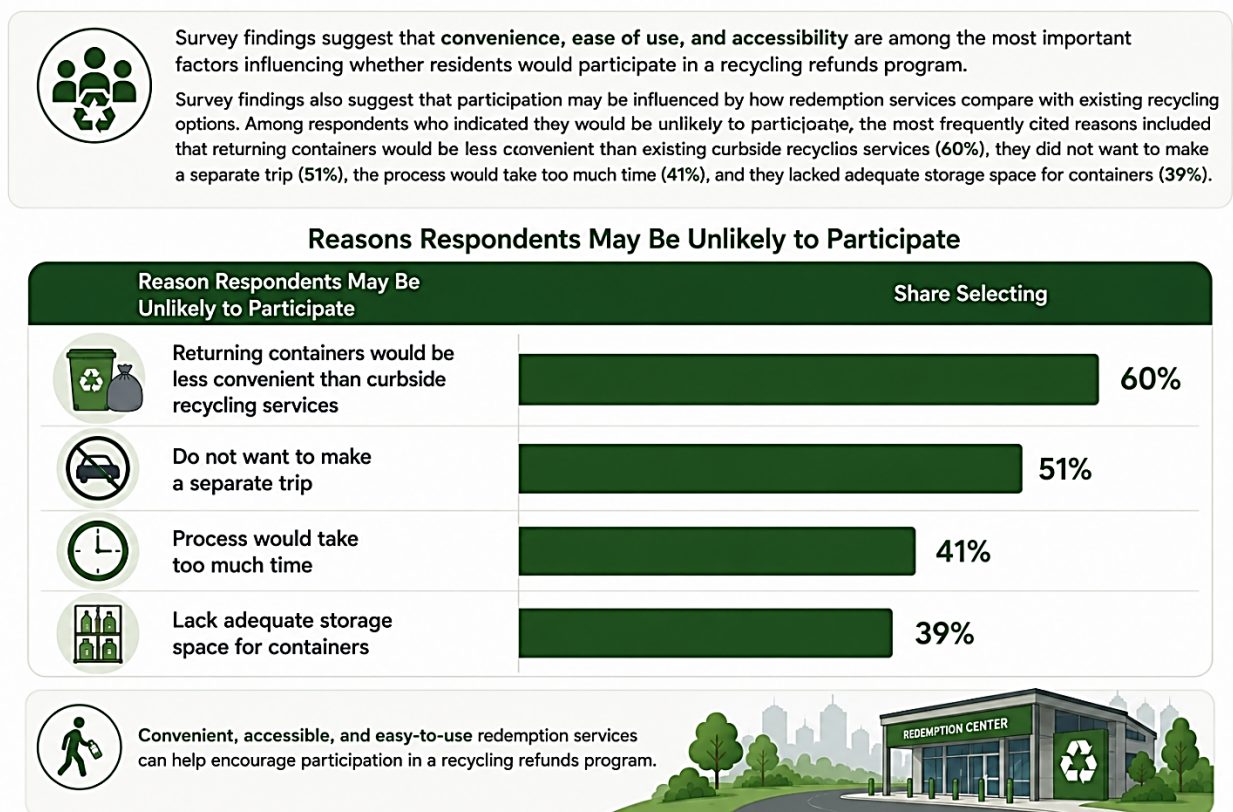
- Convenience emerged as one of the most important conditions for success across all engagement activities.
- Participants consistently identified long wait times, limited operating hours, and travel requirements as significant barriers to participation.
- Trust, transparency, and public understanding were repeatedly identified as important factors influencing program acceptance and participation.
- Participants emphasized the importance of clear communication regarding how the program works, where materials go, and how refunds are obtained.
- Education and outreach were frequently identified as critical implementation needs, particularly during program launch.
- Participants consistently emphasized that successful implementation will require balancing accessibility goals with operational feasibility and long-term sustainability.

E.9.2. Survey Findings

Survey findings suggest that convenience, ease of use, and accessibility are among the most important factors influencing whether residents would participate in a recycling refunds program. As noted in Section X above, the top three barriers to participation include long wait times, limited operating hours, and distance to redemption locations.

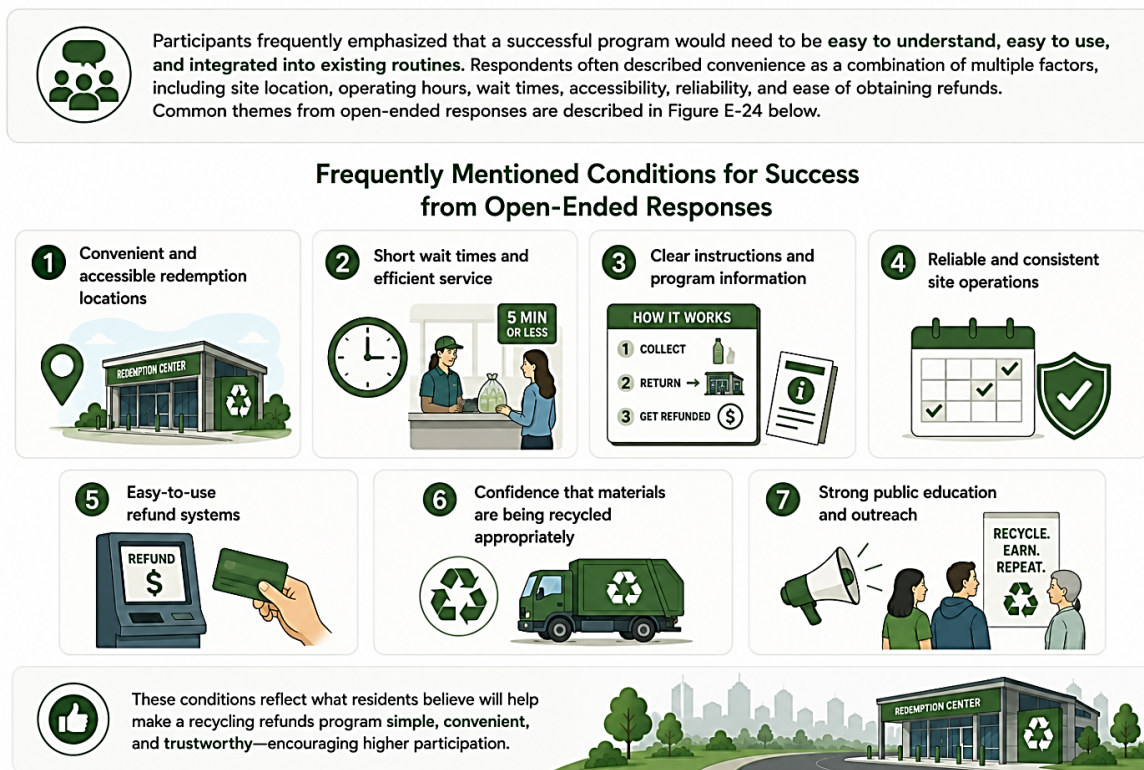
Survey findings also suggest that participation may be influenced by how redemption services compare with existing recycling options. Among respondents who indicated they would be unlikely to participate, the most frequently cited reasons included that returning containers would be less convenient than existing curbside recycling services (60%), they did not want to make a separate trip (51%), the process would take too much time (41%), and they lacked adequate storage space for containers (39%). [Figure E-25](#) below summarizes reasons respondents may be unlikely to participate.

Figure E-25. Reasons Respondents May Be Unlikely to Participate



Open-ended responses reinforced these findings. Participants frequently emphasized that a successful program would need to be easy to understand, easy to use, and integrated into existing routines. Respondents often described convenience as a combination of multiple factors, including site location, operating hours, wait times, accessibility, reliability, and ease of obtaining refunds. Common themes from open-ended responses are described in [Figure E-26](#) below.

Figure E-26. Frequently Mentioned Conditions for Success from Open-Ended Responses



Overall, survey findings suggest that participation and program acceptance may depend as much on the user experience as on financial incentives. Participants consistently emphasized that convenience, reliability, and ease of use will be critical to long-term success.

E.9.3. Interview and Engagement Findings

Interview and engagement findings reinforced the importance of convenience, trust, and public understanding as conditions for success.

Participants across multiple audiences emphasized that a recycling refunds program would need to be easy to understand and simple to use. Community members, community-based organizations, local governments, retailers, producers, and recycling system operators all identified convenience as a critical factor influencing participation.

Participants frequently emphasized that public education would be necessary before and during implementation. Several noted that many residents are familiar with the concept of a recycling refunds program but may not understand how a Washington-specific program would operate. Participants identified questions regarding redemption locations, eligible containers, refund processes, and program administration as areas where additional education may be needed.

Trust and transparency emerged as recurring themes throughout interviews. Participants frequently discussed public skepticism regarding recycling and emphasized the importance of demonstrating that collected materials are actually being recycled and that program funds are being managed appropriately.

One participant explained: “It must be trustworthy and transparent. Folks have such a distrust in recycling and people need to feel a benefit. We need to show folks that containers are actually getting recycled.”

Participants also identified several implementation risks. These included operational challenges, insufficient infrastructure, inadequate staffing, confusion regarding responsibilities, potential overlap with existing programs, and the possibility that participation rates could be lower than anticipated if redemption opportunities are not sufficiently convenient.

Retail and recycling system participants also raised concerns regarding site maintenance, sanitation, storage requirements, contamination, vandalism, and servicing logistics. Several noted that these issues may affect both operational costs and public perception of the program.

Community-based organizations frequently emphasized the importance of designing a system that is responsive to the needs of different communities. Participants noted that barriers affecting one community may differ substantially from those affecting another and emphasized the importance of ongoing evaluation and adaptation over time.

Across engagement activities, participants consistently emphasized that successful implementation will require more than infrastructure alone. Convenience, trust, transparency, communication, and public understanding were repeatedly identified as factors that may ultimately determine whether residents choose to participate.

Taken together, interview and engagement findings suggest that long-term success will depend on building a program that residents view as convenient, reliable, transparent, and responsive to community needs. Participants consistently emphasized that public confidence, clear communication, and ease of use may be just as important as physical access to redemption services.

E.10. Benefits and Outcomes

This topic explored what benefits matter most to residents, communities, businesses, Tribal Nations, and other interested parties. The study team used the results to evaluate whether anticipated outcomes associated with a recycling refunds program aligned with participant priorities and expectations.

Engagement activities explored potential environmental, community, economic, operational, and material recovery benefits associated with a recycling refunds program. Participants were asked which outcomes they considered most important and how a recycling refunds program could potentially affect recycling behavior, litter, material recovery, and broader community goals.

Understanding these priorities is important because participants may evaluate a recycling refunds program differently depending on the benefits they believe it could achieve. Findings from this topic help identify the outcomes that participants view as most valuable and provide context for evaluating tradeoffs associated with program implementation.

10 Benefits and Outcomes



Key questions

- What benefits do people hope to achieve from a recycling refunds program?
- How might the program affect recycling rates, material quality, and litter?
- What environmental, community, and economic benefits are most important?
- How could the program create value for residents, communities, and local governments?
- How might the program support a circular economy and sustainability goals?



Model Study Recommendation Connection

Informs evaluation of anticipated benefits, supports outcome priorities, and helps weigh tradeoffs in program design.

Figure E-27. Benefits and Outcomes: Key Questions and Connection to Model Study Recommendations

E.10.1. Key Takeaways

- Participants most frequently identified increased recycling, reduced litter, and cleaner communities as important potential benefits of a recycling refunds program.
- Many participants viewed improved material quality and increased recovery of beverage containers as important system-level benefits.
- Participants frequently identified both environmental and community benefits, including reduced waste, cleaner public spaces, and improved recycling outcomes.
- Economic benefits, including refunds returned to consumers and opportunities for container collection, were also identified as important by many respondents.
- Participants frequently linked anticipated benefits to program design, noting that achieving desired outcomes may depend on providing convenient and accessible redemption opportunities.
- While participants identified many potential benefits, some also emphasized the importance of evaluating whether those benefits would justify implementation costs and operational impacts.

E.10.2. Survey Findings

Survey respondents identified a wide range of potential benefits associated with a recycling refunds program.

Among resident respondents, the most frequently identified potential benefits were increased recycling (57%), reduced litter (57%), and cleaner neighborhoods and public spaces (51%). Respondents also identified reducing waste-related costs over time, increasing opportunities to recover deposits, and creating incentives for container collection and recycling. These results are summarized in [Figure E-28](#).

Open-ended responses frequently emphasized the potential for a recycling refunds program to increase beverage container recovery and reduce litter in public spaces. Participants also discussed broader environmental benefits, including resource conservation, reduced waste disposal, and increased recycling participation.

Overall, survey findings suggest that participants viewed recycling, litter reduction, and cleaner communities as the most important potential outcomes. Respondents also identified a range of environmental, economic, and community benefits that could result from increased beverage container recovery.



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Most Frequently Identified Potential Benefits

Potential Benefit	Resident Respondents Selecting
 Increased recycling	57%
 Reduced litter	57%
 Cleaner neighborhoods and public spaces	51%
 Reduced waste-related costs over time	45%
 Returning deposit money to consumers	41%
 Creating income opportunities for container collectors	34%
 Charitable donation opportunities	29%
 Additional income through returning containers	27%



These potential benefits highlight the many ways a recycling refunds program can support communities, the environment, and residents.



Figure E-28: Most Frequently Identified Potential Benefits

E.10.3. Interview and Engagement Findings

Interview and engagement findings reinforced many of the benefits identified through the survey while also providing additional perspective regarding why participants viewed those outcomes as important.

Across engagement activities, participants frequently identified increased recycling and reduced litter as primary goals of a recycling refunds program. Community members, local governments, community-based organizations, producers, retailers, and recycling system participants all discussed the potential for a recycling refunds program to increase beverage container recovery and reduce containers in public spaces, parks, roadways, and waterways.

Participants also frequently discussed material quality. Several participants emphasized that beverage containers collected through dedicated redemption systems may be cleaner and less contaminated than

containers collected through commingled recycling systems. Participants noted that higher-quality material streams may improve recyclability and support closed-loop recycling opportunities.

One participant explained: “There are very few other systems that can source material that clean from the marketplace.”

Several participants also identified broader environmental benefits. These included reducing waste, conserving resources, increasing the value recovered from recyclable materials, and supporting circular economy objectives. Participants frequently discussed recycling refunds programs as one tool that could contribute to broader sustainability and waste reduction goals.

Economic benefits also emerged during interviews. Some participants emphasized the importance of returning deposit funds to consumers and creating opportunities for individuals and organizations to collect containers for supplemental income or charitable purposes. Others identified potential economic benefits associated with improved material recovery and stronger recycling markets.

At the same time, participants frequently emphasized that anticipated benefits should be considered alongside implementation costs, operational impacts, and broader system considerations. Several participants noted that the degree to which benefits are realized may depend on participation rates, accessibility, convenience, and overall program design.

Participants also expressed differing views regarding the magnitude of potential benefits. While some believed a recycling refunds program could substantially improve recycling outcomes, others questioned whether additional gains would justify the costs of implementation given Washington's existing recycling infrastructure.

Across engagement activities, participants generally agreed that improving recycling outcomes, reducing litter, and increasing recovery of beverage containers are worthwhile objectives. Differences often centered on how effectively a recycling refunds program would achieve those outcomes and how benefits should be weighed against implementation challenges.

Taken together, interview and engagement findings suggest that participants view recycling, litter reduction, cleaner communities, and improved material recovery as the most important potential benefits of a recycling refunds program. Participants also emphasized that achieving these outcomes may depend on thoughtful program design, accessibility, participation levels, and effective implementation.