

Master Family & Consumer Sciences Volunteer Program Summary

Institution: Montana State University Extension
Program: Precycle Shopping Volunteer Program
Contact: Michael Vogel, Program Director
Email: mvogel@montana.edu

To “precycle” is to evaluate every item we pick up in the supermarket for its contribution to the waste stream, not only its contribution based on what the package is made from, but whether or not the packaging is something that can be recycled or reused in the local area or at home. The term “PRECYCLE” was coined from an effort that took place in 1989, in the city of Berkeley, California in which the city initiated a campaign to encourage consumers to buy food packaged in biodegradable or recycled materials.

Volunteers are the key to success of “Precycle” programs with an in-store information center. The number of volunteers needed depends on the structure of the program: number of volunteers used to staff the information center; how often the center is going to be staffed; and the potential pool of volunteers.

In order to inform volunteers of the project goals and responsibilities, each volunteer is requested to participate in a 3-hour training session at the beginning of the program. Volunteer responsibilities can consist of the following: Setting up an information table at a local supermarket, informing shoppers about the precycle program, answer questions about precycling, and more.