South Carolina State House
Columbia, SC

South Carolina State Agencies & Colleges/Universities

RECYCLING & BUYING RECYCLED

Annual Report • Fiscal Year 2026

Prepared for **Gov. Henry McMaster**
and the **Members of the S.C. Legislature**

Prepared by the S.C. Department of Environmental Services
Division of Mining and Solid Waste Management

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Introduction

The S.C. Solid Waste Policy and Management Act of 1991 (Act) – S.C. Laws § 44-96-140 – requires state agencies and state-supported colleges/universities to:

- **Provide recycling programs** for the collection of selected materials including aluminum, cardboard, glass, lead-acid batteries, paper, plastic, tires and used motor oil;
- **Make necessary modifications** to their programs to ensure material is recycled to the maximum extent possible; and
- **Report the type and amount of materials recycled**, as well as all products purchased containing recycled-content material each year to the S.C. Department of Environmental Services (SCDES). The Act [Section 44-96-140 (E)] also sets a goal that at least 25 percent of all product purchases contain recycled-content material.

The South Carolina Department of Environmental Services (SCDES) is required to submit a report on this information to the Governor and General Assembly by November 1 of each year. This report reflects recycling and buying recycled activities for fiscal year (FY) 2026 (July 1, 2025 to June 30, 2026).

Data for this report is submitted directly from state agencies and colleges/universities as well as from vendors providing recycling services. Both public and private colleges/universities are included in this report although only state-supported colleges/universities are required to provide information according to the Act. In FY26, a total of 36 state agencies, to also include 18 S.C. Department of Transportation locations, reported their recycling efforts. In addition, 18 colleges/universities (both public and private) reported recycling. This year saw an increase in state agencies and colleges/universities that reported.

As changes evolve to the work environment and daily operations for state agencies and college/university campuses, SCDES would like to commend those agencies and collegiate institutions that maintain their recycling programs and report. Government agencies and colleges/universities continue to lead by demonstrating that recycling is the standard in South Carolina. SCDES is prepared for training and technical assistance now more than ever.

The percentage of state purchases that contain recycled material cannot be determined because no statewide system to track those purchases exists. The recycled-content products purchased most frequently by reporting state agencies and colleges/universities were office paper, bathroom paper products, and inkjet/toner cartridges.

Note that due to rounding, percentages do not always equal 100.

FY25 & FY26 Comparison for State Agencies

TOTAL FOR FY25		TOTAL FOR FY26	
MATERIAL	**TONNAGE**	**MATERIAL**	**TONNAGE**
Banned Items	212.35	Banned Items	221.83
Commingled Recyclables	196.31	Commingled Recyclables	193.52
Glass (containers & packaging)	2.25	Glass (containers & packaging)	2.25
Metal	443.16	Metal	443.18
Organics	0.00	Organics	0.00
Paper	9,335.72	Paper	9,333.14
Plastic	5.66	Plastic	5.66
Miscellaneous Items	352.62	Miscellaneous Items	353.62
TOTAL	**10,548.07**	**TOTAL**	**10,553.20**

FY25 & FY26 Comparison for Colleges & Universities

TOTAL FOR FY25		TOTAL FOR FY26	
MATERIAL	**TONNAGE**	**MATERIAL**	**TONNAGE**
Banned Items	179.74	Banned Items	311.53
Commingled Recyclables	863.54	Commingled Recyclables	863.54
Glass (containers & packaging)	4.13	Glass (containers & packaging)	12.94
Metal	336.27	Metal	549.27
Organics	3,680.90	Organics	3,825.37
Paper	1,544.83	Paper	2,095.86
Plastic	32.36	Plastic	50.21
Miscellaneous Items	20,735.55	Miscellaneous Items	21,543.63
TOTAL	**27,377.32**	**TOTAL**	**29,252.35**

About this report ...

"The State Agencies & Colleges/Universities Recycling & Buying Recycled Annual Report for Fiscal Year 2026" is submitted by SCDES in compliance with the Act – Section § 44-96-140 (C) – and is published by SCDES's Bureau of Land and Waste Management (BLWM). In addition, Act 119 of 2005 mandates that agencies provide all reports to the General Assembly in an electronic format. **This report was published on November 1, 2026.**

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SPECIAL THANKS – SCDES would like to commend those agencies and colleges/universities that maintained their recycling programs and reported. As always, even more so now, SCDES stands-by for training and technical assistance.

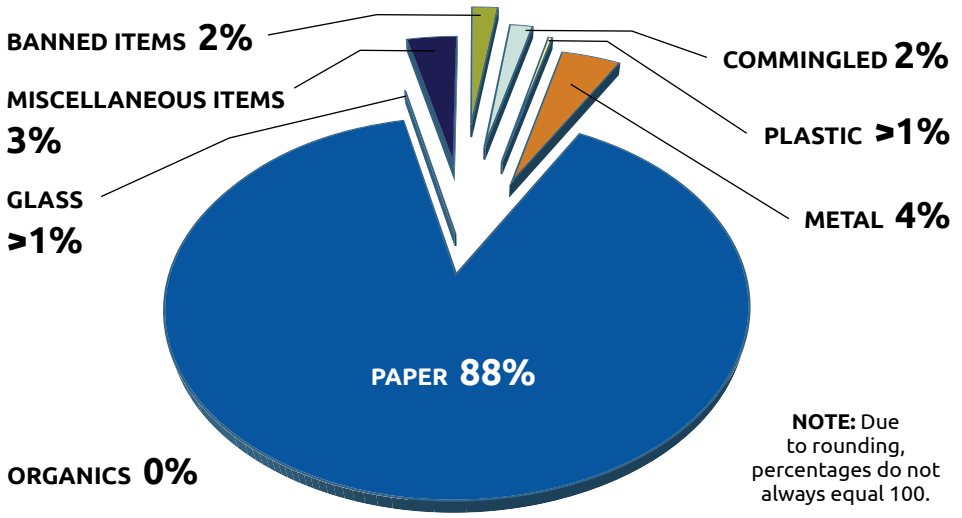
State Agencies

State agencies reported recycling **10,553.20 tons** of material – an increase of about .05 percent from FY25. The S.C. Department of Corrections' (SCDC) recycling service primarily collects from state agency programs.

Materials that saw significant changes in FY26 include:

- **Commingled recyclables decreased** from FY25 to FY26; and
- **Banned items saw an increase** from FY25 to FY26.

CHART 1: Percentage of Recyclables Collected by State Agencies



NOTE: Due to rounding, percentages do not always equal 100.

TABLE 1: Commodities Recycled in Tons by State Agencies in FY26

COMMODITIES RECYCLED		AMOUNT
Banned Items	Appliances	0.53
	Electronics	39.53
	Lead acid batteries	16.00
	Tires	76.58
	Used motor oil	89.19
TOTAL BANNED ITEMS		**221.83**
Commingled Recyclables	May include: cardboard, paper, glass bottles, plastic, aluminum & steel cans	193.52
TOTAL COMMINGLED RECYCLABLES		**193.52**
Glass (containers & packaging)	Brown	0.42
	Clear	0.25
	Green	1.00
	Other/mixed glass	0.58
TOTAL GLASS		**2.25**
Metal	Aluminum (cans, foil)	104.50
	Ferrous metals	146.48
	Steel cans	64.26
	Other/mixed metal	127.94
TOTAL METAL		**443.18**
Miscellaneous Items	Antifreeze	6.69
	Carpet	0.36
	Carpet padding	0.00
	(C&D) debris	102.71
	Cooking oil	0.00
	Fluorescent bulbs	5.25
	Inkjet/toner cartridges	1.27
Miscellaneous Items (continued)	Mattresses/Box Springs	0.00
	Paint (oil or latex)	0.14
	Rechargeable batteries	0.14
	Used oil filters	10.82
	Wood*	223.80
	Other**	2.44
TOTAL MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS		**353.62**
Organics	Food waste (composted)	0.00
	Yard trimmings (composted)	0.00
	Yard trimmings (mulched)	0.00
	Yard trimmings (boiler fuel)	0.00
TOTAL ORGANICS		**0.00**
Paper	Beverage cartons (aseptic & gable-top)	0.00
	Cardboard	8,133.93
	Magazines	8.34
	Newspapers and inserts	2.33
	Office paper	1,018.44
	Paperboard	0.73
	Other/mixed paper	169.37
TOTAL PAPER		**9,333.14**
Plastic	HDPE	1.57
	LDPE	1.57
	PET	0.08
	Other/mixed plastic	2.44
TOTAL PLASTIC		**5.66**
TOTAL FOR ALL		**10,553.20**

* Wood includes furniture, cabinets and pallets

** Other includes alkaline batteries, non-hazardous sludge and oil absorbents

For more information, visit des.sc.gov/sw-recycling-reports.

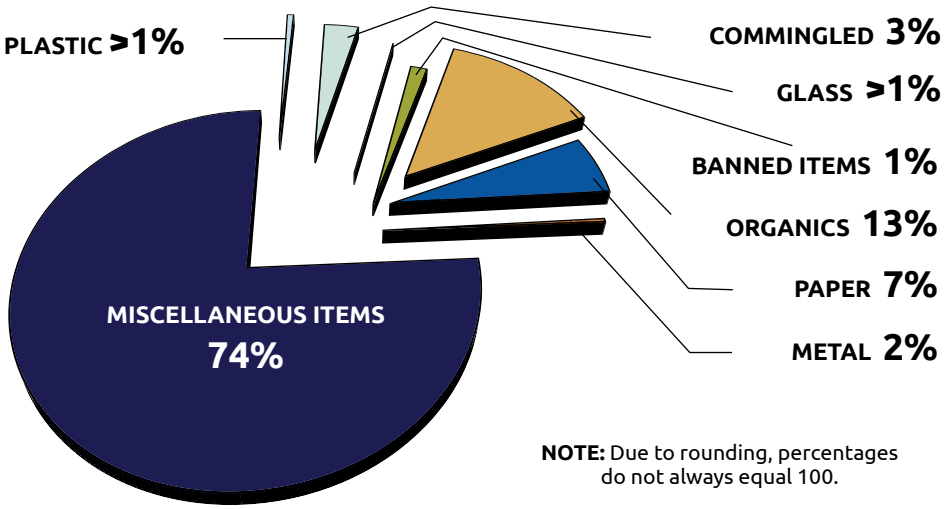
Colleges & Universities

During FY26, 18 colleges and universities reported recycling **29,252.37 tons** of material – an increase of about 7% from the previous FY.

Significant changes in FY26 recycling included:

- **Banned items saw an increase** from FY25 to FY26;
- **Metal saw an increase** from FY25 to FY26;
- **Miscellaneous items saw an increase** from FY25 to FY26; and
- **Paper items saw an increase** from FY25 to FY26.

CHART 2: Percentage of Recyclables Collected by Colleges/Universities



NOTE: Due to rounding, percentages do not always equal 100.

TABLE 2: Commodities Recycled in Tons by State Colleges and Universities in FY26

COMMODITIES RECYCLED		AMOUNT
Banned Items	Appliances	0.66
	Electronics	283.77
	Lead acid batteries	14.88
	Tires	5.21
	Used motor oil	7.01
TOTAL BANNED ITEMS		**311.53**
Commingled Recyclables	May include: cardboard, paper, glass bottles, plastic, aluminum & steel cans	863.54
TOTAL COMMINGLED RECYCLABLES		**863.54**
Glass (containers & packaging)	Brown	0.00
	Clear	0.00
	Green	0.00
	Other/mixed glass	4.13
TOTAL GLASS		**4.13**
Metal	Aluminum (cans, foil)	23.42
	Ferrous metals	432.62
	Steel cans	1.55
	Other/mixed metal	91.68
TOTAL METAL		**549.27**
Miscellaneous Items * Wood includes furniture, cabinets and pallets	Antifreeze	0.61
	Carpet	3.01
	Carpet padding	1.50
	Clothing/textiles	3.77
	(C&D) debris	15,306.45
	Cooking oil	102.40
	Fluorescent bulbs	5,025.50
Miscellaneous Items (continued) ** Other includes alkaline batteries, non-hazardous sludge and oil absorbents	Inkjet/toner cartridges	287.72
	Mattresses/Box Springs	2.46
	Paint (oil or latex)	1.02
	Rechargeable batteries	9.68
	Used oil filters	0.99
	Wood*	182.78
	Other**	615.74
TOTAL MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS		**21,543.63**
Organics	Food waste (composted)	1,534.53
	Alternative Daily cover	4.00
	Yard trimmings (composted)	2,010.28
	Yard trimmings (mulched)	276.56
TOTAL ORGANICS		**3,825.37**
Paper	Cardboard	1,176.40
	Magazines	0.40
	Newspapers and inserts	0.08
	Office paper	263.62
	Paperboard	0.00
	Other/mixed paper	655.36
TOTAL PAPER		**2,095.86**
Plastic	HDPE	0.41
	LDPE	0.11
	Commingled PET & HDPE	17.92
	Other/mixed plastic	31.79
TOTAL PLASTIC		**50.23**
TOTAL FOR ALL		**29,252.37**

For more information, visit des.sc.gov/sw-recycling-reports.

Santee Cooper

The recycling activities of Santee Cooper, a state-owned electric utility, are separated from traditional state agency reporting. This is done due to the significant differences between Santee Cooper's recycling and that of other state agencies. This separation provides a more realistic picture of the recycling of traditional state agencies.

Santee Cooper recycled **1,389,632.62 tons** of material in FY26 – compared to 2,416,482.39 in FY25, a 42% decrease from the previous year. Significant changes in FY26 include:

- **Metal increased** from FY25 to FY26;
- **Miscellaneous items decreased** from FY25 to FY26.

Santee Cooper®

santeecooper.com

TABLE 3: Commodities Recycled in Tons by Santee Cooper in FY26

COMMODITIES RECYCLED		AMOUNT
Banned Items	Electronics	24.08
	Lead-acid batteries	10.57
	Tires	18.52
	Used motor oil	52.48
	Other banned items	0.00
TOTAL BANNED ITEMS		**105.65**
Commingled Recyclables	Aluminum cans, office paper, mixed paper	45.18
TOTAL COMMINGLED RECYCLABLES		**45.18**
Metal	Ferrous metals	3,862.04
	Other/mixed metals	208.15
TOTAL METAL		**4,070.19**
Miscellaneous Items	Mixed wood	435.25
* Other includes bottom ash, fly ash and pond ash	Fluorescent tubes	0.67
	Rechargeable batteries	0.00
	Used oil filters	6.70
	Other*	1,389,190.00
TOTAL MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS		**1,389,632.62**
Construction & Demolition (C&D) Debris	Combustion Ash	0.00
TOTAL C&D DEBRIS		**0.00**
TOTAL FOR ALL		**1,393,853.64**

Recycling Services Offered

SCDC currently collects and processes* recyclables from state agencies, colleges/universities and K-12 schools in the Midlands area. Participants see a significant reduction in the amount of material going to the landfill and may be able to reduce disposal costs. There is a fee for this service, and participating programs need to provide their own recycling containers. For more information, call **(803) 896-2364** or **1-800-768-7348**.

* While collection of material by SCDC is typically included in arrangements for this service, due to manning issues, please expect some potential delays for pick-up. Dropping off recyclables at the SCDC facility is allowed and free of charge.

South Carolina Department of Corrections

Green Government Initiative

The Green Government Initiative (GGI) assists state agencies in meeting their recycling requirements, bringing South Carolina closer to its recycling goals. GGI encourages agencies to lead by example through:

- **Reducing its environmental footprint** (which can also save money);
- **Buying recycled-content products**; and
- **Supporting South Carolina's recycling industry**.

Visit des.sc.gov/recycle or call **1-800-768-7348** to learn more.

GREEN GOVERNMENT INITIATIVE

RecycleU

RecycleU is a comprehensive SCDES program that helps South Carolina colleges/universities to improve waste reduction, recycling and composting programs on campus. Free, non-regulatory services include:

- **Site visits** to assess waste reduction, reuse, and recycling successes and opportunities;
- **Technical assistance** (e.g., phone/email consultations, research and contacts for markets, service providers, and reuse; and
- **Training and workshops**.

Please visit **des.sc.gov/recycleu** for more details.

State Agencies Reporting for FY26

- Comptroller General's Office
- Office of the Adjutant General
- Patriots Point Development Authority
- SFAA-Insurance Reserve Fund
- S.C. Administrative Law Court
- S.C. Commission of Higher Education
- S.C. Commission on Indigent Defense
- S.C. Education Lottery
- S.C. Emergency Management Division
- S.C. Department of Administration
  - Federal and State Surplus Property
- S.C. Department of Consumer Affairs
- S.C. Department of Corrections
- S.C. Department of Education
- S.C. Department of Employment and Workforce
- S.C. Department of Environmental Services – Aiken Office
- S.C. Department of Labor, Licensing, and Regulation
- S.C. Department of Motor Vehicles
- S.C. Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism
- S.C. Department of Probation, Parole and Pardon Services
- S.C. Department of Public Health
  - Aiken County Health Department
  - Chester County Health Department
  - Fairfield County Health Department
  - Lancaster County Health Department
  - Laurens County Health Department
- S.C. Department of Revenue
- S.C. Department of Transportation
  - Darlington Maintenance
  - Darlington
  - Dillon
  - District 1
  - District 3
  - District 6
  - Florence Maintenance
  - Georgetown
  - Horry Maintenance
  - Kershaw Maintenance
  - Marion
  - Marlboro Maintenance
  - Office of Materials and research
  - Pickens Construction
  - Richland Maintenance
  - Sumter
  - Williamsburg
- State Ethics Commission
- SCETV
- S.C. Forestry Commission
- S.C. Higher Education Tuition Grants Commission
- S.C. Law Enforcement Division
- S.C. Public Employee Benefit Authority
- S.C. Office of the State Auditor
- S.C. Sea Grant Consortium
- S.C. School for the Deaf and Blind
- S.C. Secretary of State
- S.C. State Library
- S.C. Worker's Compensation Commission

Colleges/Universities Reporting for FY26

- Aiken Technical College
- Clemson University
- Coastal Carolina University
- College of Charleston
- Florence Darlington Technical College
- Francis Marion University
- Furman University
- Horry-Georgetown Technical College
- Medical University of South Carolina
- Orangeburg-Calhoun Technical College
- Trident Technical College
- University of South Carolina (USC) – Main Campus
- USC Upstate
- Voorhees University
- Williamsburg Technical College
- Winthrop University
- Wofford College
- York Technical College

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