

BUSINESS RECYCLING

Partnering for a better environment



The Open Door Pantry

Business type: Food pantry

Eagan, MN

www.theopendoorpantry.org

A non-profit food pantry in Eagan that provides fresh and healthy food to low-income residents in Dakota County.

Challenge

Each year The Open Door Pantry distributes over 1 million pounds of food to families in Dakota County, 70 percent of which is fresh and perishable. Like at all food shelves, some fresh food that is donated by other organizations goes bad by the time it arrives at The Open Door Pantry. This food waste was being thrown in the trash.

How we helped

To start, The Open Door Pantry staff met with the County's sustainability consultant to go over steps to set up an expanded recycling and new organics collection program. The consultant worked with The Open Door Pantry to secure a hauler to provide organics recycling service and expand their recycling collection services to capture the increased amount of recyclable materials (e.g., plastic containers) from the new de-packaging process used to sort the food waste so it could be placed in the organics recycling.

Through funding from Dakota County's Business Recycling Incentive Program, The Open Door



Pantry received color-coded containers that were strategically placed throughout the food shelf for easy de-packaging and sorting of waste. Aside from the food area, blue recycling bins were placed at every desk for staff. Green organics containers were added to bathrooms to collect paper towels and employee common areas to collect food waste and coffee grounds.

Outcome

The amount of waste diverted annually has been significant with more than 95,000 pounds diverted annually (88,400 pounds of organics composted and an additional 6,684 pounds of materials recycled).

Highlights

Goal Add organics recycling and improve recycling sorting

Why To reduce food waste going to the landfill and collect more recyclable packaging

How Added color-coded and labeled containers to sort trash, recycling, and organics. Trained volunteers to de-package food waste. Also worked with the landlord and hauler to update waste services.

Results An estimated 88,400 lbs. of organics (food waste) and an additional 6,864 lbs. of recyclables collected annually.