



DEPARTMENT OF
ECOLOGY
State of Washington

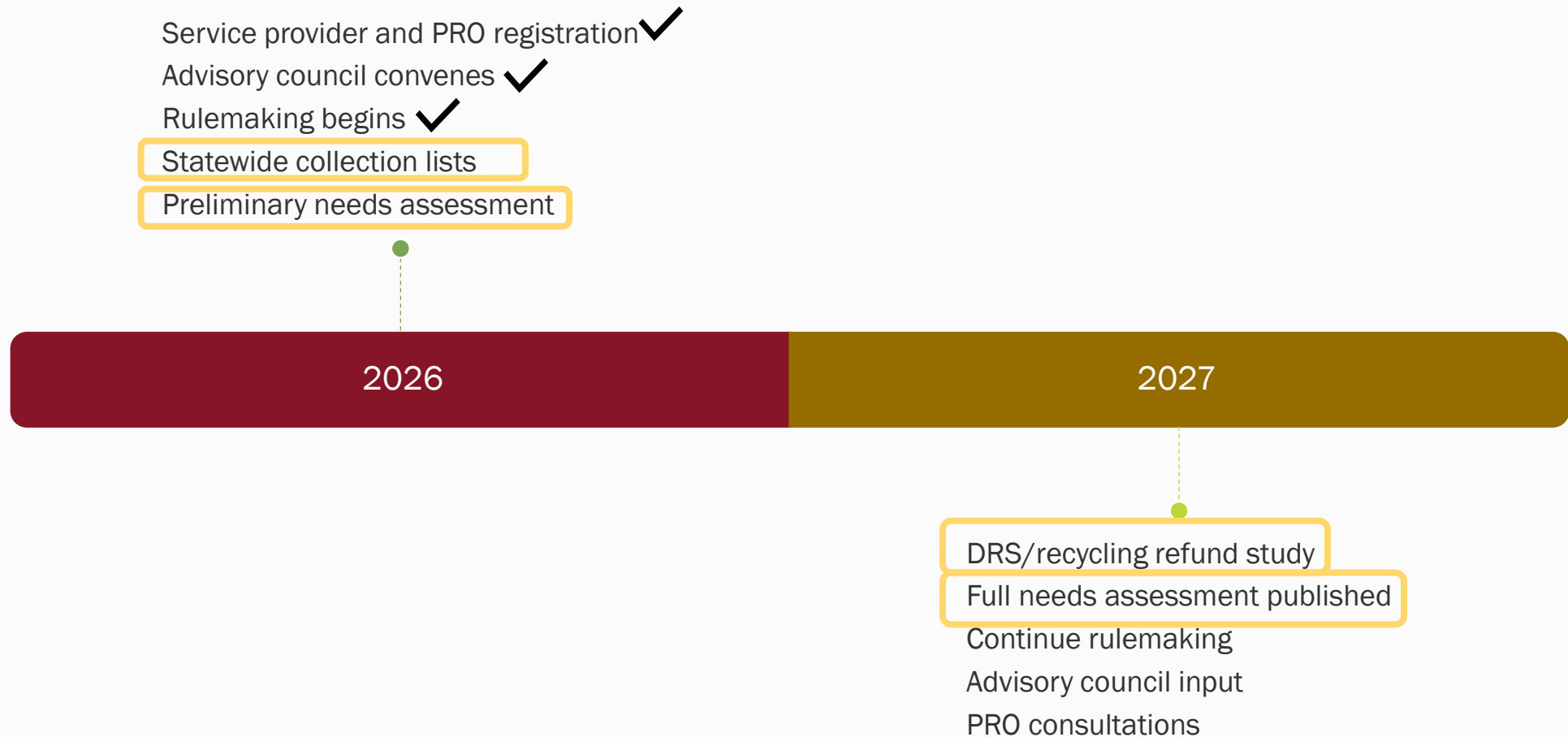
Recycling Reform Act

April 29th Advisory Council Meeting

Recycling Reform Act Timeline



Recycling Reform Act Timeline





Statewide Collection Lists

Statewide Collection Lists

- Initial lists due October 1, 2026
- Lists developed to direct (full) needs assessment
- Four lists:
 - Residential recycling (curbside and drop-off)
 - Residential composting
 - Public place collection (sidewalks, plazas, public parks, forests, etc)
 - Alternative collection



Statewide Collection Lists

Candidate Materials List

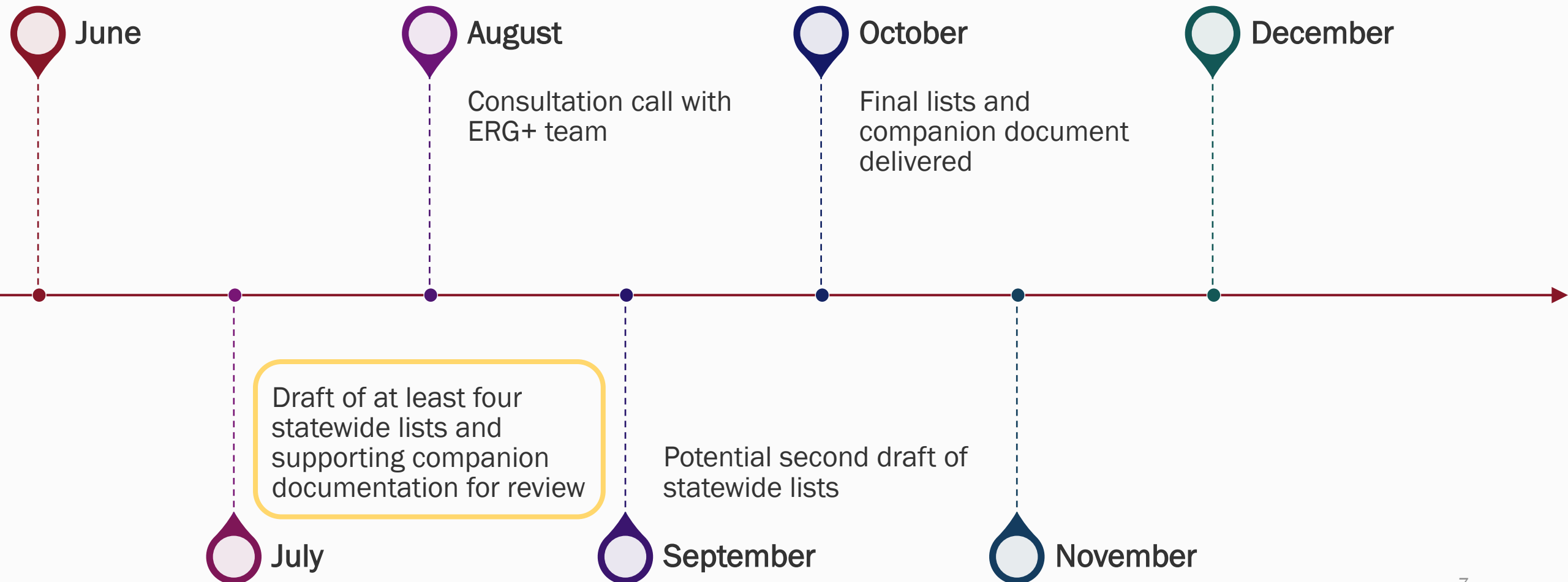
- Materials being considered for inclusion on statewide lists
- ~100 materials



Evaluation Criteria

- Statewide collection access
- Compatibility with sorting and processing infrastructure and practicalities of sorting and storing the material
- Responsible end markets
- Anticipated yield loss for the material during the recycling or composting process
- Harmonization with other states implementing EPR
- Adherence to design guidelines for recyclability or compostability
- Easy identification and preparation
- Unlikely to cause contamination
- Environmental health and safety considerations
- Environmental factors from a life-cycle perspective

Documents to Review – Statewide Lists





Preliminary Needs Assessment

Preliminary Needs Assessment

- Due December 31, 2026
- Identifies:
 - **Covered materials:** material types and volumes in WA, amounts processed, end markets
 - **Service access:** residential service types (curbside/drop-off, single and multifamily), costs, and unserved areas in each city and county
 - **Infrastructure:**
 - MRF, compost facilities, transfer stations, and drop-off sites
 - Capacity, technologies, and costs
 - **Costs and contracts:** annual system costs and contract terms
 - **Gaps and needs:** service, capacity, and market constraints

Request for Information/Surveys/Interviews

- Request for information
 - Seeking technical data, studies, recommendations to inform statewide lists and needs assessments
 - Supplement existing data, fill gaps
 - Responses due May 8
- Targeted surveys/interviews for needs assessments
 - Municipalities, Tribes, producers, collection service providers, CAA and Interchange360

Request for Information to Develop Statewide Recycling Lists and Needs Assessments

April 1, 2026

Why is Ecology requesting information?

The Washington Department of Ecology (Ecology) is requesting technical information to inform requirements of [Section 090](#) and [Section 110](#) of the Recycling Reform Act passed by the legislature in 2025, which requires an extended producer responsibility (EPR) program for consumer packaging and paper products ("covered materials"). The law, codified in Chapter 70A.208 RCW, directs Ecology to:

- Develop four statewide collection lists, due by October 1, 2026, identifying covered materials suitable for residential recycling, residential composting, public place collection, or alternative collection.
- Complete a preliminary needs assessment due by December 31, 2026, describing current recycling system access, infrastructure, contracts, costs, material flows, and market conditions.
- Complete a full needs assessment, due by December 31, 2027, evaluating system performance, environmental and public health considerations, investment needs, and opportunities for improvement.

This Request for Information (RFI) is intended to:

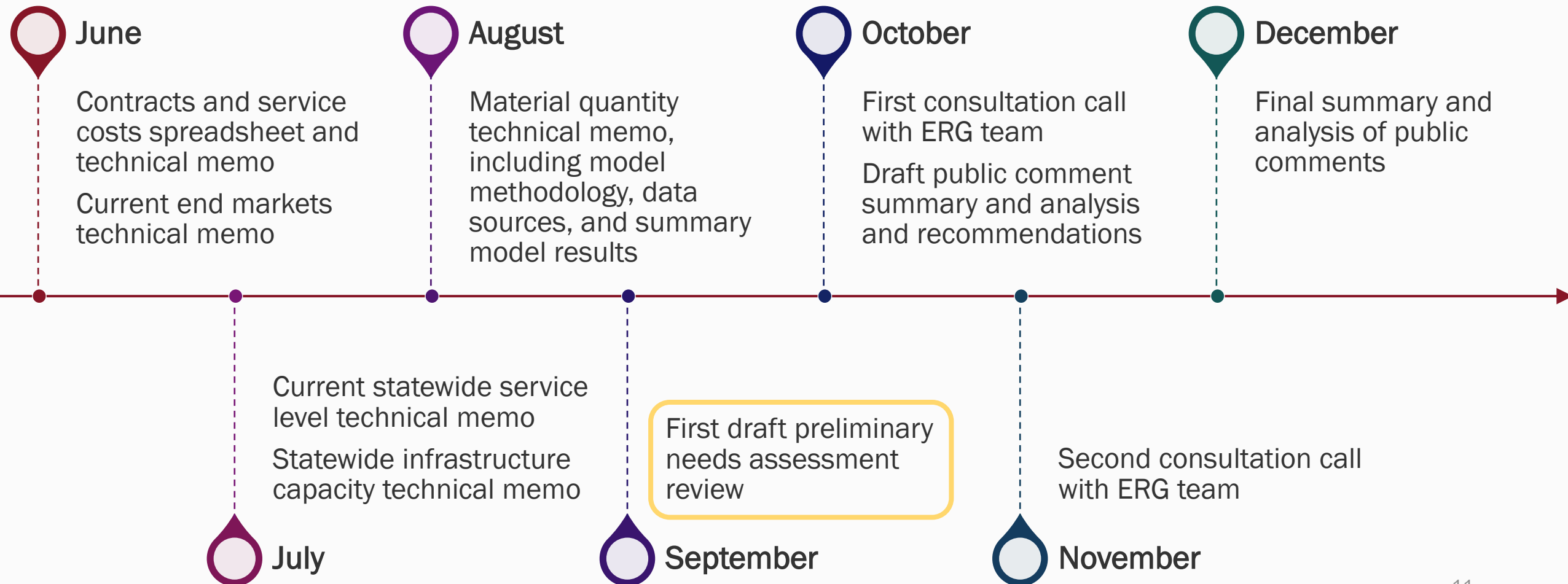
- Identify relevant datasets, studies, and technical insights.
- Support evaluation of specific covered materials for statewide collection lists.
- Identifying and filling gaps in available information to support the needs assessments.
- Gather recommendations on methodologies, performance metrics, and system improvement opportunities and priorities.

The information collected as part of this RFI is in addition to (i) data submitted by service providers through Ecology's service provider registration, as described below, and (ii) data and input collected through surveys to key audiences. RCW 70A.208.110(7)(a) states that a service provider or other person with data or information necessary to complete a needs assessment must provide the data or information to the department upon request.

Ecology has already requested that service providers (including local governments, collectors, material recovery facilities, and processors) register with Ecology and share information pursuant to RCW 70A.208.070. Ecology may reach out to service providers who have not submitted the requested information or submitted incomplete information.

<https://apps.ecology.wa.gov/publications/documents/2607021.pdf>

Documents to Review - Preliminary Needs Assessment





(Full) Needs Assessment

(Full) Needs Assessment

- Due December 31, 2027, and every 5 years after
- Includes:
 - Baseline performance and outcomes by covered material type and statewide
 - Composition of disposal, recycling, and composting streams
 - Recycled content opportunities and barriers
 - Proposed five-year performance outcomes and statewide requirements
 - Collection methods and service system design recommendations
 - Infrastructure, capacity, funding, and cost inventory
 - Equity, access, and investment needs across communities
 - Market readiness, contamination, toxics, and public education factors affecting implementation

Documents to Review – Needs Assessment

- December '26
 - Draft needs assessment outline
- March '27
 - Environmental and public health impacts LCA and technical memo
 - Program design options and outcomes methodology
- September '27
 - Second draft needs assessment



Recycling refund/DRS study



Recycling Refund Program Studies

- Phase 1 - Model study published in January 2026
- Phase 2 - Engagement process
 - Survey, interviews, in-person meetings
 - Advisory council input
 - Public comment: June/July
- January 2027: publish recycling refund report

Recycling Refunds Survey

English

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. This survey gathers input from residents, Tribal nations, community organizations, local governments, and industry partners to inform recommendations to the Washington State Legislature.

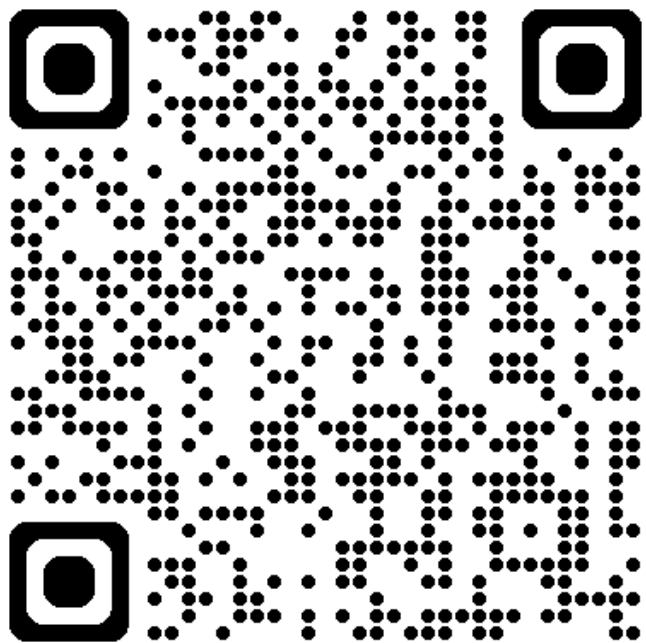
Estimated time to complete:

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

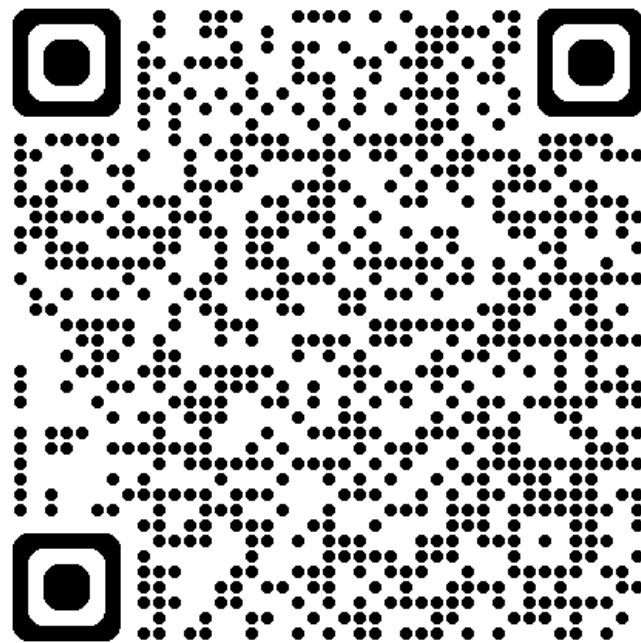
Select "[Learn More](#)" for a brief overview of the program and how your input will be used or select "**Next**" to begin.

Recycling Reform Act resources

Ecology's newsletter



Ecology's website



Ecology's email

recyclingreform@ecy.wa.gov

Advisory Council

www.RRAadvisorycouncil.org

The equity subcommittee is responsible for informing and making recommendations to the advisory council, the department, and producer responsibility organizations regarding the impacts of activities under this chapter on socially vulnerable populations and overburdened communities, including the accessibility of covered services for covered materials to socially vulnerable populations and overburdened communities. At a minimum, the equity subcommittee must review and, as appropriate, provide information or make recommendations regarding needs assessments, submitted plans, and submitted annual reports.

- (11) "Overburdened community" means a geographic area where vulnerable populations face combined, multiple environmental harms and health impacts, and includes, but is not limited to, highly impacted communities as defined in RCW [19.405.020](#).
 - (22) "Highly impacted community" means a community designated by the department of health based on cumulative impact analyses in RCW [19.405.140](#) or a community located in census tracts that are fully or partially on "Indian country" as defined in 18 U.S.C. Sec. 1151.
- (14)(a) "Vulnerable populations" means population groups that are more likely to be at higher risk for poor health outcomes in response to environmental harms, due to: (i) Adverse socioeconomic factors, such as unemployment, high housing and transportation costs relative to income, limited access to nutritious food and adequate health care, linguistic isolation, and other factors that negatively affect health outcomes and increase vulnerability to the effects of environmental harms; and (ii) sensitivity factors, such as low birth weight and higher rates of hospitalization.
 - (b) "Vulnerable populations" includes, but is not limited to:
 - Racial or ethnic minorities;
 - Low-income populations;
 - Populations disproportionately impacted by environmental harms; and
 - Populations of workers experiencing environmental harms