



**LA CROSSE COUNTY**

Exceptional services. Extraordinary place.

**2023**

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

1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> 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](mailto: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. 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), 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. 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.

Materials classified as hazardous waste are the second most collected at the facility; representing approximately 20% 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.

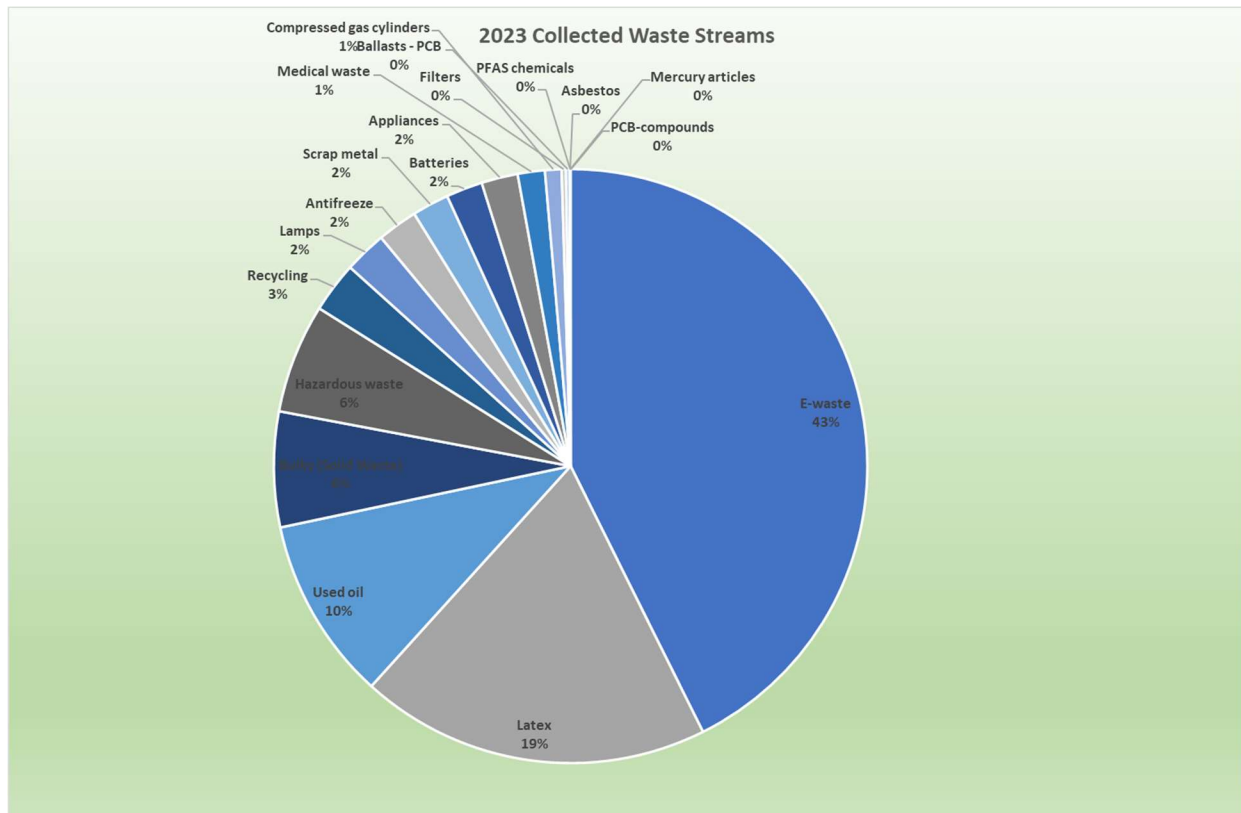
Latex paint is the third largest material managed by the program representing 15% of materials dropped off. Latex paint recycling would improve the program’s overall waste management hierarchy if a cost-effective means of doing so could be identified. Implementation of an initiative equivalent to the Minnesota Paint Care program in Wisconsin would provide for dependable latex paint recycling and reduce disposal expenses.

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 81% 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 103,700 pounds of usable materials that were given back to the community through the Reuse Room. This is a record volume of reuse for the program. 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 \$240,500 (saving \$85,000 in the equivalent disposal costs and \$155,500 in commercial purchasing value for equivalent new products). Many people are surprised when they learn about disposal costs for many 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.

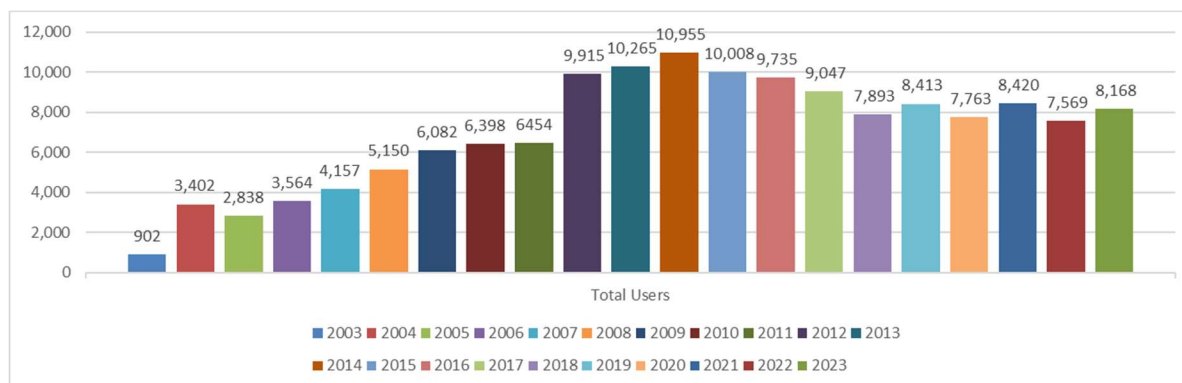
The 441,628 pounds of materials received at the HHM facility in 2023 were classified into the following categories:



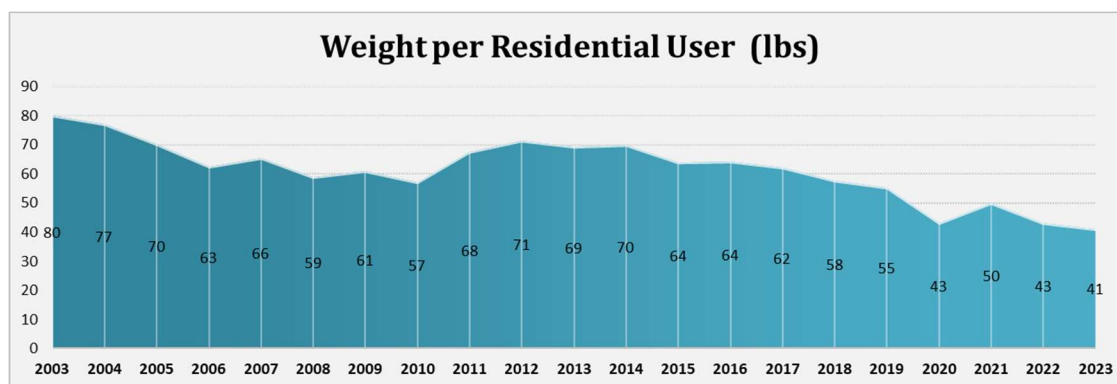
## Program Utilization

### Residential Users

In 2023, 8,168 household users utilized the La Crosse County Hazardous Materials (HHM) program. Our program has seen stable, consistent utilization from residents. The below graph represents residential usage from 2003 through 2023.

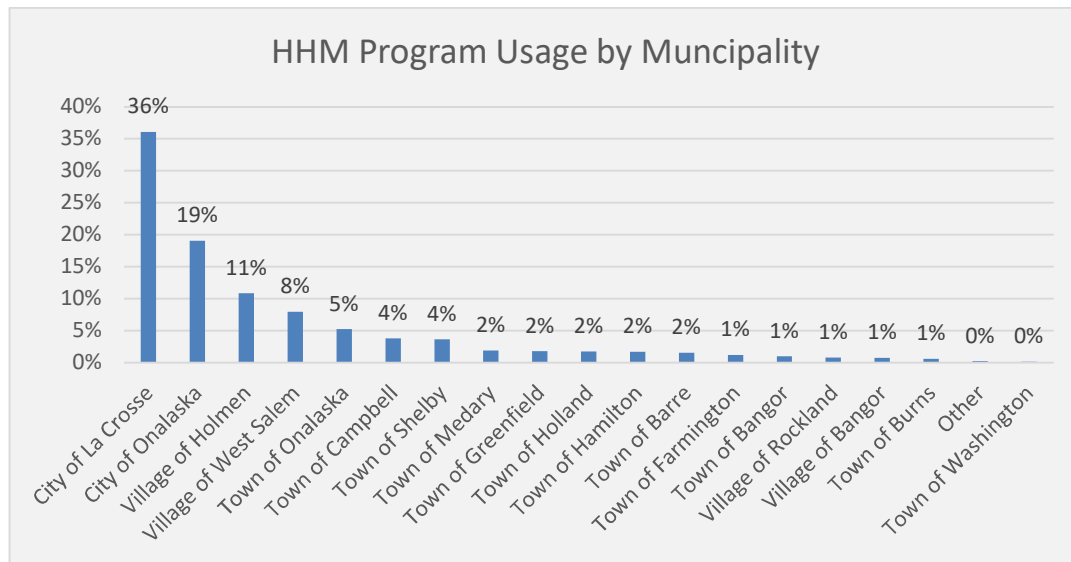


After the initial start of the program, users were able to clean up stockpiled waste that they had not previously been able to dispose of. The chart below depicts the average amount of waste by weight brought in by each household user since the program's inception. This data includes all materials collected by the HHM program. The average amount of materials brought in per residential customer in 2023 was 41 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.



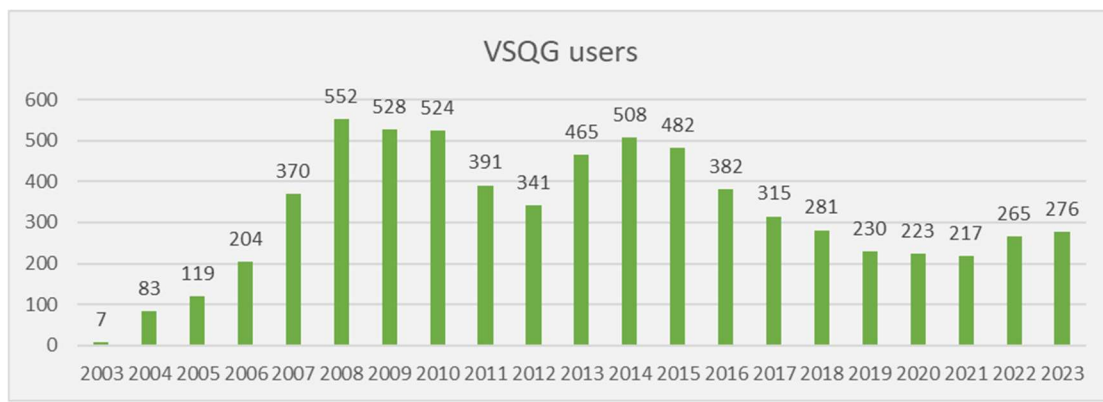
A spike in accepted residential user materials occurred in 2012. This coincided with the statewide electronic waste landfill ban and the HHM program's acceptance of electronic waste. The initial stockpile of electronic waste has since been reduced. In addition, today's electronic devices are significantly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

The following chart shows that in 2023, 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 and organization. During 2023, small business utilization of the HHM program continues to increase. Small businesses delivered 60,506 pounds of materials to the facility representing a 15% increase from the year previous. An ongoing marketing campaign aimed at increasing this important customer base was started in 2020 and will continue in 2024.



### Off-Site Collection Events

In 2023, the HHM program participated in two off-site hazardous waste collection in Houston County, Minnesota (Houston and La Crescent). The following is a summary of those off-site waste collection events.

2023 HHM program off-site hazardous waste collection events.

<b><u>Houston County Clean Sweeps</u></b>	
<u>Location</u>	<u>Weights</u>
Houston, MN	2,884 lbs.
La Crescent, MN	5,641 lbs.

## **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 1<sup>st</sup>, 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 31<sup>st</sup>, 2027.

The HHM program also receives funding through the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection Clean Sweep Program. In 2023, the program was awarded \$26,003.64 for 2024. Revenue received from qualifying small businesses are also an important part of the facility's operations. In 2023, the HHM program received \$51,044.00 from local business customers for waste disposal services provided by the program.

## **Looking Ahead**

As part of the program's evolution, HHM will be expanding its hours of operation 22% for residential users in 2024. Also, for the first time since the program was established, the facility will be completing a large-scale waste storage system upgrade. Including waste storage lockers for flammables, oxidizers, and corrosives waste in order to meet updated code requirements, improve safety, and increase storage capacity.

## **Conclusion**

The La Crosse County Household Hazardous Materials program remains a valuable and necessary service to the people of this area as demonstrated by consistent usership and ongoing community support. Program staff strives to continue providing a program that fulfills the original vision of the HHWAP and by growing to meet the evolving needs the community. As always, the HHM staff appreciates feedback from its customers and stakeholders and will strive to provide the best in public service in 2024.