

Reuse Based Enterprises

Every city, county, and state must think about waste. For most it is headache, but for a growing number of forward thinking locales it is a boon for economic development.

If your community is interested in green jobs, the discard stream is a logical place to start. When handled properly the items in the discard stream are valuable feedstocks that can be used in remanufacturing. This strategy has seen success most recently in Reading, PA, and Bridgeport, CT, where new enterprises are opening and recycling employees have seen their wages rise substantially in the midst of a recession.

The recycling sector already employs more than 1 million workers nationwide, and that is with a relatively low national diversion rate of 33%. Given that the technological capacity exist to cost effectively recover over 90% of the materials in the discard stream, this sector can support in excess of 1 million additional jobs.

The enterprises below range from for-profit companies to socially responsible non-profit ventures. ILSR can assist your community in securing the resources in your discard stream to attract companies like the ones profiled here.

COMPANY TYPE/NAME	# JOBS	FOOTPRINT	CAPITAL	IN OPERATION	PRIMARY FEEDSTOCKS
Paper Manufacturer	100-120	5 acres	\$10 million	January 2013	High grade paper and linen (40 tons per day)
Plastics Manufacturer	15	1 acre	\$800,000	1965	Recycled PET & PP plastic
Permeable surface manufacturer	100-200	10 acres	Not available	2011	Crumb rubber
Cathode Ray Tube (CRT) screen processor	90-100	3 acres	Not available	1995	CRT tubes, mixed CRT glass, and leaded CRT funnel glass
Network of modular reuse enterprises	20-120	2 acres	\$200,000	1985	Appliances, books, mattresses, furniture, clothing, pane class, automobiles
Bioponica, Inc.	3-5	10,000 sq/ft	\$25,000	2010	Organics converted into growth medium for edible plants and fish.
ECO City Farms	3-5	20,000 sq/ft	\$50,000	2012	Organics converted into compost products and edible plants.
Greenway	5-10	5 acres	\$150,000	2000	Organics converted into compost products.

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The Institute for Local Self-Reliance (ILSR) is a national research and policy organization founded in 1974 to advance community-centered, environmentally sound and equitable economic development. Read more about our work at www.ilsr.org.