

Tehama County Education Plan 2026



Green Waste of Tehama

Tehama County Education Program

2026

This Education Program is intended to be the roadmap we follow to increase diversion each year. This program will be adjusted each year based on the needs the current year presents.

Our past recycling rate percentages are as follows:

Year	Residential	Commercial
2022	26.39%	10.68%
2023	27.58%	9.32%
2024	28.01%	11.20%
2025 (Estimated)	28.44%	10.80%

Annual expectation of outreach education expense for 2026 = \$28,714 (\$27,347 x 5% CPI)

Introduction

Building on the momentum of our digital outreach efforts in 2025, we've turned our attention to strengthening the systems that support meaningful, measurable change. This year, our goal was to deepen our impact through targeted support and data-driven strategies, specifically through the development of our Technical Assistance program and the expansion of residential route audits.

Thanks to strong collaborative support from the Tehama County Solid Waste Management Agency, our Technical Assistance efforts have grown into a promising framework for engaging commercial customers, especially large generators, in more sustainable practices. The process we're refining together is proving to be a key tool in making recycling not just accessible, but effective.

On the residential side, we are investing in waste characterization audits and in-cab route audits to better understand how our community is actually disposing of waste. This data will guide our outreach, ensuring it is specific, topical, and relevant—rather than general and easily ignored. We want to embrace 2026 with the idea that “audit informs action.” By grounding our messaging in real behavior, we can better support residents in making informed, sustainable choices.

2026 County Education Plan

Commercial Outreach

“Technical Assistance”

1. Commercial Diversion

- **Direct Business Diversions**

- This is our established standard. For this purpose, “diversions” are defined as direct contact with a business that leads to an alteration of its recycling services. An ideal diversion results in a customer permanently decreasing their trash volume in favor of recycling.
- **Metric:** Engage 20 businesses

- **Technical Assistance (TA)**

- Building on the successful pilot in 2025, we will apply the TA model locally. A complete engagement includes a waste audit, site visit, staff education/presentation, signage, right-sizing service, and provision of interior recycling containers. This project is a collaborative effort between Green Waste and the Tehama County Solid Waste Management Agency (TCSWMA). TCSWMA provides all bins and signage for this project.
- **Metric:** Engage 4 businesses in on-site TA projects.

2. Big Generators

- **Large Scale TA**

- Big generators are challenging to work with. We have never approached them with the structure that the hands-on TA model provides. As a collaborative effort with the TCSWMA, it allows us to approach large businesses from two perspectives. A united front has more impact, and the hope is that we will be able to generate more diversion success.
- **Metric:** Apply TA to 1 of the 5 top generators identified in 2025.

- **Load-Check Refocus for Roll-Off Drivers**

- 2025 load checks revealed reusable materials, though not in consistent volumes. We feel that training drivers to assist in diversion will provide us

with another level of scrutiny and, therefore, diversion opportunity. The training will be developed by a team that represents all levels of the collection process (hauling, landfill, and sustainability), so all parties agree before the change is made. This procedure shift may also enhance efficiency between the hauling and landfill operations, ultimately improving material recovery.

- **Metric:** Train and empower drivers to identify reusable materials (especially from C&D projects) and divert them to the self-haul pad.

3. Customer Communication

- **Digital Flyers**

- Emailed outreach in 2025 led to successful diversions with quick turnaround. This channel bridges the gap between mailed content and the immediacy of text messaging.
- **Metric:** Send 4 topical flyers to commercial customers

- **Informational Mailers**

- Required by the hauling agreement, we mail out informational flyers to all residential and commercial customers in the spring and fall. In 2025, these documents also included detailed recycling guides.
- **Metric:** Mail biannual flyers to all commercial and residential customers.

Residential Outreach

“Audit Informs Action”

1. Audits

- **Waste Characterization**

- We began performing waste characterizations on recycling loads in 2025. We found it to be a good snapshot of the overall contamination concerns in a given area. It also gave us specific items to address in social media outreach. The characterizations were specific to one area at a time, which allowed us

to collect specific data. We would like to apply this to areas in the county in 2026.

- **Metric:** Perform recycling characterizations in a targeted section of the county. (ex: North vs. South). Use this data to send specific, data-driven e-mails directly to the customers audited.

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- **In-Cab Audits**

- This project continues a collaborative effort initiated in 2024 between GWT and the TCSWMA. The recycling audit is conducted by recycling personnel from both agencies using a side-load truck. During the audit, carts containing inappropriate materials are tagged with a notice explaining the issue. After approximately one month, the same route is audited again to assess the effectiveness of the outreach and communication efforts.
- **Metric:** Conduct 2 audits in 2026
 - Audit definition: “A & B” audits, with subsequent team review sessions. This allocates two days in a truck, and 2 in office meetings, per audit.

3. Customer Communication

- **Digital Flyers**

- Emailed outreach in 2025 led to successful diversions with quick turnaround. This channel bridges the gap between mailed content and the immediacy of text messaging.
- **Metric:** Send 4 topical flyers to residential customers

- **Contamination Reporting Overhaul**

- In-cab audits highlight recycling contamination issues. A collaborative approach between hauler and landfill teams will improve internal efficiency and external impact, especially in yard waste management. We feel that we can improve our current system by integrating our contamination recording directly into our software.
- **Metric:** Explore integration of contamination recording with route management software.

4. Digital Campaign

- **Social Media Posts**

- The 2025 campaign showed reasonable engagement with the use of topical content. We feel that continued activity will sustain momentum. Social media has the benefit of bringing information directly to where customers are viewing it. It has the added benefit of raising awareness about local outreach events.
- **Metric:** Publish 24 posts throughout the year

- **Website Refinement**

- We feel that our website has a generic feel to it and would like to personalize it to be more relatable to our county. In doing so, we would also like to check for accuracy and potential for improvements to the user experience.
- **Metric:** Audit website for accuracy, completeness, and improved imagery.

5. School Presentations

- In 2025, GWT and TCSWMA worked together to refine the school presentation offering, specifically the presentations and the educators' user experience. The agency has worked diligently to transition from the educational bus to the trailer for the 4R Kids exhibit. This is the cornerstone of the educational presentations and is the foundation that sustainability outreach in the county is built on.
- **Metric:** GWT will continue collaboration and support for agency-led educational presentations, as requested by the agency.