

Municipal Solid Waste Pay-As-You-Throw (PAYT)¹ Case Study

**Plainfield, New Hampshire²
Population: 2,241**

Prepared by: The Northeast Waste Management Officials' Association (NEWMOA)³

The Town of Plainfield is located in a rural area of east central New Hampshire on the border with Vermont between Claremont and Lebanon. When Plainfield's town dump closed in 1973, the community decided it did not want to build a transfer station and did not want to employ any waste management staff, and instead would pay a contractor to provide curbside trash pickup to all households. This arrangement has been affirmed by Town Meeting several times since then.

By 1991, disposal costs were increasing and the Town voted to charge residents a fee to alleviate budget pressures. The Town decided to require that residents purchase stickers and affix one for each 30 pounds of trash that they place at the curb. Initially, the \$1.00 sticker fee paid for the cost of disposal, while the Town paid for curbside pick-up through property taxes, with each covering about 50 percent of the total waste management costs. Over time, curbside pickup costs increased, and disposal costs decreased, but the Town has maintained the sticker fee so it covers approximately 50 percent of the total costs. The current fee is \$2.00 per bag which generates approximately \$80,000 per year. Stickers are sold at several locations in Town.

When the sticker program was introduced in 1991, Plainfield added free curbside pick-up of recycling. Currently, trash and recycling are picked up every other week by the contractor, Cassella Waste Systems. Cassella recently switched to single-stream recycling which allows residents to include more types of materials in their recycling collection bins.

In the past, Plainfield sent approximately 1,200 tons of trash to the Claremont incinerator each year. Now they send approximately 500 tons a year to the Lebanon Landfill. The Town largely attributes this recent decrease to the availability of single-stream recycling and eliminating waste services to the local private high school, Kimball Union Academy.

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¹ Also known as: variable rate pricing, unit-based pricing (UBP), and save-money-and-reduce-trash (SMART).

² The information in the case study is based on correspondence with Steve Halleran, Plainfield Town Administrator.

³ NEWMOA is a non-profit, non-partisan interstate association whose membership is composed of the state environmental agency directors of the hazardous waste, solid waste, waste site cleanup, and pollution prevention programs in Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Rhode Island, and Vermont. Visit www.newmoa.org.