

# Soapbox Cincinnati

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## Unanswered questions to Cincinnati's effort to reduce useable waste

Emily Dillingham | Tuesday, June 13, 2017

Almost three months into the orange bag recycling initiative, Cincinnatians are still unclear about the procedure. But overall, this initiative is good news for Cincinnati. As the city continues to grow and evolve, so must its practices.

When are the bags picked up? Where are the goods going? What prompted this initiative?



Soapbox connected with the Director of the Office of Environment and Sustainability, Larry Falkin, to gain some clarity.

Falkin says that so far, the initiative is going well. "More than 80,000 pounds of material have been rescued from the landfill and returned to the economy."

But where are the donations going?

The collected goods are sorted at a facility to be sold to thrift stores and commodities markets. To date, three full tractor-trailer trucks have been sent to the sorting facility.

Residents claim missed pick-ups. Others are unsure *when* the bags are picked up.

The bags are to be picked up every two weeks on the resident's regular recycling day. Falkin says that the beginning of every new program carries some start-up issues. When a missed pick-up occurs, residents should call the phone number on the orange bags and Simple Recycling will return, generally within 24 hours.

The City of Cincinnati has partnered with [Simple Recycling](#), a for-profit organization that, according to its website, is "committed to offering residents the most simple and easy way to keep usable materials from the landfill."

"Cincinnati was looking for a way to recycle old clothing because it is one of the biggest components of residential trash," Falkin says.

The city published an RFI to find a partner for textil recycling, and Simple Recycling was chosen due

to its success in other cities similar to Cincinnati like Austin.

So far, the program is looking good. The effort to reduce useable waste in landfills is beginning to succeed. While nonprofits should not be forgotten, the orange bags are an accessible option for Cincinnatians who cannot manually drop off donations at nonprofit facilities.

Local Northside resident Alistair Probst is excited about the program and feels that it could help people with limited transportation donate their usable goods.

The program has only just begun. While the first few months have showed success so far, Falkin says they are still fine tuning. "Operational procedures are constantly being reviewed to improve customer service and program efficiency."