

# Chicago Introduces Paper Cup Recycling

*Regional recycling opportunities expanded for over 1 million residents in the Midwest*

**CHICAGO >>>** (July 11, 2023) —LRS, the City of Chicago’s blue cart recycling service provider for four of the six zones, has expanded its list of accepted materials to now include paper cups. This enhanced service will allow over 1 million residents in the city of Chicago and surrounding areas the opportunity to keep paper cups out of landfills and recycle them into new products. The Windy City joins a growing trend by adding paper cups to its residential recycling program.

“As an early pioneer of the circular or closed-loop operating model, we are thrilled to be a part of this initiative to expand curbside recycling in the Midwest. The ability to add paper cups to our list of acceptable materials is in line with our goals of diverting and repurposing discarded materials, and we look forward to continuing our collaborative recycling efforts in the Chicagoland area,” said Mark Molitor, director of MRF operations at LRS.

Thanks to a communications grant from the [Foodservice Packaging Institute](#) (FPI), LRS will launch an outreach campaign to inform Chicagoland residents of what is recyclable through the expanded program and remind them that all recyclables should be clean and empty when placed in their recycling carts. The campaign will feature social media posts, an updated recycling flyer, an educational recycling video, and transit advisements tailored to the Chicagoland community. Since 2017, FPI has created pathways to grow paper cup recycling through community partner education grants on behalf of its members, who include leading manufacturers of cups and other food packaging items, paper mills and foodservice brands.

“FPI has collaborated throughout the recycling value chain to conduct research, facilitate trials and cultivate relationships with end markets to provide pathways for paper cup recycling,” said Natha Dempsey, president of the Foodservice Packaging Institute. “The Midwest represents a huge opportunity for adding paper cups to the residential recycling stream due to its proximity to end markets. We’re excited to continue expanding recycling efforts in the region.”

LRS has joined other recent regional initiatives to increase curbside recycling opportunities. By doing so, residents throughout the Chicagoland area are now able to recycle paper cups, in addition to the food packaging items that were already accepted, such as pizza boxes without any grease or residue, food and beverage cartons, paper bags, polyethylene terephthalate (PET) and polypropylene (PP) cups and aluminum foil food packaging.

“This opportunity to expand recycling to include paper cups helps Chicago minimize landfilling, reduces greenhouse gas emissions, and moves us closer to achieving our goal of increasing recycling rates,” said Chris Sauve, deputy commissioner policy and sustainability for the City of Chicago, Department of Streets and Sanitation.

Once paper cups enter the recycling system, they are baled with other paper products and sent to mills in the Great Lakes region. The high-quality fiber is used to make new paper

products that consumers use every day, like paper towels, toilet paper, napkins and even new paper cups.

To learn more about LRS' recycling initiative and see a list of all acceptable curbside recyclables, visit [www.LRSrecycles.com](http://www.LRSrecycles.com).

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