Guide to creating customized waste reduction and recycling educational pieces with Hennepin County



We work with cities to create customized resources to promote services to residents and create awareness about waste topics.

Resources we have created include customized flyers and brochures, mailings with returnable postcards, graphics, and social media campaigns.

This guide includes a general timeline you should plan for requests and information about the process from initial request to content development and design to printing and mailing.

Timeline

General timeline for updating a simple, existing piece: 3 to 6 weeks total

Examples of a simpler piece include recycling or organics recycling guides or brochure or flyer with city-specific recycling calendar. This type of request could include updating a piece we have created for your city in the past or customizing something we have created for a different city.

- Review of request and content changes: 1 week
- Graphic design: 1 week
- Review and approval: 1 week
- Printing and delivery/mailing: 1 to 3 weeks depending on complexity of the piece

General timeline for creating a new piece or updating a more complex piece: 8 to 12 weeks total

Examples of a more complex piece include new materials, brochure with returnable postcard, social media graphics or campaign, or services guide.

- Review of request: 1 week
- Content development: 1 to 3 weeks depending on complexity of piece and amount of back and forth needed
- Graphic design, review, and additional updates: 3 to 4 weeks
- Final approval: 1 week
- Printing and delivery/mailing: 2 to 4 weeks, depending on complexity of the piece

Process

Initial request, content development, and printing requirements

1. Submitting your request
    - Reach out to your Hennepin County liaison to explain your request. Find your liaison in the list of Hennepin County contacts for city recycling programs at **hennepin.us/residents/recycling-hazardous-waste/city-recycling-program-resources**.
    - Your Hennepin County liaison will follow up with additional questions or to schedule a meeting to discuss. Hennepin County communication staff may be included depending on the complexity of your request.
    - Your liaison may provide examples of similar pieces we've created with other cities that you may want to customize for your needs or use content from.
    - You should also make your city communications staff aware of your request to understand how they want to be involved and if they have any branding or content guidelines.

2. Developing content or making content changes

- If you are updating an existing piece or customizing a piece that already exists, common ways to send content changes include outlining changes in an email or making comments on an existing PDF.
- If you are creating a new piece or making significant changes to an existing piece, content is commonly developed in a Word document. This may be initiated by city staff or by county communication staff after discussing content at a meeting.
- Also be sure to think about photos and graphics that are needed. Hennepin County and the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency have some general recycling and organics recycling photos that can be used. If you have specific needs or ideas for photos, you will be responsible for providing those. Hennepin County can work with you to develop graphics.

3. Printing and mailing requirements

- Start figuring out details about printing and mailing (if applicable) as soon as possible. This will help keep the piece moving and stay on your desired timeline. Some details to consider:
  - Quantity: Include the quantity being mailed (if applicable) or otherwise distributed and any extras you want.
  - Delivery address: This is where the pieces that are not being mailed need to be delivered once they have been printed.
  - Mailing list: Should be an excel file that includes Name (or Current Resident), Address, City, State, Zip
  - Printing requirements: Such as if the piece should be delivered flat or folded, who will print addresses, etc. This is especially important when working with a mail house.
  - Business Reply Mail (BRM): If your piece has a returnable postcard, a PDF will need to be generated with USPS to insert on the returnable postcard.

Business Reply Mail (BRM) postcard



The business reply mail (BRM) postcard is required if your custom piece includes a returnable postcard. You will need to know the size of the returnable postcard, which will be determined during content creation and initial design.

The BRM can be easily created using the USPS Business Customer Gateway at **https://gateway.usps.com/eAdmin/view/signin**. The Automatic BRM service can be accessed under Mailing Services; the type of artwork needed is BRM (not CRM or QBRM). Alternately, you can email **MDA@usps.gov**, and they can help process your BRM request.

You need to send the full PDF as sent by USPS to Hennepin County for it to be placed in the print piece. See an example of the file work needed above.

Design, review, and approval

4. Finalizing content and coordinating design
    - Your Hennepin County liaison will share your request with Hennepin County communication staff, who will coordinate content development and graphic design.
    - Communication staff and/or your liaison may follow up with content questions or additional needs before sending to design.
    - As much as possible, content should be finalized before going to design – this saves time in the review process.
5. Reviewing the draft design
    - You will receive a designed copy of the piece to review.
    - Changes can be submitted via comments on the PDF and/or comments in an email.
    - As much as possible, have everyone who needs to review the piece get their comments in and submit all comments at once.
6. Finalizing and approving the design
    - Hennepin County will make changes and send another draft for review.
    - Send additional changes or let Hennepin County know the piece is approved. Approving a piece means that it is final and/or ready to be printed.

Printing and mailing

7. Coordinating printing and mailing
    - Our standard approach for pieces that are printed and mailed is for Hennepin County to coordinate and pay for printing and postage. There may be exceptions to this that we will work with you to arrange if necessary.
    - Hennepin County will coordinate printing, either with our internal print service or contracted external printers, depending on the complexity of the piece.
    - If we are working with our external contracted printers, we need to get print bids, which takes 3 to 5 business days. We cannot start to get print bids until the piece is approved.
    - We can give you a more exact delivery or mailing date once the piece is at the printer and we've approved a proof.
    - Pieces that are being mailed will be mailed by Hennepin County's printer using Hennepin County's mailing permit, unless we have arranged a different process with you.
        - Note about Every Door Direct Mail (EDDM): This is not the county's preferred approach to mailing as we have found it's challenging to understand the requirements, can slow down the delivery process, and is difficult to get confirmation that the piece has been delivered. If you are considering EDDM, your liaison will discuss the reason for this approach and alternative options.
8. Confirming delivery
    - Please let your Hennepin County liaison know when you have received the piece so we can close out the project and pay invoices.