

Falmouth Recycling Program

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The program is a collaboration between ecomaine and the towns of Falmouth, South Portland, Windham and Scarborough to help educate residents about contamination. These municipalities are facing rising contamination costs that can be avoided if residents receive crucial information regarding what should go in their bin.

We received a 2-week intensive training with EcoMaine before going out into the field. This training was a crash course on waste in general; we learned about recycling but also about waste-to-energy and other EcoMaine processes. Learning about the recycling process in-depth as well as understanding why certain items are not recyclable was very helpful when it came to explaining to residents why some items did not belong in their bin and why ecomaine cannot process some materials.

We started off in the Stapleford and the Flats Neighborhoods. However, by the fourth week the residents' bins had improved so much because of the education they had received that we were able to move on. We then switched to the Town Landing and Brooke Road areas and are seeing lots of improvement there as well. Throughout the whole program, we have reached around 600 households. The most common contaminants have been plastic bags, straws and paper towels. We have seen drastic improvement but we still see these items.

The residents have been very excited and engaged about this program. Unlike the other towns, we have never had a negative resident interaction. Everyone looks forward to seeing us and seeing how they are improving. The ability to speak to residents face-to-face is what made this program so special and effective. We highly recommend that this program be continued, even though Falmouth's contamination rates are low overall. The enthusiasm from the residents really showed that people were very open to receiving this education and are willing to help with our town's recycling efforts in the future.