

# Case Study

## The VILLAGE at RANCHO SAN DIEGO



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#### MULTI-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL

90 Units

Serving 125 Seniors

5,200 Full-Time Equivalent Students

As a retirement community for active seniors, The Village at Rancho San Diego is situated to allow residents to embrace the walkability of their community and neighborhood.

The Village at Rancho San Diego was eager to start an effective recycling program that would allow them to streamline their waste management process and provide residents with an easier way to collect and recycle materials.

Strategically planning the placement of recycling containers throughout the complex increased participation by residents, who found the new container locations and signs easier to navigate.



## Recycling Practices Prior to Intervention

- ➔ Low participation in the recycling program due to lack of convenience and awareness
- ➔ High contamination rates in recycling bins

The Village at Rancho San Diego worked with their hauler to add recycling to their complex, but found that the recycling program wasn't working well. Recycling containers used by residents were heavily contaminated, and many recyclables were ending up in the trash.

## Recommendations Implemented

- ➔ Replacement of three trash dumpsters with two split dumpsters and one recycling-only dumpster
- ➔ Replacement of mixed recycling bins with paper-only recycling bins near mail room
- ➔ Provision of recycling tote bags to residents

The County of San Diego recommended distributing recycling containers among different enclosures throughout the property to increase convenience and facilitate participation for residents with reduced mobility.

A community-wide presentation introduced the improved recycling program to residents who see it as an opportunity to engage in a community-based effort. Management now includes information about the recycling program in their new resident welcome packet, including a recycling tote bag, location of the recycling containers and information on what materials are recyclable.



Challenge	Practice Implemented
High contamination rates in indoor recycling containers	Distribution of recycling tote bags to each residence, with clear labeling of the materials that are recyclable to encourage proper sorting of materials  Recycling presentation to residents by County consultants
Recyclables in trash dumpsters	Replacement of trash-only dumpsters with split recycling and trash dumpsters to increase number of recycling locations and encourage proper placement of materials
Accumulation of loose papers and flyers from direct mailings in the resident mail area	Replacement of mixed recycling bins with paper-only bins in mail room
High rates of packaging and moving materials (e.g., cardboard boxes, etc.) in trash dumpsters during resident move-in and move-out	Replacement of trash dumpsters with split dumpsters  Help from maintenance staff in breaking down and transporting recyclable materials to proper receptacles

## The Bottom Line

- ➔ 86,736 pounds of recyclable materials are diverted from landfills annually
- ➔ 62% reduction in the volume of trash disposed
- ➔ Reduction of maintenance workload (e.g., less sorting of trash from recycling and cleaning of the mail room)
- ➔ Improvements in clarity and ease of recycling for residents
- ➔ Increased resident participation and satisfaction



“Before receiving help from the County, our recycling was inaccessible for many residents, and there was not a clear process in place. Now, with the addition of the large recycling containers as well as the multi-family collection bags provided by the County, it is very simple for our residents to recycle.”

**Barbara Brooke**  
Resident Manager, The Village at Rancho San Diego

The County of San Diego conducts free on-site visits to help multifamily complexes comply with the State’s mandatory recycling and organics recycling requirements. Contact County staff or your solid waste hauler to request assistance.  
Email: [Recycle@sdcounty.ca.gov](mailto:Recycle@sdcounty.ca.gov) or visit: [www.R1earth.org](http://www.R1earth.org)



The County also maintains a recycling database available online and toll-free hotline. Visit [www.WasteFreeSD.org](http://www.WasteFreeSD.org) or call 1-877-R-1-EARTH (1-877-713-2784)