



E-CYCLE WISCONSIN 2026 REPORT

*Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources Annual Report to the
Legislature and Governor under s. 287.17(10), Wis. Stats.*

May 2026



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Executive summary

Wisconsin's electronics recycling law has produced many successes since it took effect in 2010, recycling nearly 440 million pounds of electronics and expanding electronics recycling access for state residents. Most electronics collected under the manufacturer-funded E-Cycle Wisconsin program are processed in the state, contributing to investments and job growth at recycling facilities.

Successes

Program year 16 (January to December 2025) yielded the following notable accomplishments:

- Registered collectors took in 20.5 million pounds of electronics, or 3.15 pounds per state resident, which is 10% higher than in the prior year.
- Nearly all electronics collected under E-Cycle Wisconsin were processed initially in Wisconsin and other Midwest states. Wisconsin recyclers accounted for 69% of weight processed.
- At least one registered collection site or event was hosted in 71 of Wisconsin's 72 counties—all but Green Lake. There were at least 55 free, one-day collection events in 36 counties that were open to all county residents, or that had no residency restrictions. The number of counties with permanent collection sites accepting all eligible electronics for free from all residents increased from 8 in 2024 to 10 in 2025.
- The DNR awarded \$306,225 to 37 projects in 34 counties. These projects supported development or enhancement of four permanent collection sites, and 54 one-day collection events between May 2025 and December 2026—most of them (81%) free.
- Most manufacturers (87%) met or exceeded their recycling targets.

Addressing program challenges

In conversations with the DNR over the past several years, E-Cycle Wisconsin participants have praised many aspects of the law, but noted several areas of concern. These include:

- a lack of affordable, convenient recycling in some areas;
- gaps in consumer awareness about the need to responsibly recycle electronics;
- a need for more actions to deter bad actors;
- economic and safety issues the changing material stream has brought to collectors and recyclers, especially due to fire risk from lithium-ion batteries; and
- the disconnect between sales-based manufacturer recycling targets and the weight of electronics being recycled.

In 2024 and 2025, the DNR worked to address some of these concerns through its E-Cycle Wisconsin Electronics Collection Grant Program, and continued implementation of standards added in 2023 for electronics collection sites and processing facilities. Expanded outreach efforts and conversations with stakeholders resulted in a March 2024 update to the E-Cycle Wisconsin law, including a new method of calculating manufacturers' annual recycling targets. This new method resulted in the closing of the gap between pounds recycled and the manufacturer target in 2025. The overall number of companies failing to reach their targets in 2025 decreased 40% from 2024; and 81% of the companies who did not meet their recycling targets in 2024 were able to meet or exceed their targets in 2025.

Recommendations for potential legislative changes

The electronics recycling law directs the DNR to examine several aspects of E-Cycle Wisconsin within the annual report and make suggestions for possible changes. The following is a list for the Legislature's consideration of changes that could improve the electronics recycling law and ensure its continued effectiveness.

To make it easier for the DNR and manufacturers to determine whether the law covers newer devices and improve proper management of newer problem components, such as lithium-ion batteries, the Legislature could update and clarify device definitions, and could grant the DNR authority to update the list of covered electronic devices by rule.

To reduce the risk of injuries, deaths and significant property damage due to fires caused by lithium-ion batteries that power many electronics, the Legislature could consider expanding the list of covered electronic devices and/or eligible electronic devices under E-Cycle Wisconsin, and could provide funding for waste facilities to install or upgrade fire detection and suppression equipment, including systems that monitor 24 hours a day for fires.

Introduction

Wisconsin's electronics recycling law establishes a statewide program to collect and recycle certain electronics. Under this product stewardship-based law, manufacturers of TVs, computer monitors, desktop printers and similar devices must register with the DNR the brands they sell to Wisconsin households and schools. Those manufacturers also must recycle a target weight of electronics each year based on their sales. Manufacturers contract with state-registered recyclers and collectors to meet their targets. This manufacturer-funded recycling program is called E-Cycle Wisconsin. The law also bans landfill and incinerator disposal of many electronics.

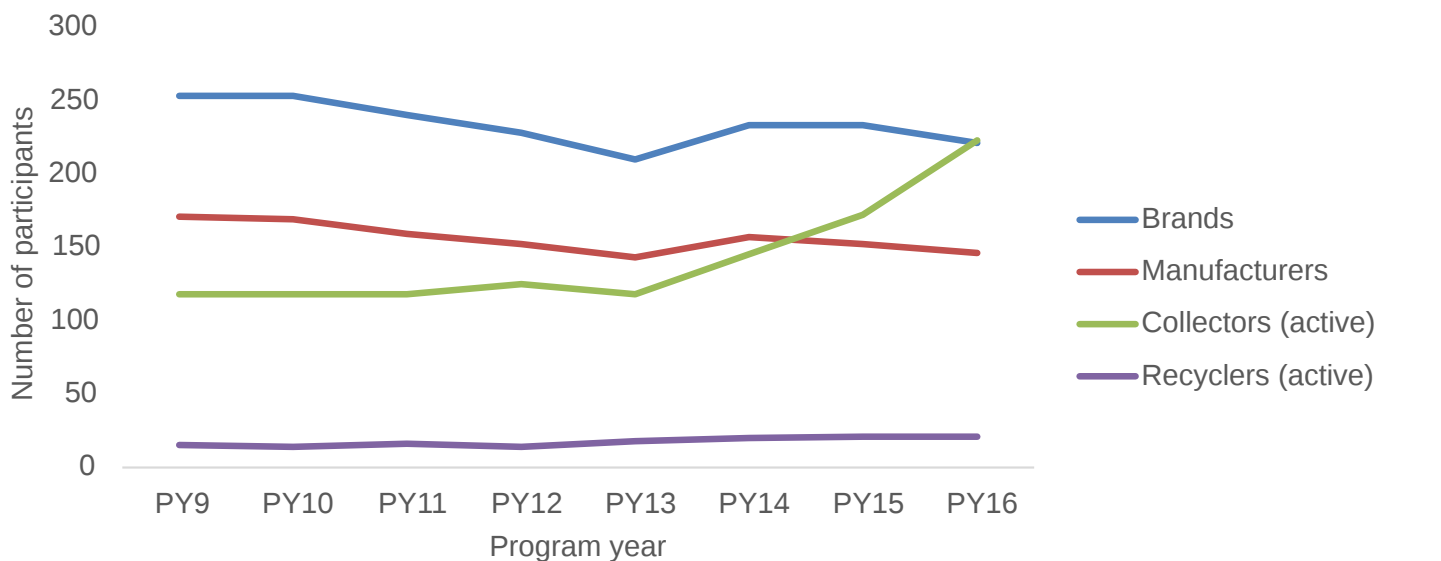
This report fulfills the annual reporting obligation in s. 287.17 (10), Wis. Stats., which specifies several metrics on which the DNR must report to the Legislature and governor. These include the weight of electronics collected and other information provided by program participants, an outline of electronics recycling outside of E-Cycle Wisconsin, a summary of compliance and enforcement actions related to the electronics disposal ban, and suggestions for changes needed. The report primarily covers E-Cycle Wisconsin's program year 16, which ran from January-December 2025.

Several developments in the past two years are helping to address electronics recycling challenges and policy recommendations the DNR has identified in previous reports.

- The E-Cycle Wisconsin Electronics Collection Grant Program has expanded access to electronics recycling by supporting dozens of collection events and sites in mostly rural counties.
- Registered manufacturers increased their financial support for electronics collection and recycling during program years 14 to 16, sponsoring dozens of free collection sites or events around the state, including in underserved areas. This support made it much cheaper and easier for many Wisconsinites to recycle electronics, especially TVs.
- Bipartisan legislation signed in March 2024 updated the manufacturer recycling target formula so that targets are tied directly to the weight of electronics recycled through E-Cycle Wisconsin, rather than the weight of new electronics sold, addressing a long-standing DNR recommendation. The law also expanded the list of devices eligible to be recycled through E-Cycle Wisconsin to include video display device peripherals.
- A bipartisan law signed in April 2026 created a new product stewardship program in Wisconsin that will cover small- and medium-format batteries that can be easily removed from electronics, which will help to address some of the battery recycling challenges in Wisconsin and improve safety by reducing fire risk caused by damaged lithium-ion batteries at recycling facilities.

The DNR continues to engage with program stakeholders and the public to get feedback on challenges facing E-Cycle Wisconsin and potential solutions. Input from stakeholders contributed to the sections of this report concerning current challenges and opportunities for addressing them.

Figure 1: E-Cycle Wisconsin participation, by program year



Program participation

Table 1 shows program year 16 (January through December 2025) participation, and Figure 1 illustrates trends over time. Recycler registrations increased from 25 to 26, with 10 of the 21 active recyclers (recyclers that processed eligible electronics during program year 16) located in Wisconsin. The number of registered manufacturers and brands decreased by six (4%) and 12 (5%), respectively.

Table 1: Program year 16 participation

Category	Registered	Active
Collectors	237	223
Recyclers	26	21
Manufacturers	146	n/a
Brands	221	n/a

“Active” means a collector that sent electronics to a registered recycler or a recycler that received electronics from registered collectors.

The number of registered collectors that actively collected eligible electronics—including local governments, retailers, other for-profit businesses and non-profits—increased 30% from 172 in program year 15 to 223 in program year 16. This was largely due to increased support from manufacturers for collection site and recycling costs.

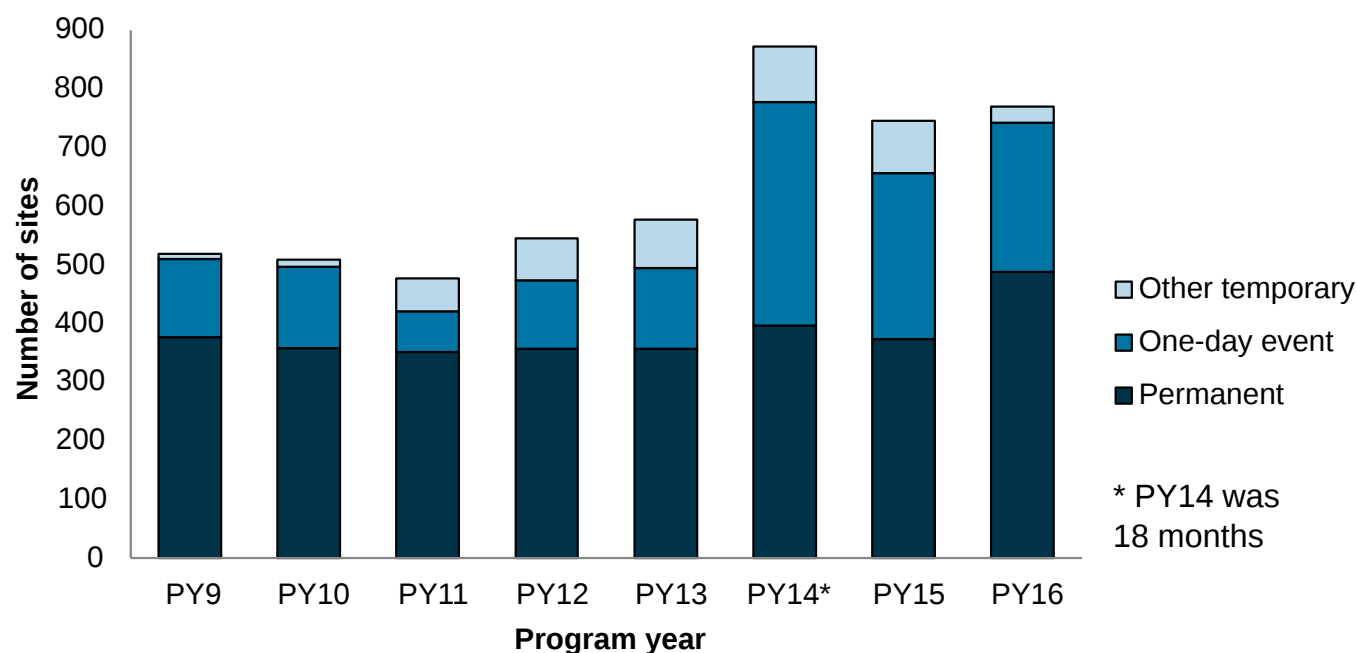
As shown in Figure 2, there were 769 registered collection sites during program year 16. This was up from 746 in program year 15. There was a 31% increase in the number of permanent sites over program year 15 (487 up from 373), a slight decrease in one-day events (254 down from 283), and a 69% reduction in the number of other temporary events (28 down from 90).

During program year 16, there were registered collection sites or events in 71 of 72 Wisconsin counties, thanks primarily to the DNR’s E-Cycle Wisconsin Electronics Collection Grant program. One county (Green Lake) did not host a collection site or event for eligible electronics. All other counties had at least one permanent collection site or one-day collection event during program year 16 (see map in Appendix A), and 94% of counties had two or more such collection sites or collection events.

Collection and recycling totals and analysis

Collectors, recyclers and manufacturers report weights of electronics collected and recycled from counties designated as “urban” or “rural” under Wisconsin’s law. The map in Appendix B shows which counties are designated as urban and rural.

Figure 2: Registered E-Cycle Wisconsin collection sites, by program year



During 2025, registered collectors took in 20.5 million pounds of electronics from Wisconsin households and K-12 schools (see Table 2), or 3.14 pounds per Wisconsin resident.

As shown in Figure 3, the weight of eligible electronics collected in program year 16 was nearly 10% higher than in program year 15, but still lower than all other 12-month program years. This is similar to trends in other states with electronics recycling programs and is partially due to electronics becoming smaller and lighter over time. The ineligible weight dismantled by collectors or sent to non-registered recyclers dropped by 86% to 41,372 pounds, which is by far the lowest since the start of the program due to a significant increase in the number of Wisconsin electronics processing facilities registered as recyclers.

Wisconsin recyclers processed 9% more total weight than recycled during program year 15. Essentially all electronics collected under E-Cycle Wisconsin continue to be processed in the Midwest (see Figure 4).

With the rural credit (1.25 pounds counted toward manufacturer targets for each pound collected in a rural county) included and non-recycled pounds subtracted, Table 3 shows 21.1 million eligible pounds available for purchase by manufacturers—to fund the recycling of the electronics—in program year 16.

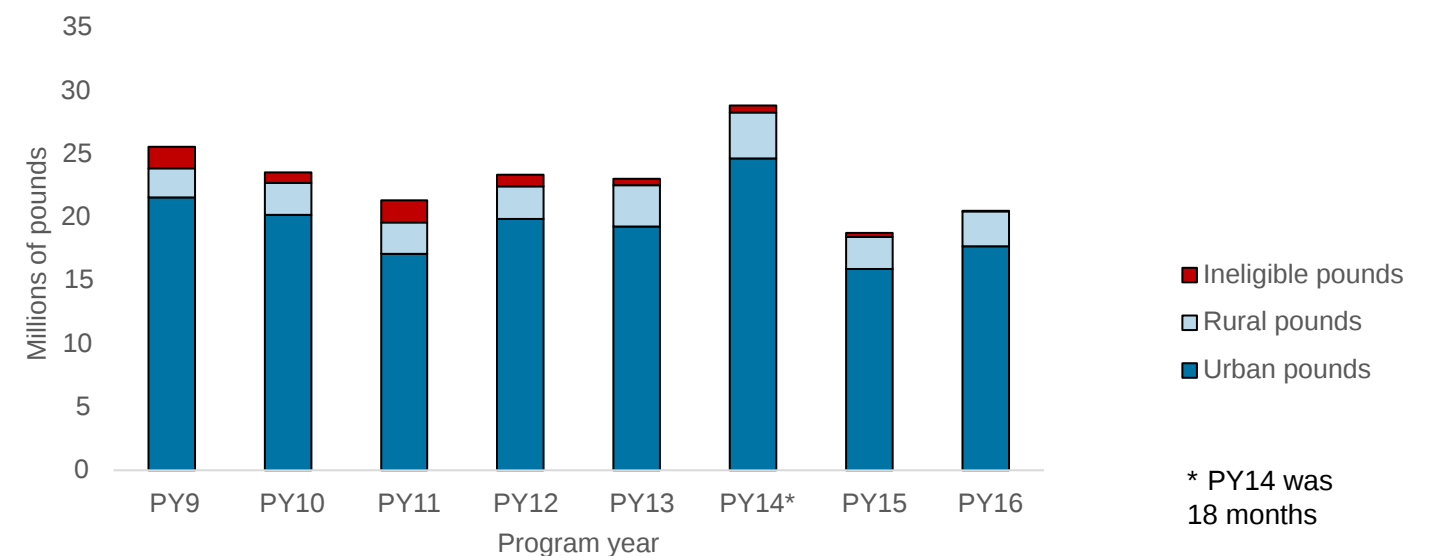
Manufacturer recycling targets and programs

Beginning in 2024, the total recycling target for a program year became the weight registered recyclers received for recycling during a recent program year and manufacturer targets are based on their market share percentage of covered electronics sold in Wisconsin during that year.

Table 2: Pounds collected by registered collectors, program year 16

Type	Pounds
Eligible urban	17,698,020
Eligible rural	2,759,220
Dismantled by collector	9,117
Sent to non-registered recycler	13,813
Total collected	20,480,170

Figure 3: Pounds received by registered E-Cycle Wisconsin collectors by program year



“Ineligible pounds” means pounds that would have been eligible for manufacturer credit if sent to a registered recycler, but that collectors dismantled themselves or sent to a non-registered recycler.

For 2026, the total target was 19.1 million pounds, the weight recyclers received during the January 2024-December 2024 program year. The DNR calculated each registered manufacturer’s market share percentage, based on 2024 sales of covered electronics to Wisconsin households and schools. Each manufacturer’s target was its market share percentage multiplied by the overall target of 19.1 million pounds. Only manufacturers with a market share of 0.01% or more had a recycling target.

Figure 5 shows manufacturer recycling targets and weight manufacturers purchased from recyclers to meet their targets. It also illustrates the gap between pounds recycled and pounds paid for by manufacturers in the years before program year 11. Due in part to COVID disruptions in 2020 and in part to increasing manufacturer targets combined with fewer heavy TVs being recycled, the weight recycled during program years 11-15 was less than the overall manufacturer target.

Based on information submitted on annual reports and discussions with stakeholders, most

Figure 4: E-Cycle Wisconsin pounds recycled by recycler location, program year 16

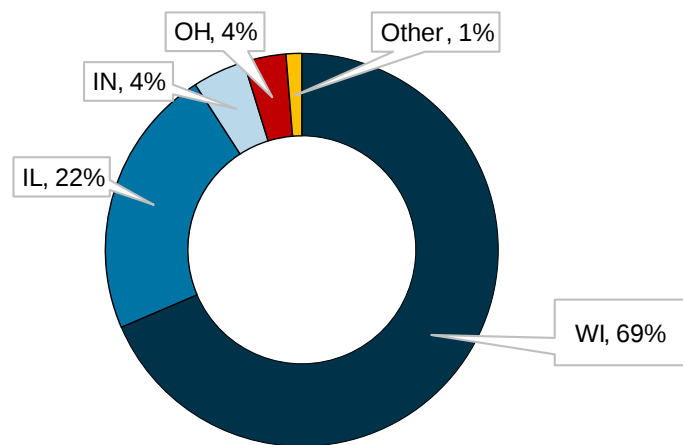


Table 3: Pounds of electronics reported by registered recyclers, program year 16

Type	Pounds
Urban	17,698,020
Rural	2,759,220
Rural credit	689,805
Diverted for reuse	(5,985)
Available for manufacturers	21,141,060
Purchased by manufacturers	(21,099,567)
Not purchased by manufacturers	41,494

Rural credit is 1.25 pounds per pound collected.

Table 4: Program year 16 manufacturer credit transactions

Description	Credits
Beginning balance	602,033
Credits applied	(57,261)
New credits earned	1,437,275
Total available for future use	1,982,047

manufacturers rely on recyclers or group plan managers to find and/or set up collection networks. Prominent exceptions include the Dell Reconnect program, in which Dell works with several networks of Goodwill stores; Best Buy's in-store and haul-away collection programs; and Apple's recycling program for schools. During program year 16, several manufacturers directly sponsored dozens of collection sites or events, many of them free to residents.

During program year 16, there were 48 manufacturers with recycling targets who participated in collectives—similar to “group plans” in other states—that contracted with recyclers for a large total sum of pounds and distributed the pounds among their members. These collectives were responsible for 60% of pounds purchased by manufacturers.

Most manufacturers continued to meet their sales weight-based recycling targets in program year 16. Fifteen manufacturers recycled more than their targets and therefore earned credits that can be used during the next three program years (see Table 4). Six manufacturers used just over 57,000 credits from previous years to meet their targets. At the end of program year 16, just

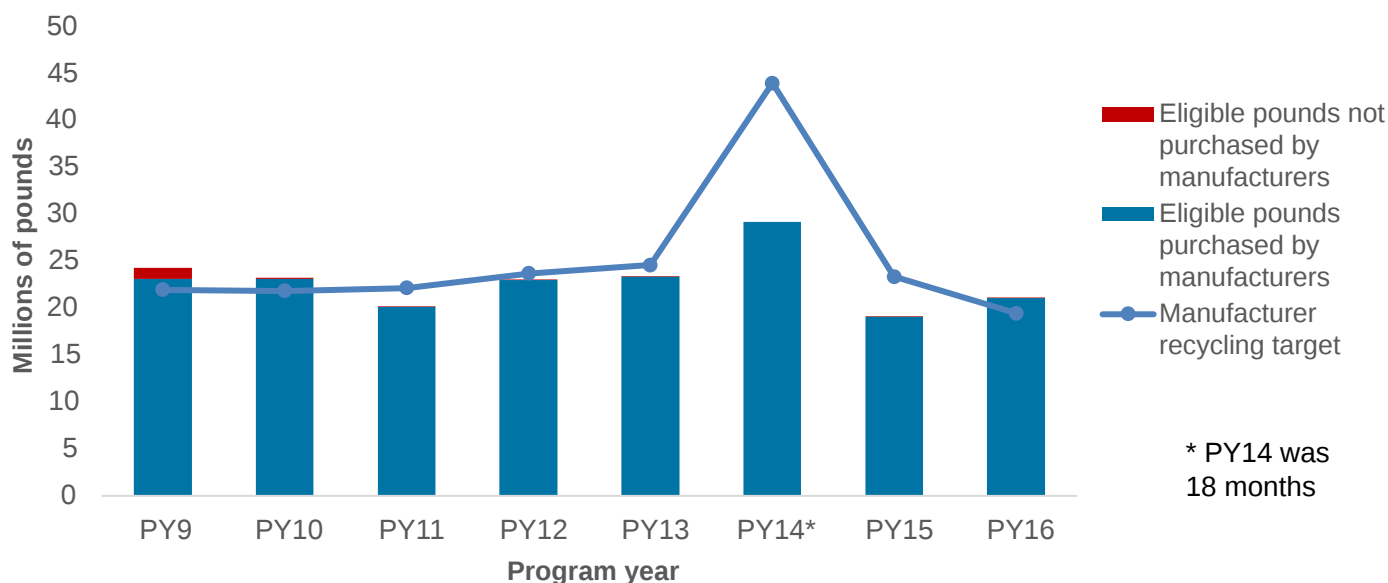
Table 5: Manufacturer registration and shortfall fees

Program year	Registration fees	Shortfall fees
9	\$370,000	\$14,066
10	\$338,750	\$9,607
11	\$358,750	\$21,203
12	\$361,250	\$68,845
13	\$317,500	\$52,630
14	\$315,000	\$129,522
15	\$455,625*	\$295,528
16	\$314,000	\$47,402**

* Registration fees for program year 15 were 150% because it followed an 18-month program year.

**Shortfall fees for PY16 as of May 2026.

Figure 5: E-Cycle Wisconsin weight recycled vs. manufacturer targets



under 2 million pounds of credits were available to manufacturers for future use, representing a significant increase from previous years.

The 2024 law change meant there were fewer manufacturers with very small (less than 1,000 pounds) recycling targets. This reduced the number of manufacturers that owed shortfall fees, since many manufacturers with very small targets have found it easier to pay the fee than to contract with a recycler. In total, 19 manufacturers paid or owed a shortfall fee for program year 16 as of May 2026. The amounts ranged from \$43.20 to \$17,511. The DNR did not receive any shortfall fee waiver requests for program year 16 targets.

Table 5 summarizes manufacturer registration and shortfall fees paid under E-Cycle Wisconsin.

Ensuring a level playing field within E-Cycle Wisconsin

Much of the DNR's administration of the electronics recycling law focuses on maintaining a level playing field for E-Cycle Wisconsin participants and identifying problems at collectors or recyclers that might endanger human health or environmental quality.

Manufacturer registration compliance

Manufacturers must comply with Wisconsin's electronics recycling law by registering their covered electronics and paying applicable registration and shortfall fees. During program year 16, the DNR revoked 17 manufacturers' registrations for failure to submit required forms or payments. Ten returned to compliance. The remaining 7 remained out of compliance as of May 2026.

To ensure a level playing field among electronics manufacturers, the DNR continued its effort to bring manufacturers of unregistered brands into compliance. In addition to retailer compliance efforts described below, the DNR contacts manufacturers to inform them of their obligation to register, and communicates with other state programs about brand status. The DNR maintains lists of registered and unregistered brands on its website to help retailers and manufacturers stay up-to-date with registration status. During program year 16, 17 manufacturers completed their initial E-Cycle Wisconsin registration, the majority of them following contacts from the DNR or from retailers the DNR had notified. As of May 2026, there were 266 unregistered brands tracked by the DNR, primarily from manufacturers selling a low volume of covered electronics through online retailers.

Electronics retailer compliance

Under Wisconsin's electronics recycling law, retailers must sell only registered brands to Wisconsin households and schools. They also must inform customers that electronics may not go into the trash and provide information about how to recycle electronics. These requirements apply to brick-and-mortar stores as well as online stores. The DNR reviews electronics retailer inventory online and in stores, and checks stores and websites for compliance with the customer education requirements.

In program year 16, the E-Cycle Wisconsin program conducted on-site inspections for five electronics retailers at 10 brick-and-mortar stores. All retailers were found to be in compliance with requirements. Online retailer compliance checks have typically been conducted and results communicated to retailers at the end of the calendar year to capture new holiday products. Staff re-evaluated timing of online compliance checks to address difficulties in communicating with retailers around the holidays and challenges with setting up new manufacturer registration forms at the end of the program year. As a result, one round of online compliance checks was conducted at the beginning of program year 17 and none during program year 16. However, several manufacturers registered or re-registered with the program during program year 16 after retailers contacted them based on

results from program year 15 online brand checks.

Registered recycler compliance

All electronics recyclers operating in Wisconsin must comply with solid and hazardous waste regulations. Registered E-Cycle Wisconsin recyclers must meet additional requirements, which apply whether the facility is located in-state or out-of-state. These include maintaining owner financial responsibility (OFR) to cover facility closure and at least \$1 million in pollution liability insurance; reporting to the DNR twice a year; and providing information on the weight of electronics recycled, sources of those electronics, and which downstream vendors received the electronics and their components.

The DNR strives to conduct annual inspections of all in-state registered recyclers. The inspector reviews inventory, shipping and downstream vendor records to determine whether electronics are moving through the facility in a timely manner and ending up at a legitimate end market or properly disposed. The inspector also reviews the facility's closure plan and OFR to ensure the amount of money set aside is adequate to properly close the facility.

Out-of-state recyclers are also subject to inspections, but because of travel constraints, they are infrequently inspected. Instead, the DNR regularly evaluates compliance through annual reports and desktop record reviews. In addition, DNR staff check with recyclers if questions arise regarding downstream vendors, sources of materials received or changes to their recycling process.

In 2025, one out-of-state recycler in the Chicago area was inspected in person. Another out-of-state recycler in Indiana was virtually inspected, which included a desktop review of records and a virtual tour of the facility.

During program year 16, the DNR inspected all 10 in-state recyclers. Two recyclers received a Notice of Noncompliance (NON). One NON was related to records and tracking of materials, and has since been corrected. The other NON was related to processing approval changes that had not been reported. Although the NON was not directly related to E-Cycle Wisconsin requirements, facilities must comply with all state laws. The facility is currently working to resolve the issues identified.

Table 6 lists the number of collection site and recycler inspections the DNR has conducted for the last several program years.

Table 6: DNR inspections, by program year

Time period	Recyclers	Collection sites
July 1, 2017, to June 30, 2018	9	60
July 1, 2018, to June 30, 2019	8	64
July 1, 2019, to June 30, 2020	3	24*
July 1, 2020, to June 30, 2021	7	71
July 1, 2021, to June 30, 2022	10	61
July 1, 2022, to Dec. 31, 2023**	9	112
Jan. 1 to Dec. 31, 2024	8	63
Jan. 1 to Dec. 31, 2025	10	42

* Includes 13 in-person inspections and 11 phone inspections with collectors due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

** 18 month transitional program year.

Registered collector compliance

The DNR assesses collector compliance through annual reports and inspections. Due to the large number of collection sites (averaging between 350 and 400 permanent sites), E-Cycle Wisconsin staff

are unable to inspect all sites on a routine basis, and therefore prioritize inspections on sites where they can have the most impact. This includes inspecting new sites to provide technical assistance during the start-up phase, collectors that receive large amounts of electronics either on their own site or by operating as a consolidation point, and collectors that also dismantle some electronics. In addition, the DNR addresses complaints received about sites through an inspection or phone call. Occasionally, staff inspect non-registered collection sites to provide technical assistance or investigate complaints.

In addition to E-Cycle Wisconsin requirements, electronics collection sites must meet requirements for electronics transfer facilities under s. NR 502.07 (2d), Wis. Adm. Code. DNR inspectors check for compliance with these requirements and assist sites with correcting any areas of non-compliance. The most common areas needing improvements were the types of containers used to store electronics and not covering electronics in a manner to adequately protect from weather and vandalism.

In program year 16, E-Cycle Wisconsin staff conducted 42 in-person inspections at registered collection sites. Three sites received a Notice of Noncompliance. Two were related to recordkeeping and the other one was for not adequately protecting materials from weather, theft and vandalism. The sites have addressed the issues and returned to compliance.

Electronics recycling separate from E-Cycle Wisconsin

New solid waste processing facility administrative rules took effect on July 1, 2023, with an enforcement date of July 1, 2024. Before that, collectors and recyclers that performed basic disassembly of electronics were exempt from most solid and hazardous waste requirements if the materials were handled appropriately. The rule requires facilities recycling more than 25 electronic devices a year to obtain a DNR solid waste processing approval and license.

During 2023 and 2024, the DNR conducted extensive technical assistance and outreach to identify existing electronics processing facilities that would require solid waste processing approval and licensing. During 2024, 14 facilities received DNR solid waste processing approval and licensing, and two facilities received plan of operation modification approvals to include electronics processing operations. Three existing electronics processing facilities failed to apply for approval and licensing and received a Notice of Noncompliance. In 2025, one of these facilities closed and the DNR initiated stepped enforcement action for the other two facilities. One of these two facilities returned to compliance, and in 2026, the second facility received solid waste processing approval and is in the process of obtaining owner financial responsibility (OFR) for closure costs to receive licensing.

In 2025, one proposed electronics processing facility received solid waste processing approval and licensing. Seven existing electronics processing facilities were identified and received a Notice of Noncompliance. Three of the facilities returned to compliance, one facility is in the process of receiving plan of operation approval, one facility is in the process of obtaining OFR for closure costs to receive licensing, and one facility was believed to be improperly handling materials and voluntarily chose to end electronics processing operations. The DNR has initiated stepped enforcement action for the remaining facility. If the DNR becomes aware of any additional existing facilities that require solid waste processing approval and licensing, DNR staff will continue to follow up.

As of May 1, 2026, there are 19 facilities with DNR solid waste electronics processing approval and licenses, of which 16 are also registered as E-Cycle Wisconsin collectors and/or recyclers. A few of the facilities that received licensing during this time have since closed or voluntarily chosen to end electronics processing operations.

Illegal disposal and irresponsible electronics processing

During 2025, DNR staff received three complaints regarding mismanagement of electronics. One was unfounded; one received a letter explaining the rules, and the other one was a business disposing of electronics in the regular trash. A warden responded to the complaint and the business now has a contract with an electronics recycling facility to collect the materials.

For more than a decade, the DNR worked on an enforcement case against 5R Processors, a business headquartered in Ladysmith that was a registered E-Cycle Wisconsin collector and recycler from 2010 to 2014. 5R abandoned millions of pounds of electronics, hazardous leaded cathode ray tube glass, and other hazardous materials at several sites across Wisconsin.

In spring 2022, the Legislature passed and Gov. Evers signed a bill providing \$2.5 million in state funding to remove waste at sites formerly operated by but no longer owned by 5R Processors. The 2023-2025 biennial budget increased the total amount appropriated for the cleanup to \$4.5 million, in addition to the restitution payments from former 5R managers. Five sites located in Ladysmith, Catawba and Glen Flora were cleaned up in 2023 with DNR overseeing the project and contracting with Veolia Environmental Services. Cleanup of the remaining 5R property, located in West Bend, began in fall 2024 and was completed in summer 2025. The West Bend state cleanup cost was \$2.4 million for electronics/hazardous waste removal, with additional costs paid by the city of West Bend for the solid waste removal and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency for asbestos removal.

Disposal ban compliance

In addition to the cases of irresponsible recycling discussed above, the DNR continues to receive reports of electronics being dumped on public lands, in ditches and in vacant lots, along with reports of electronics put in the trash. Often, these are cases of an individual dumping one or two items, most commonly TVs, and are difficult to track in a systematic way.

In winter 2025, the DNR hired a contractor to conduct a study looking at consumer awareness of electronics and battery recycling options and how consumers dispose of these items. The research consisted of online voice interviews of 200 Wisconsin residents, with participants largely reflecting state demographics. The study identified the following management choices for unused electronics:

- Study participants were most likely to store unused electronics, followed by recycling, selling, or donating them.
- A relatively small percentage put electronics in the trash.
- Participants were more likely to recycle non-working unused electronics rather than store them, and were more likely to dispose of non-working devices than working devices that were unused.
- Younger Wisconsinites (age 18-34) were more likely to donate or sell unused electronics, or to put them in the trash, than to recycle them.

Addressing program challenges

In addition to analyzing program data, the DNR gathers input through surveys and conversations with program participants, other stakeholders and the public when evaluating whether changes are needed to make the electronics recycling law function better. Challenges the DNR and stakeholders have identified in recent years include:

- Continued lack of affordable and convenient electronics recycling options for residents in many parts of Wisconsin.
- A lack of consumer awareness of which electronics to recycle and how to do so.

- Challenges for manufacturers in meeting their annual recycling targets due to increasing sales (especially during the pandemic) that led to higher targets at the same time the weight of electronics collected for recycling was decreasing.
- Threats to Wisconsin's recycling and waste collection and processing infrastructure caused by the fire risk of improperly managed lithium-ion batteries, including those that cannot be easily removed from electronic devices.

The DNR has worked with the Legislature, Gov. Evers and program stakeholders to identify and implement policy solutions for these challenges, and the DNR's E-Cycle Wisconsin staff have focused their work on addressing barriers to electronics recycling and providing technical assistance.

Identifying and addressing electronics recycling barriers

DNR studies have identified a lack of awareness about where and how to recycle electronics, concern about actual or perceived recycling costs, a lack of convenient collection sites and/or convenient site hours, and concerns about data security as the top barriers to electronics and battery recycling.

To address the barriers of lack of awareness, cost and lack of convenient recycling locations, the DNR continues to maintain and promote its online list of registered E-Cycle Wisconsin collection sites and manufacturer mail-back programs.

The DNR's 2025 public outreach campaign used digital advertising, paid search ads, paid and unpaid social media, sponsorship messages on Wisconsin Public Radio and ads on Spanish-language radio stations to drive Wisconsin residents to the DNR's list of registered collection sites and mail-back programs. This included targeted posts on NextDoor and Facebook to promote free collection events around the state. Overall, the DNR's electronics and battery recycling webpages received more than 350,000 visits during 2024.

In 2026, the DNR's outreach will focus on reaching younger Wisconsinites and providing more detailed information about how to recycle specific types of electronics, such as mobile devices. It will also provide updated resources to help local government recycling programs meet their requirements to educate residents about electronics and battery recycling.

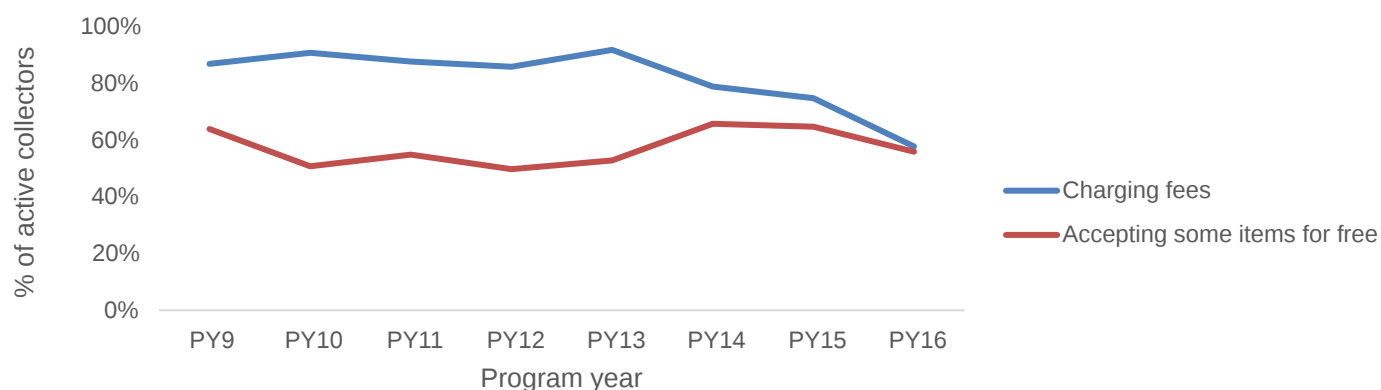
The DNR will continue to work with collectors and recyclers to ensure residents can find the information they need to recycle electronics and explore ways to make electronics recycling more convenient.

Improving access to responsible electronics recycling in underserved areas

Access to convenient and affordable electronics recycling has been uneven across Wisconsin. A handful of rural counties have had only sporadic collection events, and both urban and rural areas have at times lacked collection opportunities open to all residents. The DNR's E-Cycle Wisconsin Electronics Collection Grant Program, authorized by a 2021 law, is helping to improve access in many areas.

In May 2025, the DNR awarded its fourth round of grants. The program, funded by manufacturer shortfall fees, aims to improve access to electronics recycling in underserved areas of the state by funding one-day collection events or establishing a permanent collection site in counties that have lacked registered collection sites or events. The DNR awarded \$306,585 to 37 projects in 34 counties. These projects supported development or enhancement of four permanent collection sites, and 54 one-day collection events (most of them free) between June 2025 and December 2026. In total, the DNR awarded more than \$590,000 to projects in 30 counties during its first four grant rounds (see map in Appendix C).

Figure 6: Registered E-Cycle Wisconsin collectors charging fees, by program year



Reducing costs for consumers and collectors

As shown in Figure 6, the percentage of collectors charging consumers fees dropped beginning in program year 14. In program year 16, 58% of active collectors charged a fee for at least some eligible electronics, the lowest since the start of the program. More than half of active collectors accepted at least some eligible electronics for free. The most common items with a charge were TVs and monitors.

These positive changes were due both to the DNR's grant program and more financial support from manufacturers, who have increased payments to recyclers and directly sponsored free collection sites or events. During 2025, there were at least 55 free, one-day collection events in 36 counties that were open to all county residents, or had no residency restrictions. There were also permanent free collection sites accepting all eligible electronics from all county residents in 11 counties (see map in Appendix D).

Ensuring safe management of lithium batteries in consumer electronics

Lithium-ion batteries—used in many portable electronics—can spark and cause fires if damaged. Lithium-ion batteries from devices thrown in trash or recycling bins have caused thousands of fires nationally in the last several years. Although the DNR does not have a way to track specific numbers, it has received several reports of fires likely or definitively caused by lithium-ion batteries in recycling/trash collection trucks and at transfer stations, recycling facilities and landfills in Wisconsin. Recyclers are spending additional money to train workers, revise procedures and invest in fire-suppression systems. The challenge will grow as more electronics containing these batteries enter the waste stream.

The DNR's household surveys identified widespread confusion among Wisconsin residents about how to manage lithium-ion batteries. The 2024 survey found more than half of respondents who disposed of a household rechargeable battery put it in the trash, and 20% put it in a recycling bin or cart. Both of these disposal methods can lead to fires in collection trucks or at facilities. Only 28% took batteries to a recycling drop-off location. The 2025 study found four out of 10 participants were unsure how to identify whether an electronic device contains a lithium-ion battery.

In April 2026, Gov. Tony Evers signed into law a bipartisan bill to create a battery product stewardship program. 2025 Wisconsin Act 170 and 2025 Wisconsin Act 171 will require producers of portable and medium-format batteries to join a battery stewardship organization and submit a plan for a statewide battery collection and recycling program to the DNR by Jan. 1, 2027. Once approved and fully implemented, the program will provide free collection of batteries for recycling at locations around the state. A ban on disposal of covered batteries will take effect Jan. 1, 2028. The new program will operate separately from E-Cycle Wisconsin, but the DNR plans to work with the battery stewardship organization(s) to coordinate information for collection sites and the public about the two programs and where to take electronics and batteries for recycling.

Recommendations for potential legislative changes

Based on the first 16 years of implementation and positive feedback from stakeholders, most of the fundamental elements of Wisconsin's electronics recycling law are sound and have proven effective. Despite recent positive changes, some challenges remain that could best be addressed through additional legislation. These ideas for the Legislature's consideration, submitted under s. 287.17(10), Wis. Stats., are based on extensive conversations with stakeholders over the last several years, in addition to analysis of program data.

Consider updating device definitions to address today's consumer electronics

As technology changes, it has been difficult for the DNR to determine whether devices are covered by the definitions in s. 287.17(1), Wis. Stats. Some examples of these "gray area" products include smartphones, digital picture frames, photo printers and portable DVD players. Device definitions and program requirements could be revamped to:

- Update the definition of consumer computer so that it is easier to determine whether new or updated products with video displays smaller than 7 inches are included.
- Broaden the definition of video display device so that it includes items with screen sizes greater than 7 inches, such as portable DVD players, that are very similar to TVs and monitors but not currently included.
- Grant the DNR authority to update the list of covered electronic devices by rule, similar to its existing authority under s. 287.17 (10) (i), Wis. Stats., to update the lists of eligible electronic devices and devices banned from disposal.

Consider actions to reduce fire risk from battery-containing devices in the waste stream

Fires caused by lithium-ion batteries, including those embedded in electronic devices, are causing injuries, deaths and significant property damage, including devastating fires in waste collection and processing operations. To help address and alleviate the risk from battery-containing devices, the Legislature could consider the following actions:

- Expand the list of covered electronic devices under s. 287.17 (1), Wis. Stats. This would require manufacturers of these devices to help fund recycling of their devices. This would work best for consumer electronics that are already collected as eligible electronics under the program, or similar devices that could be handled by the same electronics recycling facilities.
- Provide funding for waste facilities to install or upgrade fire detection and suppression equipment, including systems that monitor 24 hours a day for fires.
- Add more battery-containing devices as eligible for manufacturer recycling obligations under E-Cycle Wisconsin, and/or ban such products from landfill and incinerator disposal under s. 287.07 (5), Wis. Stats. This could help drive public education and perception about not putting battery-containing devices in trash or recycling bins and might increase recycling of battery-containing devices by making them eligible for current manufacturer financial support under E-Cycle Wisconsin. This could also provide more weight to help manufacturers meet their recycling targets.

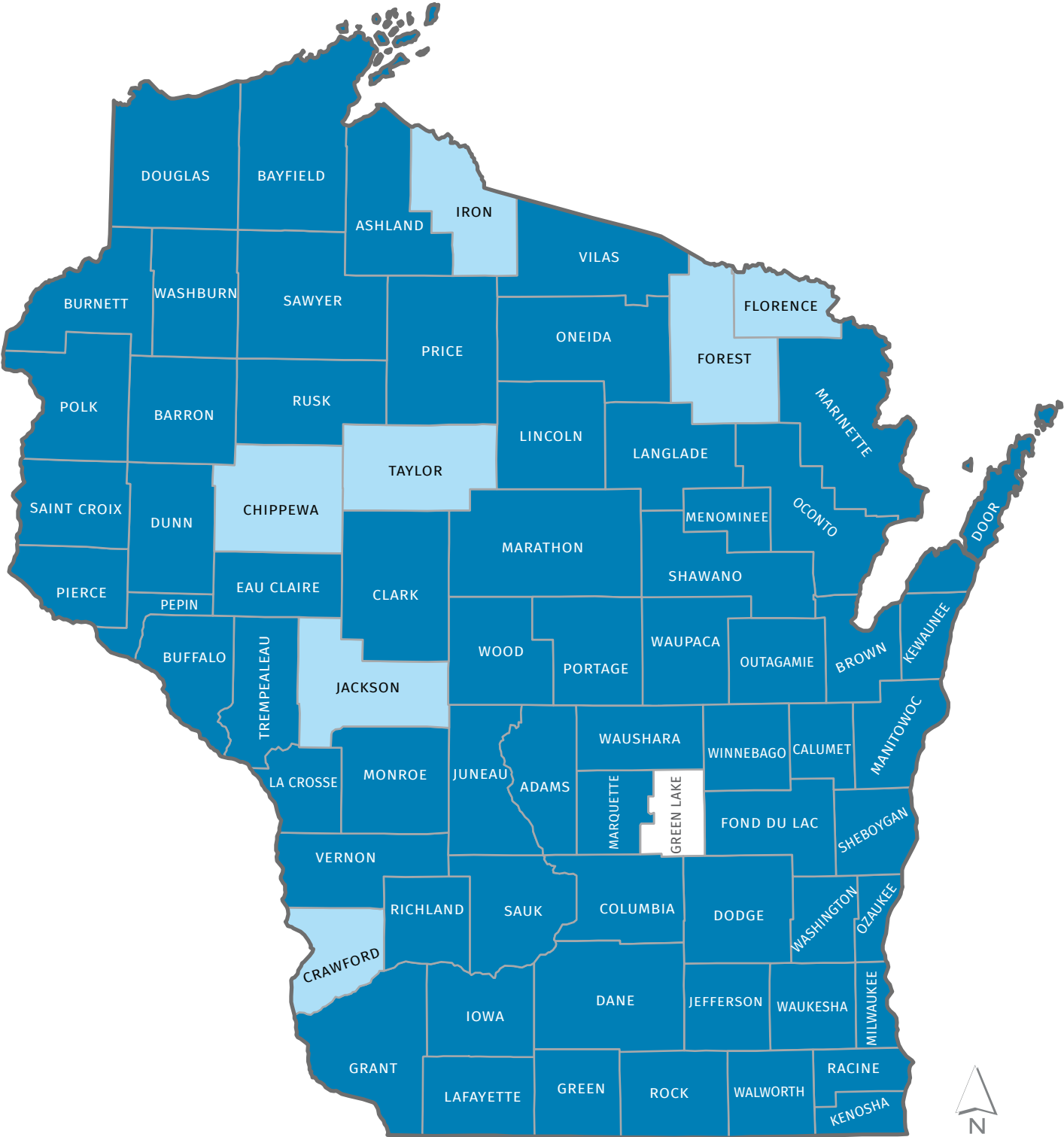
Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources Bureau of Waste and Materials Management

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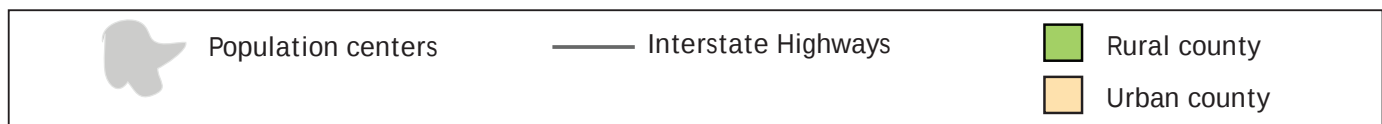
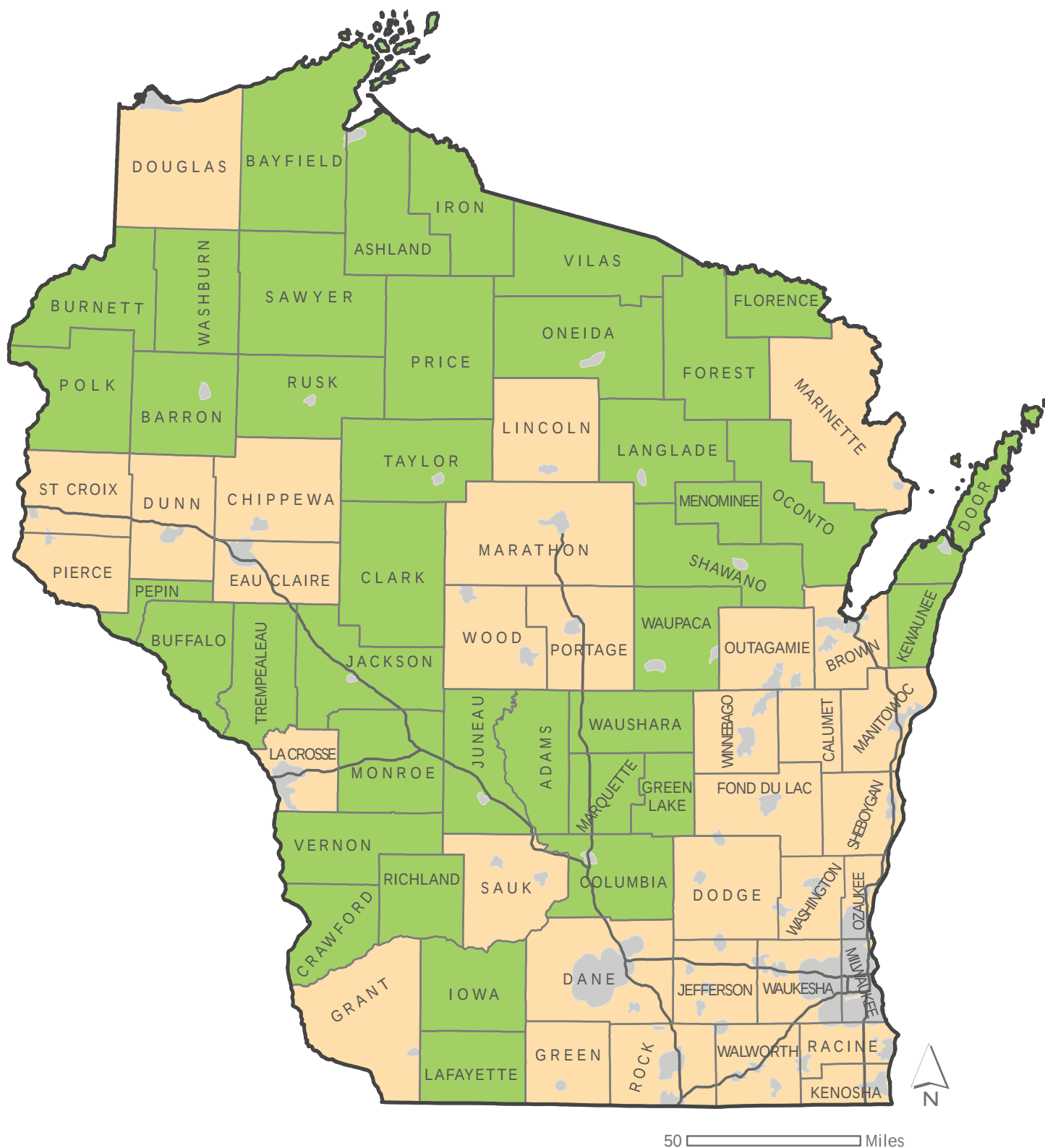
Appendix A: Counties with collection sites or events accepting all eligible electronics from all residents, 2025 program year



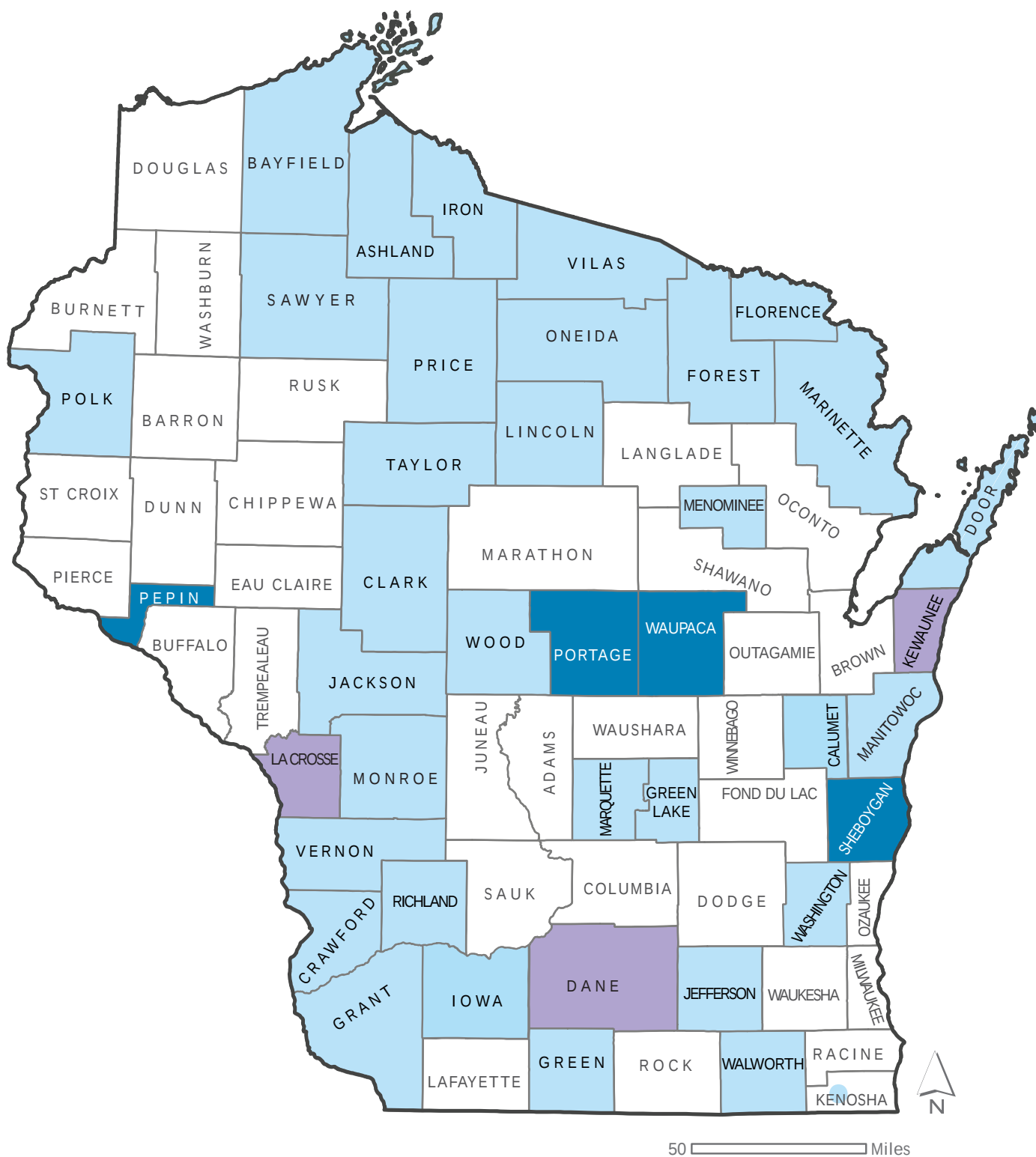
- Collection site open to all residents
- Collection event open to all residents
- No site or event accepting all EEDs

50 Miles

Appendix B: Map of urban and rural counties under E-Cycle Wisconsin

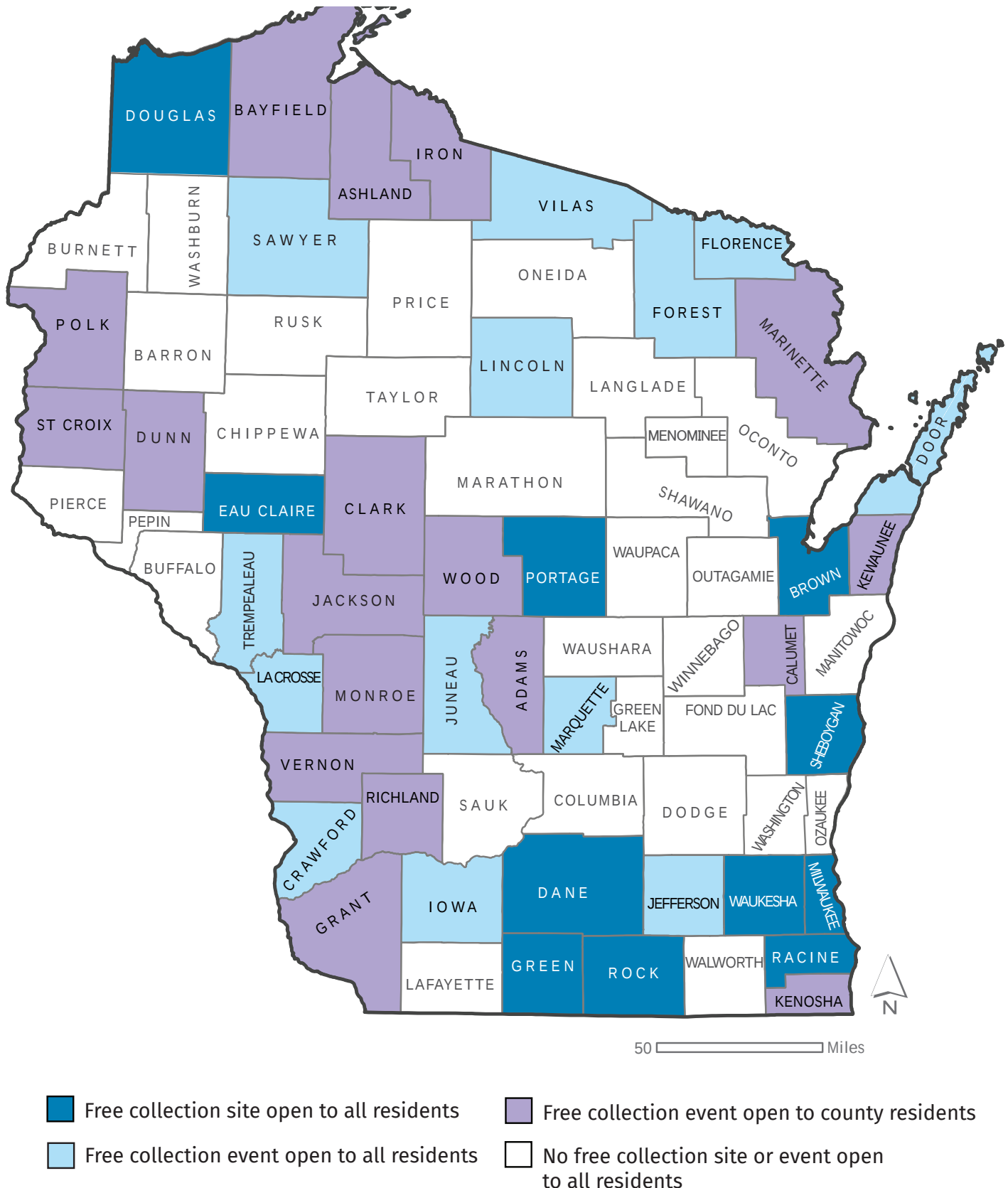


Appendix C: E-Cycle Wisconsin Electronics Collection Site Grant awards, 2022-2025



- Project(s) for permanent site
- Project(s) for collection event
- Projects for both permanent site and event

Appendix D: Counties with free collection sites or events for all eligible electronics, 2025 program year



50 Miles

