

PE5 Action: Government Solid Waste Audit

2 Points

A. Why is this action important?

As with energy and greenhouse gases, we “can’t manage what we don’t measure.” Assessing the amount and composition of the waste generated by local government operations is an essential step in establishing a baseline from which to measure waste diversion and reduction improvements over time.

B. How to implement this action

Local governments implement this action by planning for and conducting a waste assessment, known as an audit. The audit must have been completed within five years prior to the application date to be eligible for points under this Climate Smart Communities (CSC) action.

The US EPA provides numerous resources on planning and implementing this kind of audit, including checklists and other resources. Common approaches to a waste audit include the following:

- Examination of waste records
- Facility walk-throughs
- Waste sorts

There are benefits and drawbacks to each of these approaches and a combination of approaches would likely provide the most comprehensive and accurate assessment of the local government waste stream and provide the most information for how and where to implement new practices.

C. Time frame, project costs, and resource needs

Depending on the size of the local government and the approach used to conduct the waste audit, costs and resource needs vary for this action. A local government may choose to hire a consultant to conduct an audit, though it is more common for local governments with limited budgets to conduct an audit using in-house staff and resources and/or volunteers or interns. Aside from the time to conduct the audit itself, a designated staff person must take time to synthesize and analyze the results.

D. Which local governments implement this action? Which departments within the local government are most likely to have responsibility for this?

This is applicable to any local government. The effort would likely be led by the waste management or recycling division and/or other government facilities staff.

E. How to obtain points for this action

Points will be obtained for this action through completion of a waste audit in any of the forms described in Section B.

F. What to submit

Documentation of the methods used to complete the waste audit should be provided along with information about the date and location(s) of the audit. A document or report summarizing the results of the audit should also be provided. The

audit must have been completed within five years prior to the application date.

All CSC action documentation is available for public viewing after an action is approved. Action submittals should not include any information or documents that are not intended to be viewed by the public.

G. Links to additional resources or best practices

- [US EPA WasteWise Waste Assessment Approaches](#)

H. Recertification requirements

The recertification requirements are the same as the initial certification requirements.