

Indianapolis Solid Waste Survey

BACKGROUND

The City of Indianapolis Office of Sustainability conducted a resident survey on DPW Solid Waste Services. The survey was designed to collect feedback on residential trash collection and recycling services in order to guide future service improvements.

The digital survey was open from June 29th to August 1st, 2016, during which time 6,424 residents provided complete responses. Respondents spanned a wide range of ages, income levels and education levels, and all Marion County Townships were represented.

SUMMARY OF RESULTS

While the majority of respondents (73%) report being satisfied with their current trash removal services, many are unaware of other DPW Solid Waste Services. Citizens Transfer Station (10%), Leaf Collection (39%), and E-Cycling (31%) were among the least well-known services.

Regardless of whether the respondent currently recycles, the majority of residents agreed that recycling is important (91%) and reported being willing to separate recycling material from the trash (87%). Most people also agreed that recycling benefits the Indianapolis economy (69%) and that recycling should be mandatory (64%). 75% of all participants believe there are not enough recycling bins in public spaces, and 59% would like to see more recycling drop-off locations.

Most individuals reported that they had not learned about recycling in grade school (62%), but on average 91% of all respondents were able to correctly sort waste materials between recycling, trash, and household hazardous waste. Residents who do not recycle are more likely to report that they have not been informed about Indianapolis recycling services (53% vs 21%).

Respondents who identified as non-recyclers cited cost (49%), lack of recycling knowledge (39%), and inconvenience (33%) most frequently when asked why they do not recycle. These residents were more likely to have used heavy trash pickup days compared to those who do recycle (73% vs 42%).

Respondents who do recycle reported they did so because “it is better for the planet” (87%), “it is the right thing to do” (86%), and “out of habit” (35%). These residents were also more likely to have knowledge of any DPW solid waste service.

Overall, the results of this survey are encouraging as the city continues its analysis of future recycling and solid waste management options for Indianapolis.