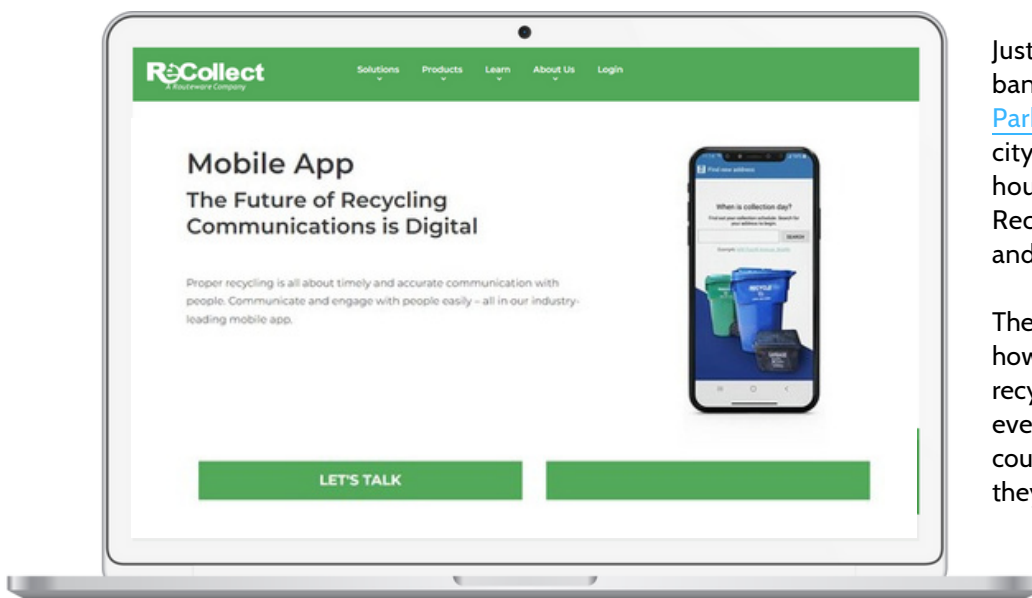




## CUSTOMER STORY | Brooklyn Park, MN

'Wonderful, Diverse City' Meets its Goals — With a Little Help from ReCollect



Just north of Minneapolis on the western banks of the Mississippi River is [Brooklyn Park, Minnesota](#), a “wonderful, diverse city” home to about 45,000 households, says Tim Pratt, the city’s Recycling Manager with its Operations and Maintenance Department.

There, Pratt and the team have figured out how to run an effective and successful recycling program while reaching each and every one of its residents, no matter the countries they hail from or the languages they speak.

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It's a “tremendously wonderful diverse city,” Pratt says.



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The city contracts with a single hauler to provide the people it serves for curbside recycling services for the people it serves. It also orchestrates the recycling program's communication efforts and beyond, ensuring that everyone in the city has access to the information they need, wherever and whenever they need it — in “terms that people can relate to,” Pratt says.



And in Brooklyn Park, these communications may look a little differently than other recycling programs. That's because Brooklyn Park's program serves a growing, increasingly diverse population, as nearly 70 percent of residents are people of color, 25 percent speak a language other than English at home (including Spanish, Hmong and Vietnamese), and 20 percent came to the United States from other countries.

## Breaking Communication Barriers

Because of Brooklyn Park's ever-evolving demographics, Pratt and the team knew that the success of their recycling program and the happiness of their residents hinged on whether the city could find a way to reach everyone they serve, regardless of their walk of life or the language they speak. To do so, Brooklyn Park needed to break down everything recycling entails and start over with the basics.



They called on ReCollect for a little help.

With ReCollect's [digital tools for communication](#), Brooklyn Park now reaches the people it serves — in multiple languages — through collection calendars, month-long community challenges, the Waste Wizard (“Can I Recycle This?” in Brooklyn Park) and culturally appropriate recycling guidance. All of these strategies support the area's countywide goal of recycling 75 percent of solid waste by 2030.

But even without language barriers, creating engaging education and messaging for any waste program is a complex endeavor. Frustrated people in search of answers mean costly, time-consuming phone calls and persistent mistakes. Which, in turn, results in higher contamination rates, missed engagement opportunities and myriad other issues.

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So, Pratt and the rest of the city crew decided to approach every interaction with the people they serve as an opportunity to increase — or decrease — trust in their organization. But first, they had to figure out how to put what they wanted to say “into terms that people can relate to,” Pratt says.

Then, they could work to meet people where they are.

Turning to census data, Pratt and his team sought insights into their community, the languages they speak and more. Then, the city designed recycling education materials that aligned with that information.

Now, the city’s education and communications materials are available in English, Spanish, Vietnamese and Hmong — and they use images to better convey information, too.

## Building on Success



Through the city’s work, the team found that only one point of communication wasn’t enough, so they chose to lean on social media and the Brooklyn Park HRG Recycling App, [powered by ReCollect](#), which launched on Earth Day 2021, and includes the [Collection Calendar](#) and the [Waste Wizard](#) tools. The city also relies on the tools’ Service Alerts to relay timely communications to the people they serve.



It was an easy fit. That’s because ReCollect’s digital tools for recycling are inherently language-inclusive, so they will help you reach the majority of any community. The tools are first created in English, and then your recycling and solid waste information is translated into 15 languages, including Spanish, German and others.



In addition to its overhaul of digital tools, Brooklyn Park’s cart labels and other materials now feature inclusive, bold icons that may be easily understood no matter which language you speak. Prior to rolling out these new materials, Pratt met with the Brooklyn Park’s Multicultural Advisory Committee and the nearby Brooklyn Center, and after some tweaks, they signed off.





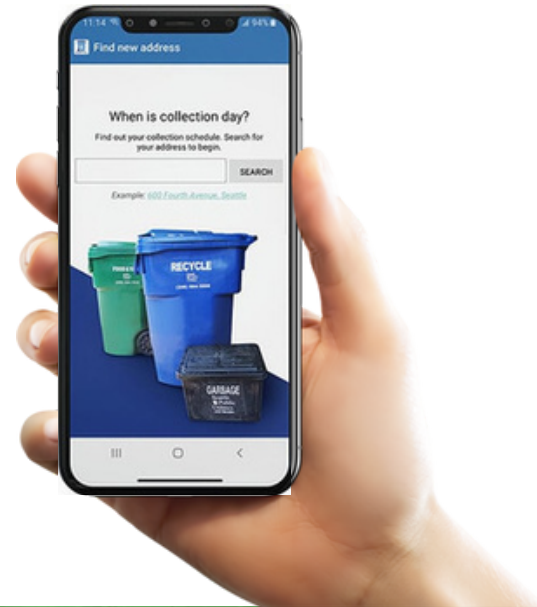
Pratt and the team will continue to monitor its education and communication efforts, promote their tools' and materials' language options and delve into more videos — perhaps even creating and sharing videos on TikTok.



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A challenge he and Brooklyn Park have happily accepted — and will continuously work to meet.



#### About ReCollect

ReCollect Systems is a technology company specializing in digital solutions for the waste management sector.

With a focus on meeting and surpassing the expectations of residents, ReCollect has the proven experience to deliver digital products that also meet the needs of waste managers, communicators, IT specialists and governmental officials.

Launched in 2009, today ReCollect is used by millions of residents across North America. From small villages to large urban centres, from municipal services to private haulers, ReCollect is ready to make your waste management programs more efficient and successful.

