



LA CROSSE COUNTY

Exceptional services. Extraordinary place.

2025

La Crosse County Household Hazardous
Materials Program Annual Report to
Stakeholders

La Crosse County Household Hazardous Materials Facility
3202 Berlin Drive
La Crosse, WI 54601

Hours of Operation:

Winter Hours: (November-March) Monday through Friday 8am-4pm

Summer Hours: (April -October) Monday through Friday 8am-4pm & 1st & 3rd Saturdays 9am-Noon

For general information you can reach the facility at (608) 785-9999 or visit our website at <http://www.lacrossecounty.org/SolidWaste/hhm.asp> or contact our technicians at: hhm@lacrossecounty.org or 608-792-3180.

Solid Waste Department Mission Statement

To provide environmentally and economically sound solid waste services through:

- ~ Cooperation with a regional mindset
- ~ Communication and education that is comprehensive
- ~ Creativity that will result in long-term value to the stakeholders

Mission, History and Scope

In September of 2001, the Household Hazardous Waste Advisory Panel (HHWAP) to the Solid Waste Committee recommended the formation of a Household Hazardous Materials (HHM) program to be housed in a permanent facility at the La Crosse County Landfill. This vision became a reality with the opening of the HHM facility in the Fall of 2003. For over 20 years, the La Crosse County Solid Waste Department has continuously operated the HHM program, accepting hazardous waste from households, farms and qualifying small businesses (VSQG). According to the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, a Very Small Quantity Generator (VSQG) of hazardous material is any company that generates less than 220 pounds of hazardous material on a monthly basis and does not exceed this quantity in any given month. The HHWAP envisioned a program that would “effectively remove toxic and dangerous household hazardous wastes from the waste stream in a cost-effective manner that is satisfactory to the users and adapts to meet the changing needs of the county residents.”

Responding to this vision and to the needs of the community, the program has expanded the materials that it accepts from strictly chemicals to now include rechargeable batteries, electronics (e-waste) and solar panels, fluorescent lamps, infectious waste, non-controlled pharmaceuticals, oil filters, compressed gas cylinders, PFAS-containing fire suppression foam and refrigerant-containing appliances.

The purpose of this report is to keep the stakeholders of the La Crosse County Household Hazardous Materials program informed about its operation.

Program Benefits

The HHM program continues to prioritize serving the community in many ways. Protecting community health and the environment by ensuring toxic materials are removed from the solid waste stream and responsibly managed. Permanent year-round household hazardous materials programs have demonstrated success.



Community Health and Environmental Protection: Reduces the risk of accidentally poisoning, fires, and chemical exposures in homes by removing those materials; Provides safe disposal options for toxic, flammable, corrosive, and reactive materials; Decreases improper storage and illegal dumping that can harm residents and first responders where programs otherwise do not exist.

Regulatory Compliance & Risk Reduction: Helps communities meet state and federal waste management and environmental requirements; Reduces municipal liability by ensuring proper handling and documentation; Improves safety for landfill operations; Ensures regulatory standards are being met while meeting the needs of local communities.

Consistent & Convenient Access for Residents: Year-round availability increases participation compared to one-day events; Encourages routine, responsible disposal habits; Supports residents during moves, cleanouts, estate settlements, and seasonal projects; Ensures all residents—not just those who can attend special events—have access; Demonstrates local government commitment to health and environmental stewardship.

Reuse and Waste Reduction: Facilitates reuse programs (e.g., paint, cleaners, automotive products); Reduces the volume of hazardous waste requiring costly disposal; Promotes a circular economy approach where feasible; Creates ongoing opportunities for public education on safer product use and alternatives; Increases awareness of toxicity reduction and pollution prevention.

Cost Efficiency Over Time: Lower per-unit disposal costs compared to periodic collection events; Allows for reuse, recycling, and product redistribution when appropriate.

Program Utilization

Electronics, otherwise known as E-waste, represent the largest portion of material by weight collected at the facility, on average, 32%. Recycling e-waste ensures that valuable materials are recovered and reused. We work cooperatively with area recyclers to ensure the materials are being managed in a responsible, cost-effective manner. In Wisconsin, manufacturers are responsible for some of the cost of recycling the electronics that they produce. Since the E-Cycle Wisconsin initiative began in 2010, a reliable electronics recycling market has developed.

Latex paint is the second largest material managed by the program representing 20% of materials dropped off. Latex paint recycling would improve the program's overall waste management hierarchy if a cost-effective means

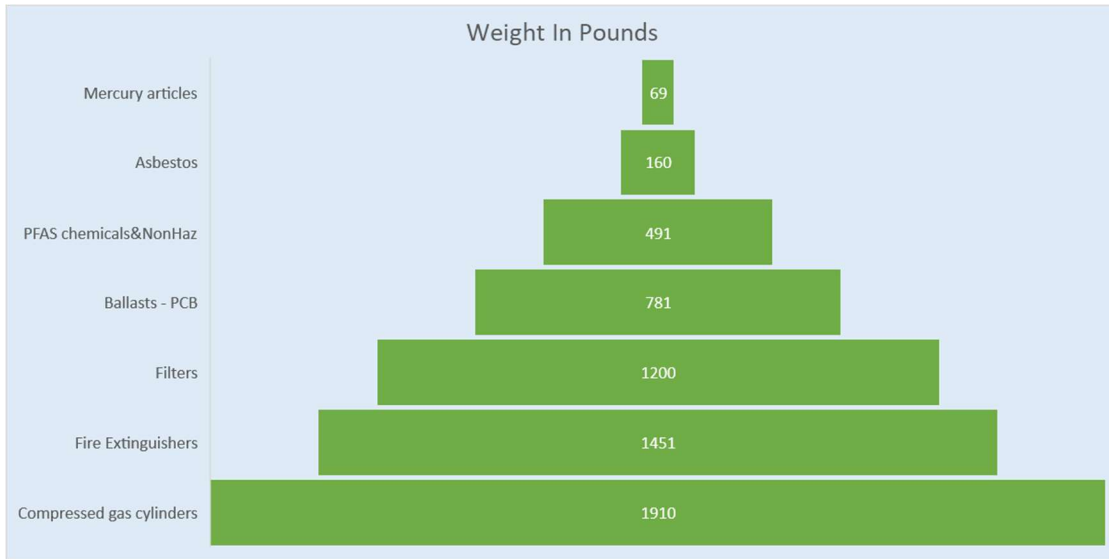
of doing so could be identified. Implementation of an initiative equivalent to the Minnesota Paint Care program in Wisconsin would provide for dependable latex paint recycling and reduce disposal expenses.

Materials classified as hazardous waste are the third most collected at the facility; representing approximately 10% of the volume managed. The program works with licensed hazardous waste transporters and disposal facilities to ensure these items are properly treated to remove their hazardous constituents and minimize regional impacts to environmental and human health.

While assuring the proper disposal of hazardous waste is the highest priority, much of the material accepted by the program can be reused or recycled. The program has succeeded in diverting an average of 75% of materials dropped off from landfilling. Diverting materials for recycling or reuse allows products to be responsibly removed from the waste stream. A majority of these diverted materials were reused, recycled or utilized as an industrial fuel. Included in these diversion totals is 86,359 pounds of usable materials that were given back to the community through the Reuse Room. This greatly benefits citizens who are able to use these products and provides a more environmentally sustainable option for these reusable materials. The value of materials placed into the Reuse Room is two-fold, from a commercial and disposal perspective. Collectively, the value to the program is estimated at \$228,853 (saving \$80,884 in the equivalent disposal costs and \$147,969 in commercial purchasing value for equivalent new products). Many people are surprised when they learn about disposal costs for everyday household products. The Reuse Room program allows products that would have otherwise needed to be disposed find new value.

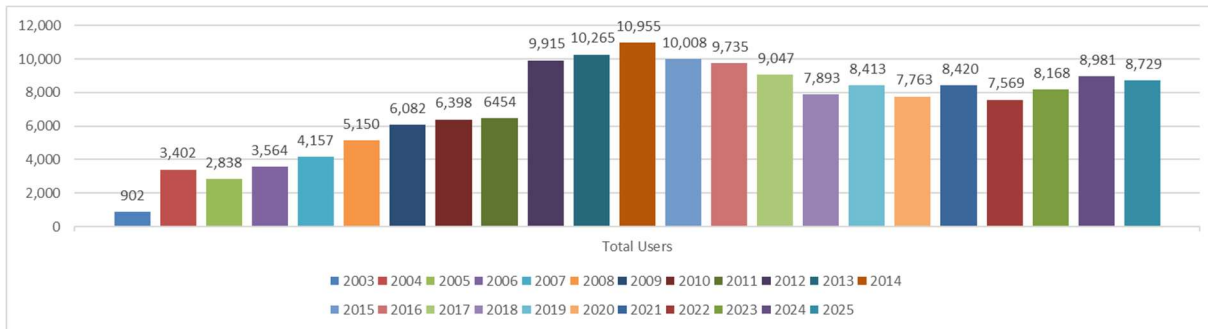
In summary, removing hazardous materials from the waste stream improves the performance of the entire disposal system. Removal of these chemicals by the HHM program reduces the toxicity of our regional waste stream, positively impacting our landfill, wastewater treatment facility and the Xcel Waste-to-Energy facility. The 515,862 pounds of materials processed and shipped out at the HHM facility in 2025 were classified into the following categories:



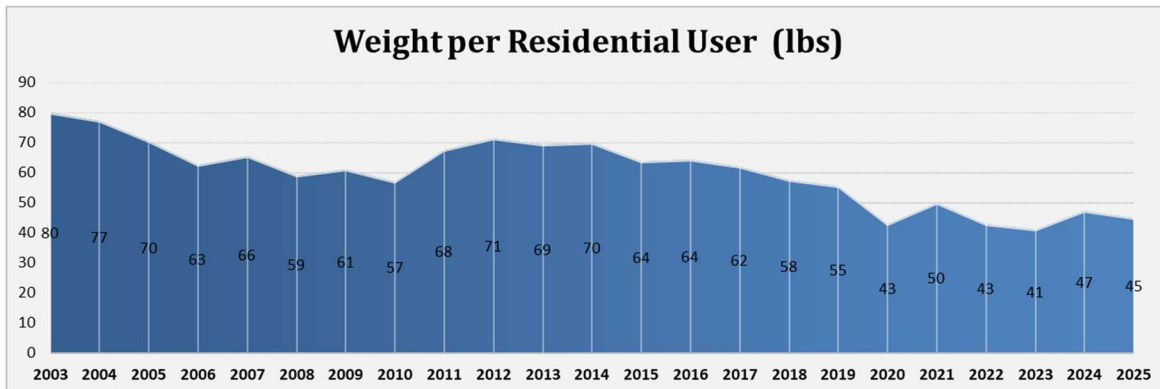


Residential Users

In 2025, 8,729 household users utilized the La Crosse County Hazardous Materials (HHM) program. These users dropped of 393,293 pounds of materials. Our program has seen stable, consistent utilization from residents. The below graph represents residential usage from 2003 through 2025.

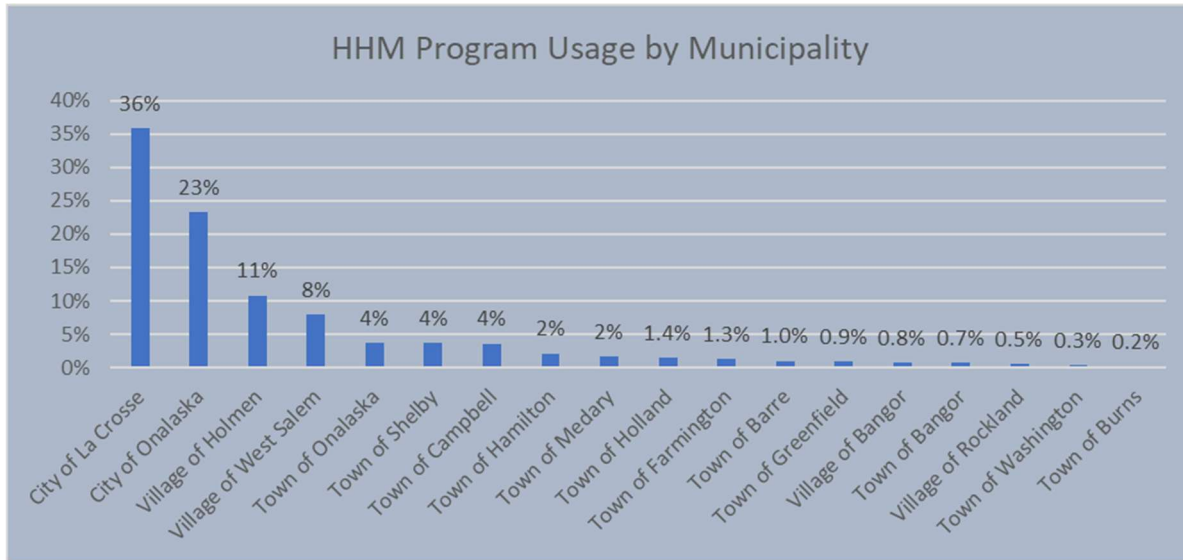


The chart below depicts the average amount of waste by weight brought in by each household user since the program’s inception. This data includes all materials collected by the HHM program. The average amount of materials brought in per residential customer in 2025 was 45 pounds. Based on comparison with the total users, residents are utilizing the facility more frequently in lieu of holding on to larger volumes of material.



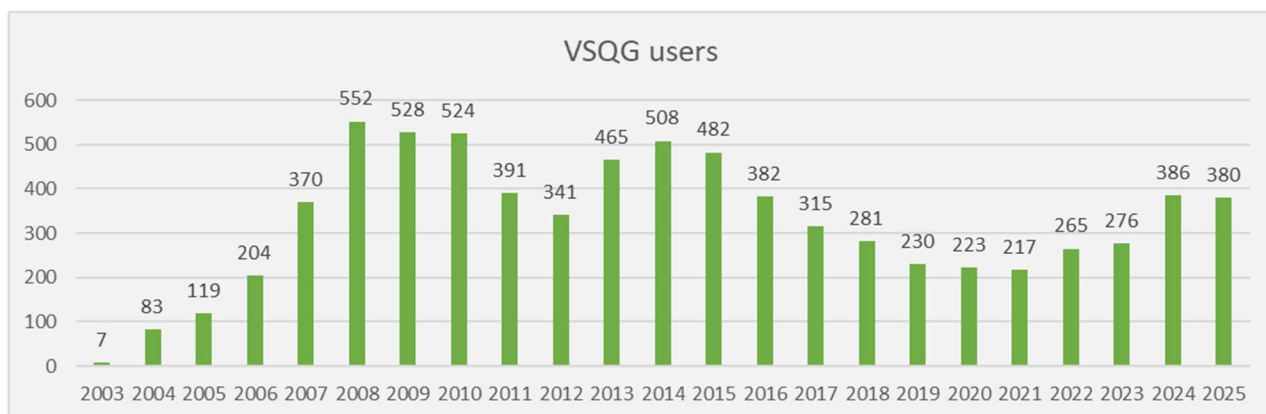
A spike in accepted residential user materials occurred in 2012. This coincided with the statewide electronic waste landfill ban and the HHM program’s acceptance of electronic waste. The initial stockpile of electronic waste has since been reduced. In addition, today’s electronic devices are significantly lighter than in the past resulting in less weight at the time of disposal.

The following chart shows that in 2025, the program was utilized by residents throughout the County regardless of where they live; however, the level of participation does vary among the individual Municipalities. Overall, 15% of La Crosse County households utilized the HHM facility which is exceptional among comparable programs.



Business and Organization Users

The HHM program accepts materials categorized as hazardous waste from businesses and organizations that qualify as very small quantity generators (VSQG’s). VSQGs generate hazardous waste at a rate of less than 220 pounds per month. In addition, the program accepts latex paint, medical waste, electronics, used oil and universal waste from any sized business or organization. During 2025, VSQG utilization of the HHM program had a slight decrease over the previous year. VSQGs delivered 69,794 pounds of materials to the facility.



Houston and Other Counties Utilization

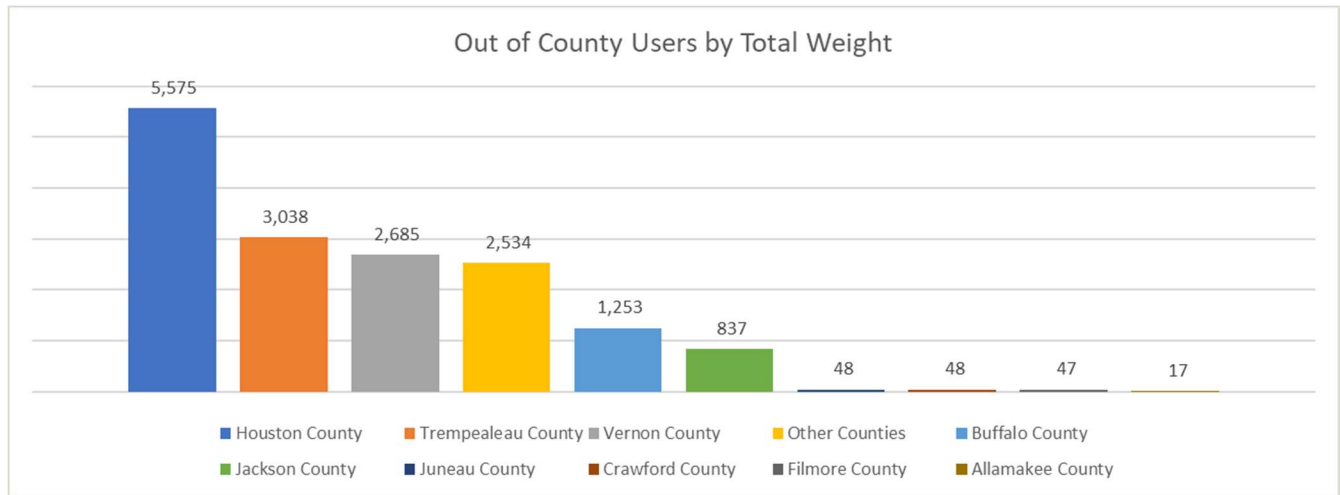
In 2025, the HHM program participated in an off-site hazardous waste collection in Houston County, Minnesota. The following is a summary of that off-site waste collection event.

Houston County Clean Sweeps	
<u>Location</u>	<u>Weights</u>
Houston, MN	~10,255 lbs. (Flex bin weight estimated)

Out-of-County Users

In 2025, the HHM program supported out-of-county users by managing hazardous, universal, electronic, medical, and non-hazardous wastes for a fee through our existing program infrastructure. This ensures users have an outlet for these materials if local options are not feasible.

Below is a summary of materials received from counties outside our service area by weight in pounds.



Public Awareness

Public information is an important part of the La Crosse County HHM program. This includes handouts and brochures, our website (<https://www.lacrossecounty.org/solidwaste/hhm.asp>), direct mail (via municipal recycling newsletters) and social media advertising. Face-to-face interaction with the community is valued. In addition, HHM staff distributed hundreds of program brochures, contributed content to the County’s website and Facebook pages and participated in several media interviews.

HHM Program Funding

A 2007 Intergovernmental Agreement between La Crosse County and the 18 municipalities of the County established funding contributions, in the form of a \$1/capita from each Municipality. This was matched by La Crosse County. These contributions provided over half of the program’s funding. Using this funding formula, most of the HHM program’s services are free of charge to La Crosse County residents. This Intergovernmental Agreement was renewed on January 1st, 2018, and supports the operation and maintenance of the HHM program by contributing \$1.30 per capita per annum by February 1st of each year. This payment increased at a

rate of \$.05/capita each year until 2022, at which time the payment was \$1.50/capita. Beginning in 2023 and extending through 2027, the payment increases at a rate of 2% per year. The calculation of the per capita payment is adjusted each year according to population estimates as published by Wisconsin Department of Administration Demographic Service Center. This agreement allows for secure and stable program funding extending to December 31st, 2027. Initial contact letters will be sent to Municipalities in the second half of 2026 to prepare for future negotiations.

The HHM program also receives funding through the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection Clean Sweep Program. In 2025, the program was awarded \$26,359.36 for 2026. Revenue received from qualifying VSQGs are also an important part of the facility's operations. In 2025, the HHM program received \$39,767 from local business customers for waste disposal services provided by the program.

Looking Ahead

For 2026, the Department will continue to prioritize advancing efficiencies and managing needed updates to the program and facility. Our first project will be the expanded Reuse Room. This very popular service manages over 75,000 lbs of reusable materials provided back to the public every year. The room is a self-service storage room for small, containerized volumes of commercial products. Users are able to take these products at no-charge. The room is being expanded to accommodate more storage and relocated for efficiency and safety for staff. The Department will also be incorporating HHM's point of sale into the Department's WasteWorks program. Utilizing the same intake and data reporting system as the landfill will allow for more consistent staff training, minimize software maintenance requirements and provide uniform regulatory reporting. For 2026, the Department is also evaluating the feasibility of independently sending latex paint for recycling.

Conclusion

The La Crosse County Household Hazardous Materials program remains a valuable and necessary service to the residents of the region, as demonstrated by consistent usership, reliable participation trends, and ongoing community support. The permanent HHM program site provides a stable, predictable, and trusted disposal option for households, reducing improper disposal, protecting public health, and safeguarding the local environment. Program staff continues to operate and refine a service that fulfills the original vision of the Household Hazardous Waste Action Plan (HHWAP), while thoughtfully adapting to meet the evolving needs of the community. The development of the site allows for efficient operations, accurate data collection, regulatory compliance, and long-term planning, while also supporting waste reduction efforts such as product reuse, education, and safe material management.

Through consistent availability and our dependable service, the HHM program strengthens public confidence and encourages responsible behavior year-round rather than episodic or emergency disposal. HHM staff values and actively seeks feedback from customers and stakeholders and remains committed to continuous improvement. In 2026, the program will continue striving to provide high-quality public service that reflects community needs, environmental stewardship, and fiscal responsibility.