



---

**DATE:** April 26, 2023

**TO:** Waste Management and Recycling Boards

**FROM:** Meghan Starkey, Senior Management Analyst  
Miya Kitahara, Program Manager

**SUBJECT:** Agency Program Evaluation

---

## SUMMARY

The Agency has launched an internal program evaluation process to better measure, continuously improve, and communicate the impact of key programs. The process is designed not only to measure the environmental benefits of the Agency's work, but also to tell the story of progress on related Agency priorities as well, such as equity, partner engagement, and business assistance. At the April 26 board meeting, staff will provide an overview of the evaluation work and plans for the future.

## DISCUSSION

The Agency's program evaluation work began with an analysis of four of our largest projects:

- SB 1383/Organics Reduction and Recycling Ordinance
- Food Waste Reduction
- Schools Outreach and Education
- Community Engagement

To start, staff leading each project refined the projects' "theory of change" and objectives to ensure that that our work is intentionally designed to achieve clear outcomes. The teams then established a working set of performance metrics, as a baseline, to measure and communicate impact.

Example performance metrics include:

- Number of businesses receiving technical assistance for compliance with recycling requirements
- Number of organizations receiving grants and the resulting waste reduction impacts
- Number of students reached through school programming such as transfer station tours
- Number of participants in StopWaste Environmental Educator Training

While metrics like these are important to help staff understand and continuously improve our work, the point of the evaluation process is not just to come up with a list of activity counts. It is rather to create an environment of constant feedback, innovation, and refinements that can be used both to direct individual programs and to inform and balance overall agency strategy.

The program evaluation work will expand in the coming year to include other Agency programs, including grants. Over the past year, staff improved the grants reporting portal to make it easier for grantees to provide consistent data on project outcomes, while also keeping the reporting burden at a minimum. Among other reporting mechanisms, staff plan to utilize data to provide each member agency with a snapshot of our Agency's partnership and impact in member agency communities.

The program evaluation effort is rooted in the goals of the Agency's Countywide Integrated Waste Management Plan (CoIWMP), which the board adopted in 2020 and which recognizes the need for not only managing discards, but also advancing upstream and circular solutions that provide multiple benefits to the community.

The staff presentation will provide an update on evaluation progress, challenges, and next steps.

**RECOMMENDATION**

This item is for information only.