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Cincinnati Recycling & Reuse Hub selected for the Small Business Environmental Stewardship Award

The National Steering Committee (NSC) of Small Business Environmental Assistance Programs (SBEAPs) & Small Business Ombudsmen (SBO) have recognized the Cincinnati Recycling & Reuse Hub (The Hub) with the 2022 Small Business Environmental Stewardship Award. The non-profit was recognized for its accomplishments in the areas of improving environmental performance, pollution prevention, and sustainability.

The Hub formed from four previously temporary recycling and reuse programs with a combined 26 years of history and a combined 465 tons of items collected. The programs joined to create a permanent, year-round location for people to drop off hard-to-recycle items, allowing all four programs to expand their capacities. Since they opened on April 1, 2021, they have diverted over 100 tons of materials from the landfill, including over 52 tons of electronics, 4 tons of Styrofoam (5 semi trailers' worth), over 17 tons of plastic not accepted in curbside bins, and 1.5 tons of universal waste (lightbulbs and batteries) sent for recycling, and over 16 tons of items, such as fabric swatches, office supplies, prescription bottles, flooring samples, egg cartons, corks, and more taken or sent for reuse. They expect the total amount they divert from landfills each year to rise to over 500 tons annually by 2030.

In addition to reducing waste streams in the Cincinnati area, the Hub keeps sustainability as a core business practice by using second-hand items, and, when used items aren't available, by purchasing sustainable products whenever possible. For instance, every piece of furniture in the warehouse was second-hand, and the hand towels are actual towels, so they can be washed and reused multiple times, which cuts down on the resources needed to create and transport paper towels.

The Hub shares the message of reducing waste and adopting sustainable consumption habits through educational programming for local residents. Dan Sowry, Assistant Environmental Administrator of the Office of Compliance Assistance and Pollution Prevention (OCAPP) at Ohio EPA, which had previously awarded a grant to the Hub for equipment purchases, noted in his nomination that, "The [educational] programming encourages participants to think about the full life cycles of items and teach them how to reduce the amount of items they use, find creative ways to reuse what they have, and properly recycle what they can't reuse. These programs are presented by personnel from the Hub, and also from other area organizations, to draw on the collective knowledge and resources of many."

The SBEAP/SBO NSC Awards are the States' premier awards program for recognizing outstanding environmental leadership among small businesses and small business assistance providers. These awards

recognize small businesses, SBEAP/SBO programs and individuals, trade associations and other business assistance providers who have made significant contributions to protecting the environment. The awards program is sponsored by the SBEAP/SBO NSC in partnership with U.S. EPA Asbestos and Small Business Office.

More information about the state SBEAP/SBO is available at <https://nationalsbeap.org/>.

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About the Small Business Environmental Assistance Programs and Small Business Ombudsmen

The Small Business Environmental Assistance Programs (SBEAP) and Small Business Ombudsmen (SBO) were created under Section 507 of the Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990. For more than 25 years, the SBEAP/SBO have provided extensive, hands-on technical assistance to small businesses across the country to help them understand and comply with complex environmental regulations. The SBEAP/SBO website, <https://nationalsbeap.org/>, is a resource for program participants and small businesses. Find your state specific contact at: <https://nationalsbeap.org/states>. #SBEAP #SmallBusiness