

**ANNUAL  
REPORT**

**2023**



## **Introduction**

This Annual Report provides an update of the achievements of the Berks County Solid Waste Authority (Authority). In this report you will find an update on the objectives of the Authority and the end of year results as of December 31, 2023.

## **Mission**

The mission of the Berks County Solid Waste Authority is to manage solid waste and recyclable materials in an environmentally safe, reliable and efficient manner.

The Berks County Solid Waste Authority was established by the Berks County Commissioners on August 19, 1992. The role of the Solid Waste Authority is to protect the health and welfare of the residents of Berks County and to provide a means whereby Berks County can effectively and efficiently manage and implement the Solid Waste Plan.

## **Board of Directors**

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### **Executive Director**

Jane Meeks

### **Solicitor**

Socrates J. Georgeadis, Esquire, Georgeadis Law

## **2023 Highlights**

### **❖ BERKS COUNTY SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT PLAN (10-YEAR)**

Berks County Solid Waste Management Plan (10-year Plan). Began the planning process in 2022 with the creation of the Solid Waste Advisory Committee (SWAC). During 2022 and 2023, the Authority gathered data on waste and recycling generation rates and evaluated the available disposal capacity from facilities currently accepting Berks County waste. The SWAC held one Solid Waste Advisory Committee meetings in 2023. During this meeting Garrett Trego from Manko Gold Katcher Fox, LLP and our Executive Director presented a draft copy of the Plan and reviewed the historical information and how the projections were being calculated. The historical information and projected capacity were gathered by our Executive Director, over the past 18 months, which resulted in two draft Plans being distributed to the Committee, for their input and comment. Attorney Trego reviewed Chapter 5 of the Plan, including the requirement to provide adequate disposal capacity and reviewed the proposed timeline for the Plan. In addition to the two advertisements that were placed in the Pa Bulletin and Waste Advantage Magazine, our Executive Director also reached out to facilities that are currently accepting waste from Berks County, to inquire if they were interested in entering into Disposal Capacity Agreements with Berks County, as part of our 10-year planning period. This resulted in fourteen (14) Disposal Capacity Agreements being received by the fall of 2023, guaranteeing more than 5.7 million tons of capacity. Those Capacity Agreements were fully executed in March of 2024, by the Authority and County Commissioners, which resulted in 1.7 million tons of excess capacity over this 10-year planning period. Initial comments on the draft Plan were received from PADEP on September 20, 2023 and were incorporated into the final draft Plan. In March of 2024, the final draft Solid Waste Plan was distributed to our seventy-three municipalities, the County Commissioners and PADEP to begin the municipal 30-day comment period. No comments were received from our municipalities during the 30-day municipal comment period. However, additional comments and recommendations were received from PADEP and are currently being reviewed. Once complete the Plan will then be presented to the County Commissioners for final approval and then forwarded to PADEP for final approval.

## ❖ SPECIAL COLLECTION EVENTS:

Worked closely with our municipalities, the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture and the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection regarding obtaining permits to hold our Household Hazardous Waste Collection, which requires us to file a Health and Safety Plan and registration forms. Pre-registration for our spring and fall collections continued throughout 2023, which allows for a much more efficient event with little to no traffic issues. Pre-registration will also continue through 2024.

The Authority held both spring and fall Household Hazardous Waste collections and shredding events in 2023. All four collections were successfully held with pre-registration and limited volunteers. The Authority will continue to require pre-registration for our special collection events, which allows us to better control traffic flow, throughout the event. Since 2007, nearly 78,700 residents have participated in our special event collections properly disposing of nearly 6 million pounds of waste. Below is a breakdown from our 2023 events:

### ➤ Household Hazardous Waste Collection (program began in 1994)

2,200 residents participated in the two events that were held in 2023, collecting 156,396 pounds of hazardous materials.

### ➤ Paper Shredding (program began in 2009)

2,500 residents participated in our spring and fall shredding event collecting over 103,000 pounds of confidential papers.

## ❖ OPERATION OF COUNTY RECYCLING CENTER:

The Authority operates a full-time recycling center at 1316 Hilltop Rd., Leesport, Pa. The operation of this facility has been enhanced substantially since the Authority took over the operations of this facility in 2008. Two horizontal balers for paper have been installed, drastically reducing our transportation costs and a full-time electronic and tire collection center now operates at this location. The center typically operates with one full-time and two part-time employees, but fluctuates depending on the season.

### ➤ Cardboard, mixed paper, bottles and containers

327 tons of recyclables were processed at this recycling center in 2023, which generated \$4,903 in revenue from the sale of our mixed paper and corrugated cardboard. Due to the volatility of market conditions, expenses exceeded revenues by \$17,900, which is quite different than 2022 when revenues exceeded expenses by \$1,856. Although in 2021 markets for cardboard and paper were similar to 2023 and our program experienced a loss of \$8,300. In 2008, the first year of Authority operation, 500 tons of material was recycled at this same facility at a cost of \$40,000. It is estimated that with the installation of our balers in 2010 and 2019, the Authority has realized a savings of well in excess of \$500,000.

➤ Electronic Waste Collection (full-time center opened July 1, 2010)

18,000 residents visited the full-time center in 2023 recycling over 1.06 million pounds of electronic scrap, up from 378,000 pounds in 2011, our first full year of operation. 210,000 residents have used this site since opening, recycling over 16.5 million pounds of electronic waste, in twelve and a half years.

➤ Tire Collection (full-time center opened in April of 2012)

250 residents recycled 34,700 pounds of tires at our full-time site in 2023.

➤ Improvements to Recycling Center on Hilltop Road

The Authority is continuously making necessary improvements to the center, which improves the appearance of the center, while decreasing our operational costs. In 2016, our land development plan was approved by Bern Township and included the construction of a new building and paving the remaining parking area, both of which were completed in 2017. A second baler was installed in 2019 which was obtained from the City of Reading, free of charge with 90% of the building renovations paid for through a 902 Recycling Grant. On August 8, 2022, a grant was awarded to the Authority from PADEP in the amount of \$109,474 to cover additional improvements at the center, including repairing/repainting roll-offs, seal coating the parking lot, fencing and the purchase of a new Kubota skid steer. In 2023, the Authority erected a canopy over our baling area, which was also funded through this grant and replaced the floor on the second floor of the center. The roof over the southern portion of the site will be replaced in early 2024.

The Authority aggressively pursues all available recycling grants to help reduce capital and operating expenses to the greatest extent possible, for both our programs, as well as, all municipalities in Berks County.

❖ **PROVIDE MUNICIPAL SUPPORT**

The Authority offers assistance to our municipalities with their grant submittals, disbursement requests, bid specifications, ordinance updates and compliance issues.

➤ 904 Performance Grants – PADEP

\$ 850,000 was awarded in 2023 for the 2021 Performance grants. These grants can be used to enhance municipal recycling programs, but are not required to be used for any specific purpose, once in compliance with Act 101. The 2022 applications are currently being reviewed and the 2023 applications, should be announced by PADEP in June and should be due in December of 2024.

➤ 902 Equipment Grants – PADEP

On July 1, 2023, \$1.09 million in grant applications were awarded by PADEP to four Berks County municipalities, under the 902 Recycling Equipment Grant Program. Only those municipalities not receiving funding in the last round were eligible to apply for these funds. Due to COVID, no applications were received or awarded in 2021, therefore everyone was eligible in 2022 and very few in 2023. Twelve applications, including the Authority's will be submitted in May of 2024. These grants must be used to purchase equipment and provide education on recycling programs and cannot be used to cover any operating costs.

❖ **COUNTY RECYCLING RATE AND WASTE GENERATION**

The Berks County Solid Waste Management Plan of 2014 projected that Berks County would meet the 35% recycling goal in 2015 and that it would continue to grow to 40% by the year 2024. In 2023, the County recycled 240,300 tons of recyclable material, which represented 41% of our waste stream, when using the state average of .8 tons per person per year. It is anticipated that in future year's contamination will decrease the amount of recycling, as mills become more stringent on the quality of recyclable materials, that they will accept. From 2017 to 2023 the actual amount of municipal waste generated by Berks County and disposed of in Pa waste facilities increased from 301,316 tons in 2017 to 322,704 tons in 2018 and then significantly decreased to 310,045 tons in 2019 and to 280,903 tons in 2022. 2023 saw a significant increase of 40,292 tons from 2022, with a total of 321,196 tons being disposed on in Pa waste disposal facilities, similar to 2017.

## **Authority Overview and Operations**

### **Authority Responsibilities:**

The Authority is responsible for the development and implementation of the County Solid Waste Management Plan. The County Solid Waste Management Plan is required to be revised every 10 years and meet the following requirements:

- Ensure adequate disposal capacity for county-generated waste for a period of ten years.
- Evaluate the county's recycling program and achieve the statewide goal of 35% recycling.
- Develop and administer collection programs for special wastes.
- Provide assistance to municipalities.

The first Solid Waste Management Plan (Plan) required under the Municipal Waste Planning, Recycling and Waste Reduction Act (Act 101 of 1988), Chapter 25 Pa. Code – 272.252 (a) and (e), for Berks County was developed in 1990. In December of 2005, the 1990 Solid Waste Management Plan was revised, as required by state law. The 2005 Plan was revised in November 2007, October 2008, October 2013 and October 2014. The 2014 Plan revision was required in accordance with Act 101 of 1988.

The 2014 Plan Revision was approved by PADEP on October 6, 2014. The Plan approval is effective for a ten-year period or at least three years prior to the time all remaining available permitted disposal capacity for the County will be exhausted.

### **2024 Solid Waste Plan Revision:**

Berks County Solid Waste Management Plan (10-year Plan). The County and the Authority began the planning process in 2022 with the creation of the Solid Waste Advisory Committee (SWAC). In 2022 and 2023 the Authority worked with our Solid Waste Advisory Committee in the revision of the 2014 Solid Waste Plan. This included updating waste and recycling projections and securing adequate Disposal Capacity Agreements for Berks County waste for this 10-year planning period. During 2022 and 2023 the Authority gathered data on waste and recycling generation rates and evaluated the available disposal capacity from facilities currently accepting Berks County waste. Two draft Plans were distributed to the SWAC, during the past two years of this planning process, with comments and suggestions being incorporated into the final Plan. The historical information and projected capacity were gathered over an 18 months period. During the 2023 committee meeting there was much discussion on the requirement to provide adequate disposal capacity, for this 10-year planning period. Advertisements were placed in both the Pa Bulletin and Waste Advantage Magazine, soliciting capacity assurances for Berks County waste over this ten-year planning period. This resulted in fourteen (14) Disposal Capacity Agreements being received by the fall of 2023, guaranteeing more than 5.7 million tons of capacity. Those Capacity Agreements were fully executed in March of 2024, by the Authority and County Commissioners, which resulted in 1.7 million tons of excess capacity



over this 10-year planning period. In March of 2024, the Plan Revision was approved by the Solid Waste Advisory Committee and the document was distributed to our seventy-three municipalities, the County Commissioners and PADEP for comment. No comments were received from our municipalities during the 30-day municipal comment period. However, additional comments and recommendations were received from PADEP and are currently being reviewed. Once complete the Plan will then be presented to the County Commissioners for final approval and then forwarded to PADEP for final approval, which is expected to be received in the Spring of 2024.

Waste Generation:

Berks County is expected to generate 6.5 million tons of waste during the new planning period (October 2024 - October 2033). Of that 2.6 million tons is expected to be recycled leaving 3.98 million tons for disposal.

The following facilities have agreed to provide adequate disposal capacity, for Berks County municipal solid waste under this Plan revision:

Conestoga Landfill	Rolling Hills Landfill
Alliance Sanitary Landfill	Cumberland County Landfill
Fairless Landfill	Lancaster Landfill
Grand Central Sanitary Landfill	LCSWMA Resource Facility
Susquehanna Resource Management Complex	Commonwealth Environmental Systems, LP
York County Resource Recovery Center	Bethlehem Landfill
McKean County Landfill	Western Berks Landfill

It is estimated that Berks County will dispose of approximately 1,090 tons per day of municipal solid waste, excluding residual waste, throughout this Planning period. In 2023, Berks County generated approximately 1,704 tons per day of municipal solid waste, a slight increase from 2022. 1,012 tons was disposed of in landfills and/or resource recovery facilities located in Pennsylvania and 692 tons was recycled.

In 2023, 27% of Berks County waste was disposed of at the Western Berks Landfill, 26% at the Pioneer Crossing Landfill, 17% at the Conestoga Landfill, 18% at the Rolling Hills Landfill, 7% at the Commonwealth Environmental Systems Landfill in Schuylkill County and 1% at the Fairless Landfill, of which all most all was residual waste. The remaining 4%, was disposed of in out of County facilities, which was the same as 2022.

Host Fees:

Berks County currently receives host fees from three landfills, those being the Conestoga, the Western Berks and the Rolling Hills (Delaware County Solid Waste Authority) Landfills. Conestoga and Western Berks Landfills have Agreements to pay the County a minimum of \$3.00 per ton for all waste generated outside of Berks County. Delaware County Solid Waste Authority

(DCSWA) also has an Agreement with Berks County, which requires a \$2.00 per ton payment on all waste generated outside of Berks County.

The following is a table showing the actual yearly host fees for 2020 through 2023:

	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>2023</b>
Host Fees Received by the County	\$ 4,494,804	\$ 4,789,230	\$ 4,877,563	\$ 4,277,843
Legal Fees paid by DCSWA		\$ 54,372	\$ 52,083	\$ 63,062
County Recycling Programs (Paid from Host Fees)	(\$ 300,000)	(\$ 300,000)	(\$ 300,000)	(\$ 290,000)
Received by Berks County (Landfill Settlement Fees from Conestoga Landfill)	\$ 100,000	\$ 100,000	\$ 100,000	\$ 100,000
Received by the Berks County Solid Waste Authority (Landfill Settlement Fees from Conestoga Landfill)	\$ 100,000	\$ 100,000	\$ 100,000	\$ 100,000

County Recycling Rate:

The objective of the Berks County Solid Waste Management Plan is to meet or exceed the State goal of 35% recycling. In 2023, a total of 240,300 tons of recyclables were collected and processed. It is anticipated that in future year’s contamination will decrease the amount of recycling, as mills become more stringent on the quality of recyclable materials, that they will accept. Of our seventy-three municipalities, only fifteen are mandated under Act 101 and seven under Act 140, to implement curbside recycling programs for their residents. As of December 31, 2023, thirty-six of our municipalities provided curbside recycling collection; nine provide drop-off programs for their residents, with thirty-one municipalities in Berks providing no recycling services to their residents.

In 2023, the Authority continued to work with our non-mandated municipalities to gather recycling data from their haulers who were providing recycling services to their residents and businesses, through private subscriptions. The County recycling rate rose from 22% in 2005 to 41% in 2023 simply by evaluating the County’s non-mandated municipalities and including all of their recyclable materials in our year end reports. The Authority has also improved on our reporting program for the County by gathering as much data as possible from Material Recovery Facilities and larger haulers throughout the County and distributing this information to the appropriate municipality.

In January of 2008 the Authority assumed all recycling operations for the County, which included the operation of both the rural recycling program, which serviced six municipalities, as well as the full-time recycling center on Hilltop Road in Bern Township. In January of 2018, the rural recycling program was terminated due to ongoing issues with illegal dumping. Only Upper Tulpehocken Township chose to continue their program and assumed all operating costs for that program. The Authority assisted them with much needed startup costs and in November of 2018 received a grant from PADEP which reimbursed both the Authority and Upper Tulpehocken

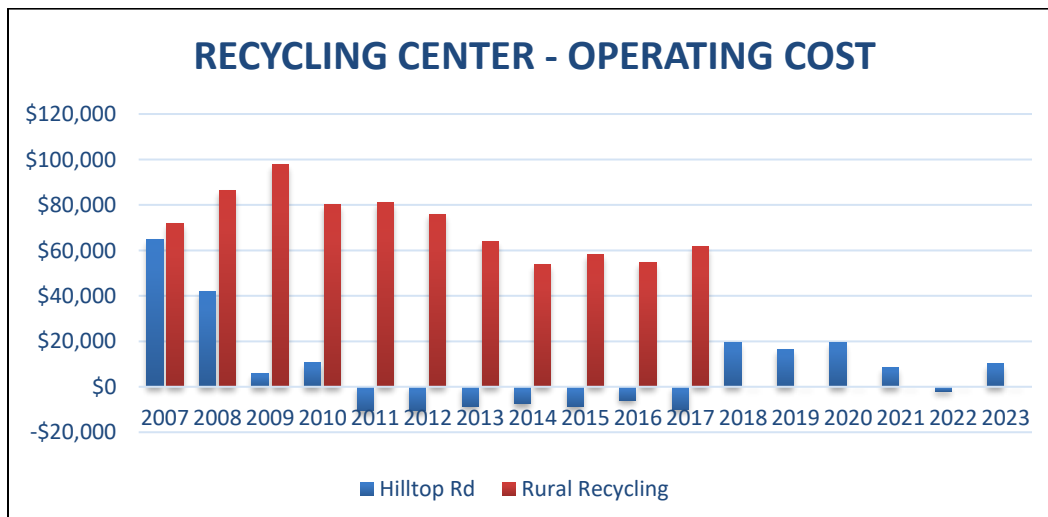
Township for 90% of those construction costs. During the past fifteen years the Authority has invested much needed funds into the appearance and operation of the Hilltop Road recycling center, and has installed equipment which has greatly reduced our operating costs. In 2010, the Authority hired a full-time employee to oversee the operation of the drop-off location and full-time electronic and tire recycling center on Hilltop Rd., and hired additional part-time employees in both 2018 and 2021.

By improving the economics of operating the recycling centers for the County, the Authority is able to reallocate those funds and provide new programming for County residents.

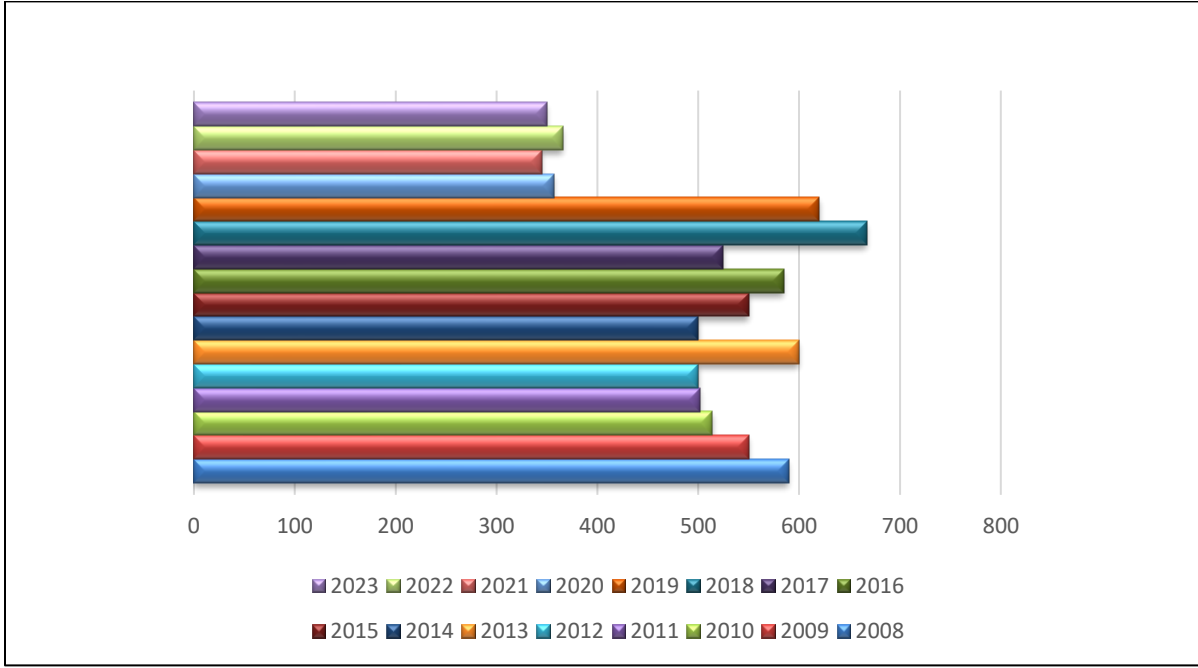
In 2010, the Authority opened a full-time recycling center for electronics. In addition, the Authority, utilizing state grants covering 90% of these costs, invested over \$900,000 from 2010 through 2023 completing the following projects at the recycling center:

- Paved the parking lot at the recycling center on Hilltop Road
- Installed restroom facilities including the installation of a well and septic
- Completed structural repairs to the floor in the electronic recycling center
- Repaired the roof at the recycling center
- Installed a baler and tipper baling mixed paper and corrugated cardboard
- Painted and/or replacing all roll-off containers at Hilltop Road and Rural program
- Renovated the entire first floor of the existing barn for the expansion of the electronic recycling storage area.
- Purchased six new roll-off containers for storing recyclables, tires & Freon items.
- Painted, installed new gutters and repointed stone area of recycling center.
- Received approval of our full land development plan including the demolition and construction of a new 2,400 sf storage building.
- Renovations and installation of second baler (Baler value \$66,000)
- Fenced and secured property.
- Installed a canopy over the baling area.
- Replaced the flooring on the second floor of the Center.

In June of 2020 the recycling center was fenced to allow for better control of the site, which also allows for set operating hours and allows us to control access during operating hours, if needed. This has also drastically decreased the amount of illegal dumping at our site. The completion of all of these projects and those currently scheduled will continue to improve the appearance and operation of the center, as well as the economics of our center, by increasing the marketability of our cardboard and mixed paper with the installation of the balers. 90% of the costs for these improvements have been, or will be, reimbursed to the Authority through 902 Equipment Grants from PADEP. Starting in 2010, the Authority baled mixed paper and cardboard at the recycling center on Hilltop Rd. thereby saving on transportation costs and increasing the value of our materials. Approximately, 330 tons of recyclables were collected at our center in 2023 at a cost of \$10,056, a \$12,000 increase from 2022, while recycling approximately the same amount of material.



**TONS COLLECTED PER YEAR  
1316 HILLTOP ROAD, LEESPORT**



Special Waste:

The Authority operated two household hazardous waste collection events and two paper shredding events in 2023. Our full-time electronic center and our tire recycling center operated on regular schedule throughout the year of 2023, collecting a total of 1.38 million pounds of special waste for recycling.

Household Hazardous Waste:

Historically, the Authority has operated a Spring and Fall collection program for household hazardous waste from Berks County residents. Since 2007, 51,000 residents have disposed of approximately 2.82 million pounds of hazardous waste at our collection events. In 2023, 2,200 residents disposed of 156,396 pounds of hazardous waste at our spring and fall collections. In 2021 through 2023, those collection events required preregistration, which will continue in 2024.

The following is a table outlining the costs and revenue sources associated with the operation of the Authority’s hazardous waste collections since 2017:

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Collection Costs	(\$150,226)	(\$ 170,449)	(\$ 173,875)	(\$99,281)	(\$124,961)	(\$132,039)	(\$158,994)
PADEP	\$ 75,113	\$ 86,953	\$ 86,938	\$ 48,095	\$ 64,612	\$ 68,297	\$ 79,454
Sponsorships	12,800	\$ 9,140	\$ 15,575	\$ 14,975	\$ 15,400	\$ 16,556	\$ 18,665
Solid Waste Authority *	62,313	\$ 74,356	\$ 71,362	\$ 36,211	\$ 44,949	\$ 47,186	\$ 60,875

\* The funds received by the Authority from Conestoga Landfill under a lawsuit settlement are used to partially fund these collection events.



Below is a list of Authority sponsors who have made financial contributions to ensure the success of our yearly collection events in 2023.

Amity Township	Fleetwood Borough	Lower Heidelberg Twp.	South Heidelberg Township
Bern Township	FNB Bank	Maidencreek Township	Spring Township
Birdsboro Borough	Greenwich Twp.	Mohnton Borough	St. Lawrence Borough
Brecknock Township	Hamburg Borough	Muhlenberg Township	UGI Utilities
City of Reading	Jefferson Township	Ontelaunee Township	Wernersville Borough
Cogle’s Recycling	Kenhorst Borough	Penn Township	West Reading Borough
Cumru Township	Kutztown Borough	Richmond Township	Womelsdorf Borough
District Township	Laureldale Borough	Shillington Borough	Wyomissing Borough
Douglass Township	Leesport Borough	Sinking Spring Borough	Yuasa Battery
East Penn Mfg.	Longswamp Twp.	Lower Heidelberg Twp.	

Electronic Waste:

From 2007 through June of 2010, the Authority operated Spring and Fall collection programs for electronic waste recycling from Berks County residents. During that time, 12,100 residents participated in our collections recycling 1.1 million pounds of electronics.

Full-time Electronic Recycling Center

On July 1, 2010 the Authority opened a full-time electronic recycling site at 1316 Hilltop Road, in Bern Township. Since opening in 2010, 210,000 residents participated in our collections and brought more than 16.54 million pounds (8,270 tons) of electronics for recycling. In 2023, 18,000 residents disposed of 1.06 million pounds of electronics for recycling. Participation and the amount of wastes collected at this site continues to grow, as residents become educated about the programs and have begun to rely on our full-time center, for proper disposal options.



Electronics were previously stored within the collection area.



The electronic collection area, after the construction of our new storage building.

### Pharmaceutical Collection:

The Authority held pharmaceutical collection events in 2009 through 2014. During that time 4,800 residents properly disposed of 13,520 pounds of medications, through our events. The events were held free of charge with the following sponsors assisting with the operation and funding of this program: Pa American Water, Reading Area Water Authority, Western Berks Water Authority, Berks County District Attorney, City of Reading Police Department, York County Solid Waste Authority and MXI Environmental.

In April of 2013, The Berks County District Attorney implemented a full-time drop-off program for pharmaceuticals in sixteen police stations throughout Berks County. This program has since been expanded and currently services 28 locations. The containers are serviced on a weekly basis by the District Attorney who ensures that the material is properly destroyed. This program has eliminated the need for the Authority to hold its own pharmaceutical collection events.

Please visit their website for additional information on that program:

<http://www.co.berks.pa.us/dept/da/Pages/medicationdropbox.aspx>

### Tire Waste:

The Authority held its first tire collection event in November of 2007. Since the start of our program approximately 8,300 residents have recycled over one million pounds of tires. Residents are charged a per tire disposal fee, which covers most of the program costs. In April of 2012 the Authority opened our full-time tire collection program at the site of our electronic recycling center on Hilltop Rd. The center operates on the same hours as the electronic center, thereby not incurring additional labor costs. In 2023, 250 residents recycled 34,700 pounds of tires through our program.

### Paper Shredding:

The Authority held its first paper shredding event in October of 2009. Since the start of our program 27,200 residents disposed of 1.17 million pounds of confidential documents for shredding. In 2023, the Authority held both a spring and fall paper shredding events, with



mandatory pre-registration, servicing 2,500 residents and collecting 103,000 pounds of confidential documents for shredding. The Authority expects the program to continue to grow as residents become educated about the importance of protecting yourself from identity theft and properly shredding your confidential documents. This event is held free of charge with Vital Records Control (VRC) providing their services at a significant discount. Pre-registration for these events allows for a smooth flow of traffic throughout the day, with minimal wait times. Volunteers from the Conrad Weiser High School, among others, drastically reduce operating costs and are instrumental in the success of this program.

### Funding:

The Authority spends a significant amount of time evaluating the existing recycling programs throughout the County and looking at possible funding opportunities to assist with those programs. Three types of grants are available through the PADEP Act 101 recycling programs to assist municipalities/counties with the sustainability of their recycling programs.

### 902 Equipment Grants:

902 Equipment Grants are available to both municipalities and counties/authorities and reimburse 90% of the cost of eligible equipment needed to improve the efficiencies of existing recycling programs or the development of new programming. Since the start of this grant program, Berks County has received more than 22 million dollars of these funds. From 1990 through 2005, which included fifty grant rounds, Berks County Municipalities received only five million dollars of 902 equipment grants. In the last eleven grant rounds (2008, 2010, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2022 and 2023), the Authority worked diligently to educate our municipalities about the importance of these grants and has drastically increased both the number of applications from Berks, as well as the dollar amount of those grants awarded. Over seventeen million dollars has been awarded in Berks County since 2008, representing 78% of the total 902 equipment grants received in Berks County since the grant program began in 1990.

Below is a listing of 902 grants awarded to Berks County municipalities since 2004.

Year Awarded	# of applicants	Total awarded in Berks	Percentage of State award
2004	1	\$ 16,200	<1 %
2005	7	\$ 660,677	<1 %
2006	6	\$ 415,821	2 %
2007	4	\$ 321,000	<1 %
2008	5	\$ 529,976	2 %
2010	13	\$ 1,390,374	7 %
2013	6	\$ 1,063,209	6 %
2014	11	\$ 1,270,341	8 %
2015	9	\$ 1,353,284	8 %
2016	6	\$ 822,378	5 %
2018	15	\$ 3,159,177	9 %
2019	10	\$ 1,930,705	15 %
2020	9	\$ 1,687,840	6 %
2022	12	\$ 3,280,000	10%
* 2023	4	\$ 1,089,365	7 %

\* Only those municipalities not receiving funding in the past round were eligible to apply for these funds. Due to COVID, no applications were received or awarded in 2021, therefore everyone was eligible in 2022 and very few in 2023. Twelve applications, including the Authorities will be submitted in May of 2024.

### 903 Recycling Coordinator:

903 Recycling Grants are only available to counties and reimburses 50% of the salary, benefits and expenses of the County Recycling Coordinator. Our Executive Director also serves as the County Recycling Coordinator for Berks County. Berks County and the Authority have received \$ 974,915 since 2003. In 2023, the Authority received reimbursement in the amount of \$74,404 covering 50% of eligible expenses incurred in 2022.

### 904 Performance Grants:

904 Performance Grants are available to both municipalities and counties and are based on the prior year tonnages from both residential and commercial recycling programs, that were successfully diverted from disposal facilities for recycling. Since 2006, the Authority has drastically increased the amount of time spent educating our non-mandated municipalities about their eligibility for these grants for recycling programs that are currently being operated by their businesses. In 2006, Berks County Municipalities received nearly \$90,000 in additional funding then was received in 2005. A total of \$ 17.22 million has been awarded to Berks County municipalities since 2001. In 2010, PADEP changed the formula for this grant program, reducing the grant awards by 40%. In the most recent grant year, 2021, \$ 850,000 was awarded to 50 applicants in Berks County. The 2022 applications are currently being reviewed by PADEP and the 2023 applications should be announced by PADEP in June and should be due in December of 2024.

Yard Waste Composting:

The Authority has assisted thirteen municipalities with siting and permitting their yard waste sites since 2008. The Authority has also assisted Hopewell Nursery in Amity Township in obtaining their yard waste permit to accept yard waste from Amity and Colebrookdale Townships, as well as the Berks Cooperative Purchasing Council. Both Lower Heidelberg Township and Wernersville Borough have entered into Inter-Municipal Agreements with South Heidelberg Township to use their yard waste site with South Heidelberg Township receiving a \$197,601 grant to make necessary improvements, which has drastically reduced their operating costs.

In 2021, as part of the 902 Recycling Grant application process the Authority worked with seven municipalities to obtain permits for either their new or existing leaf waste drop-off sites. These grants were awarded in the spring of 2022. The Authority also worked with three municipalities to obtain permits for the land application of leaves on existing farms, which has resulted in huge cost savings for those municipalities.

Currently there are seven farms permitted by PADEP in Berks County, to accept leaves for beneficial land application, which provides a huge savings to municipalities in avoided disposal/processing costs. Below is a list of permitted yard waste sites in Berks County:

<b>Facility Name/Municipality</b>	<b>Exact Facility Address</b>
Amity Township	2004 Weavertown Road, Douglassville, Pa. 19518
Bern Township	1316 Hilltop Road, Leesport, Pa.
Bernville Borough	101 Umbenhauer Drive, Bernville, Pa. 19506
Birdsboro Borough	Armorcast Road, Birdsboro, Pa.
City of Reading	Hill Road, Reading
Colebrookdale Borough	Hopewell Nursery (172 Fancy Hill Road, Boyertown
Cumru Township	301 Poplar Neck Road, Birdsboro, Pa.
Exeter Township	950 W. Neversink Road, Reading, Pa. 19606
Heidelberg Township	11 Tulpehocken Forge Road, Robesonia, Pa. 19551
Kutztown Borough	45 Railroad St., Kutztown, Pa.
Leesport Borough	Berks Soil - 1 Belleman Church Road, Reading Pa.
Lower Alsace Borough	Hill Road, Reading
Maidencreek Township	Quarry Road, Fleetwood, Pa.
Maidencreek Township	61 Lake Shore Drive, Blandon, Pa. 19510
Maxatawny Township	127 Quarry Road, Kutztown, Pa. 19530
Mohnton Borough	W. Madison Street, Mohnton, Pa. 19540
Muhlenberg Township	Reading Crest Blvd., Muhlenberg, Pa.
Robesonia Borough	210 S. Elm Street, Robesonia, Pa.
Shillington Borough	Philadelphia Ave., Shillington, Pa. 19607
Sinking Spring Borough	152 R. Woodrow Ave., Reading, Pa. 19608
South Heidelberg Township	Point Road, South Heidelberg, Pa.
Township of Spring	Yerger Blvd, Reading, Pa. 19609
Township of Spring	122 Goose Lane, Reading, Pa. 19609
Tulpehocken Nursery	1148 Van Reed Road, Reading, Pa. 19605
West Reading Borough	123 S. First Ave., West Reading, Pa.
Womelsdorf Borough	Rt. 422 - Womelsdorf, Pa.

Food Waste:

In 2010, PADEP awarded \$ 74,000 to the Authority, towards the development of a food waste collection program, EPA awarded a total of \$11,000 towards the 2011 and 2012 collection costs and the Authority dedicated \$10,000 towards this program in both 2011 and 2012.

In November of 2012, Gannet Fleming performed a technical review of our program, on behalf of PADEP. The recommendation of that review was for the Authority to terminate our involvement in the food waste program, as originally designed, and to have the program operated directly by the private sector, if there is adequate interest. A copy of the technical review can be found on the Authority website at:

<http://www.co.berks.pa.us/Dept/SWA/Documents/Special%20Wastes/Berks%20Co%20%20RTA%20527%20-%20Draft%20Rpt%2011-7-2012rev1.pdf>

All equipment that was originally purchased for this program in 2010 through PADEP grants was sold and those funds were returned to PADEP in 2013.

Food Recovery Infrastructure Grant:

In May of 2020, eight non-profits in Berks County were fully approved for grants totaling over \$800,000 to be used to improve their food distribution programs. In September of 2023, DEP awarded another \$298,500 to an additional nine non-profits, for additional food recovery and distribution programs, in Berks County. This funding covers items such as trucks, refrigeration, cooking and storage needed to recover food that would have otherwise been thrown away and is now being distributed to the public. Below is a list of those grants awarded since the program began in 2020:

<b>AWARDED</b>	<b>NAME</b>	<b>AMOUNT</b>
2020	Greater Berks Food Bank	\$ 197,096
2020	Friends Inc. Community Service	\$ 113,045
2020	New Journey Community Outreach, Inc.	\$ 29,882
2020	Hope Rescue Mission	\$ 152,419
2020	Opportunity House	\$ 142,516
2020	Reading Recreation Commissioner	\$ 78,308
2020	The Real Church	\$ 6,047
2020	The Salvation Army	\$ 88,897
2023	Friend Inc. Community Service	\$ 49,678
2023	Helping Harvest	\$ 49,555
2023	Keystone Military Families	\$ 49,849
2023	New Journey Community Outreach	\$ 20,778
2023	Opportunity House	\$ 50,000
2023	Reading Recreation Commission	\$ 24,748
2023	Saint Mark's Lutheran Church	\$ 46,120
2023	The Salvation Army	\$ 7,746

## Compliance Issues:

During 2023, the Authority assisted Berks County Municipalities with the following issues:

- Assist Municipalities with PADEP reporting and communication including:
  - PADEP Grants
  - Reporting Forms
  - Educational programs
  - Contract language
  - Act 101 and Act 140 requirements
  - Ordinances
  - Assisted municipalities with yard waste collection, storage and processing programs.
  - Assisted municipalities with permitting of yard waste sites that were not previously permitted, as well as permitting of farms for the land application of leaves in the fall of each year.

## Development of new programming

- Yard Waste collection / composting
- Assisting municipalities with electronic waste recycling
- Speaking Engagements
  - Civic Organizations
  - Schools
  - Environmental Groups
  - Municipalities

The Authority will continue to offer assistance to Berks County Municipalities as new programming is developed.

Financial Summary:

	<u>2022</u>	<u>2021</u>	<u>2020</u>	<u>2019</u>	<u>2018</u>
<b>Expenditures</b>	\$ 616,076	\$ 603,308	\$ 558,627	\$ 686,860	\$670,602
<b>Revenues</b>	\$ 654,847	\$ 593,600	\$ 541,336	\$ 629,763	\$537,538
<b>Surplus/Deficit</b>	\$ 38,771	(\$9,708)	(\$ 17,291)	(\$ 57,097)	(\$133,064)

Copies of the audit report are on file in the office of the Authority. Audited financial statements of the Authority for fiscal year 2023 have not been completed as of the date of this report.

From 2010 through 2023, the Authority has spent in excess of \$900,000 purchasing equipment and making improvements to the Recycling Center on Hill Top Road in Bern Township, of which 90% has been reimbursed by PADEP, through State grants.

## The Year Ahead

The following collections are scheduled for 2024:

Household Hazardous Waste – 8:00 am – Noon

- April 13, 2024 – Governor Mifflin Intermediate School (Pre-registration required)
- October 19, 2024 – Berks County Ag Center (Pre-registration required)

Paper Shredding Event- 8:00 am – Noon

- April 20, 2024 – Governor Mifflin Intermediate School (Pre-registration required)
- October 12, 2024 - Berks County Ag Center (Pre-registration required)

Electronic & Tire Recycling Center – (1316 Hilltop Rd., Leesport, Pa.)

Open every Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday  
8:00 am - Noon

New Projects for 2024:

- Continue working through the process to obtain PADEP approval of our ten-year Berks County Solid Waste Management Plan.
- Improve existing County recycling programs.
  - Assist with grant writing and submittals.
  - Improve efficiency of programs while better managing costs
  - Reduce contamination in materials accepted for recycling
  - Assist municipalities with waste and recycling bid specifications
- Expansion of yard waste collection programs throughout Berks County and permitting of sites.
- Continue to improve website format and continuously update information
- Educate our municipalities on available grants and data management and help to educate their residents about ever-changing market conditions for recyclables.
- Expand our sponsorship program to help offset the costs of our special waste collection programs
- Organize volunteers for cleanups and collection events