



University of Dayton 2026 Campus Race to Zero Waste Case Study Competition

Contact info:

Gwendolyn Turnbull

Hanley Sustainability Institute (HSI), University of Dayton

turnbullg1@udayton.edu

(937)-418-6284

Focus of Case study:

The campus-wide recycling project installed hubs and signage in all residence halls and updated standardized stream-bin backboard inserts at the University of Dayton.

Detailed description of campaign or effort:

The Hanley Sustainability Institute (HSI) was awarded over \$87,000 from OhioEPA's Recycle Ohio Grant to implement updated and standardized recycling containers and waste-sorting signage on campus. The goals of this project were to reduce cross-contamination of trash and recyclable items, reduce waste, and educate faculty and students on what they can recycle. After testing 3 different recycling systems, recycling hubs were established in all residence halls. These hubs removed the recycling bins from standard trash rooms and brought them out to common spaces, therefore making recycling more accessible and visible to residents. This project resulted in 74 recycling hubs being installed in six residential halls. Large, poster sized signs were created to accompany the bins to indicate what should be placed in the recycling vs the trash streams. In addition to the hubs, all other classrooms, administrative, and gathering spaces on campus received new and detailed signage on dual-stream recycling and waste bins to be a visual for what can and cannot be recycled. This resulted in over 150 new signs in 30 buildings on campus.

Planning steps & timeline to implement

- April-May 2025
 - Working with Facilities Management at the University of Dayton to put in orders of infrastructure from Clean River (bins) and Digital Fringe (poster signage).
- May-August 2025

- Begin walkthroughs of buildings to plan potential locations of hubs and confirm locations of trash rooms.
- Marked floorplans of trash rooms and potential hub locations.
- Wrote drafts of proposals to implement hubs.
 - Included how many hubs and where they would be located.
- Confirmed orders of all infrastructure with Facilities Management and vendors.
- August-December 2025
 - Hired returning student leaders at HSI to help install hubs in residential halls.
 - Created an online spreadsheet to audit performance of implemented hubs and trash rooms.
 - Hired student leaders to audit buildings and record spreadsheets based on how much of each material (recyclable or trash) is in the same trash room and hubs for five weeks.
- January-May 2026
 - Implemented permanent poster signage where hubs would go and in all trash rooms.
 - Finalized findings of audits from spreadsheet.
 - Created online spreadsheet for stream-bin insert installations.
 - Installed all dual-stream bin signage on backboards.

Resources and stakeholders involved

Our budget was supported by the OhioEPA grant and HSI student employees. Stakeholders involved in this project included folks from Facilities Management and Residential Properties to get permission to install hubs and change the infrastructure inside of all buildings on campus. Vehicles were borrowed from facilities management to transport bins to all buildings. Most of the installations were completed during student breaks when the University was still open.

Results of this campaign component

- a. General results
 - i. Published blog by the University of Dayton about installation of hubs.
 - ii. A video about recycling at UD using the new bins and signage was created and put on the University's main recycling page.
 - 1. Video was reposted by the Dean of College of Arts and Sciences.
 - iii. First-year resident halls adapted extremely well to new infrastructure.
- b. Specific measurable impact figures, if applicable
 - i. 74 recycling hubs installed
 - ii. Over 150 dual-stream bin signs were installed.
 - iii. 36 total buildings have new recycling infrastructure.

What would you do differently in the future?

If I were to do anything different, I would have liked to make it more known to the University of Dayton that the Hanley Sustainability Institute did this project, and that it would benefit all of campus. I would have also had the other student leaders at HSI be educated on the project and its entirety of it earlier in the fall.

What advice would you give to another college that wanted to do a similar effort?

If I were to give another college that wanted to pursue a similar effort to this, I would tell them that most of the attention from a project as this is beneficial to most, if not all parties, and is economically friendly. Having the financial means to buy the infrastructure for the project could be unnecessary for others. The main idea behind the project is to have informational recycling signage that is accessible and readable for all students and staff. This can be as simple as just paper flyers and email reminders. Starting small and getting the word out to people who would support this project will go a long way.

Photos and graphics



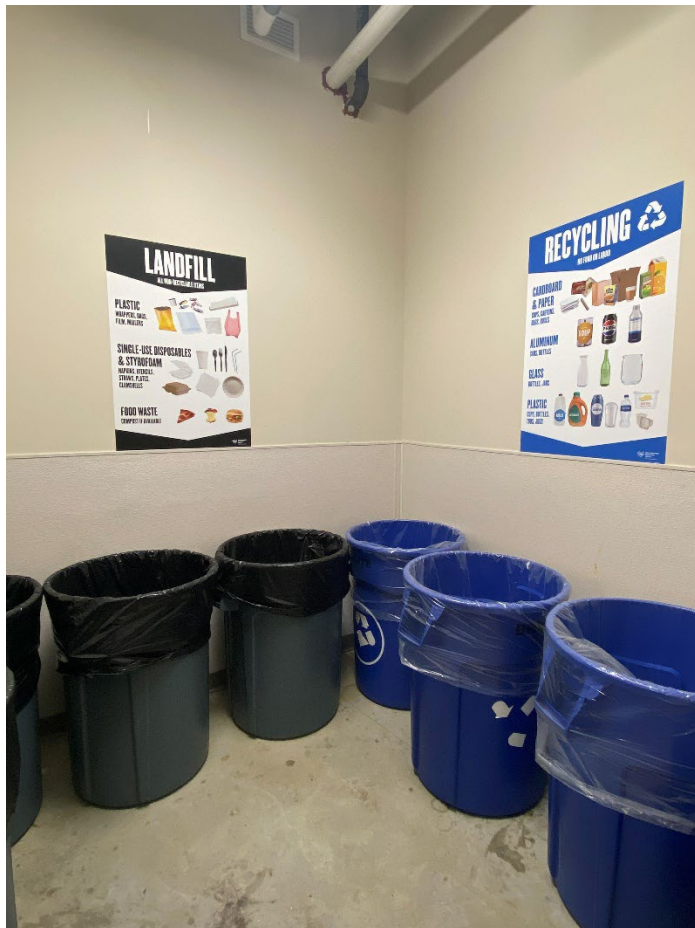
Stream bin



Recycling Hub



New Stream bin insert



Recycling and Landfill signage for recycling and trash locations