

Road to Circularity

2026 Impact Snapshot

Prepared by Pallavi Pokharel, Sustainability Manager
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Idaho State University
Office of Sustainability

A note from our manager



Pallavi Pokharel

Sustainability Manager, Idaho State University

When I started this work, waste on campus was something most of us threw away without a second thought. Road to Circularity asks a better question: where could this go next?

The answer is already showing up. Old electronics now go to a responsible recycler instead of a landfill. Food that would have been wasted is being cut, and meals are being donated. Clothes and books that people no longer need find a new home through Benny's Closet, where you take what you need and pay what you can.

None of this happens alone. It takes our partners at the City of Pocatello, eCyclers of Idaho, Idaho National Laboratory and Chartwells, and the students, staff and volunteers who sort, carry and show up.

This is a snapshot of where we are. The work continues, and I am grateful to everyone who makes it possible.

Road to Circularity

Mission, vision and goals



OUR MISSION

Keep useful materials in use on campus and out of the landfill, by making reuse, recycling and responsible disposal easy for everyone.

OUR VISION

A campus where nothing useful is thrown away, and everyone has a part in the loop.

1

Divert

Keep e-waste, food waste and recyclables out of the landfill, and measure what we divert.

2

Reuse

Grow Green Move-Out and Benny's Closet into a permanent, student-run thrift space.

3

Educate

Train students, staff and custodial teams, and add multi-stream bins to busy buildings.

Progress on these goals is tracked on the Action Plan scorecard. See pages 10 and 11 for details.

Clothing loop

REUSE

Clothes and household items leave residence halls at move-out and return to students through Benny's Closet.

Dorm move-out
Students leave clothing and household items behind.

Green Move-Out
Green Move-Out collects donations from residence halls.

Benny's Closet
Items are sorted, organized and offered at pop-ups.

Students
Students take what they need and pay what they can.



PROGRAM DETAILS

- Donations were collected across campus from January to April 2026.
- An estimated 100 or more bags of clothing, shoes, books and kitchen items were received.
- A second pop-up was held on September 23 and 24.
- Sustainability Club members and volunteers sorted, organized and displayed the donations.
- Estimated impact: about 800 lbs diverted from the landfill, at roughly 8 lbs per bag. Not yet weighed.
- Next: regular pop-ups and a permanent, student-managed thrift space.

~800 lbs
Estimated clothing diverted

200+ bags
Donated to Benny's Closet

250+
Attendees across four pop-up events

Books recycling

REUSE

Outdated, not-required books leave campus and return to students as useful materials.

Campus recycling unit
Outdated, not-required books are dropped off on campus.

Bulrushed Books
Bulrushed Books picks the books up for processing.

Debind, recycle, convert
Books are debound, recycled and converted into materials.

Back to students
Notebooks and bookmarks are offered back to students.



PROGRAM DETAILS

- Boxes of donated and outdated books will be recycled from campus.
- Book recycling is an ongoing goal on the Action Plan scorecard.
- Bulrushed Books, a company in Moscow, Idaho, handles the processing.
- The office plans to track weights at future events so impact can be measured.
- The first pickup's pounds are not yet in the project notes.

To confirm
Books kept out of landfill

Ongoing
Book recycling goal

2026
Launch year for the book stream

E-waste

RECOVER

Campus electronics go from campus to recovery with eCyclers of Idaho.

Campus electronics
Electronics are collected at campus drop-offs.

eCyclers pickup
eCyclers of Idaho collects the material.

Materials recovered
Copper, aluminum, gold, silver and rare earth elements are recovered.

Landfill saved
Less e-waste is sent to the landfill.



PROGRAM DETAILS

- 67,051.4 lbs (33.5 tons) across 9 documented pickup events.
- Items include CRT monitors and televisions, toner cartridges, circuit boards and hard drives.
- Recovery returns valuable raw materials to use instead of mining new ones.
- Next: track CO2 equivalency with the recycling vendor.
- Next: schedule pickups using weight data over time.

67,051 lbs
Diverted from landfill

9
Documented pickup events

33.5 tons
Equivalent weight

Food waste

REDUCE

Dining partners with Chartwells and Bengal Dining to cut food waste at the source and donate meals.

Dining food waste
Food waste is tracked in campus dining.

Cut at the source
Waste is reduced where food is prepared.

Extra meals donated
Surplus meals are donated instead of thrown away.

Less food to landfill
Less food waste goes to the landfill.



PROGRAM DETAILS

- 4.7 tons of food waste avoided in dining, down 22%.
- $25,742 in cost avoided.
- 24 meals donated from dining, up from zero.
- Long-term Action Plan goal: phase out single-use plastics in dining.

4.7 tons
Food waste avoided, down 22%

$25,742
Cost avoided

24 meals
Donated from dining

Recycling bins

RECYCLE

Uniform, multi-stream bins on campus, with the City of Pocatello sorting and transporting what is collected.

Uniform bins
Multi-stream bins go into busy buildings.

Campus recycling unit
Material is collected at the campus unit.

Transport to Pocatello
The City of Pocatello takes the waste and transports it.

Sorting by type
Material is sorted by type.

Warehouse in Utah
Material moves on to a warehouse in Utah.





PROGRAM DETAILS

- 224 recycling bins on campus, from the 2024 metrics.
- The City of Pocatello collects and sorts the recycling, then transports it to a recycling facility in Utah.
- The Sustainability Manager inaugurated existing bins with uniform two-stream receptacles for trash and recycling.
- Uniform signage across campuses helps reduce contamination.
- Replacement starts with Rendezvous Building.
- We will document how the City sorts and transports the waste, and what happens to it in Utah.

224
Recycling bins on campus

4
Priority buildings, first phase

2026
City of Pocatello partner

2026 highlights

Results as of November 2026

67,051 lbs	E-waste kept out of landfill in 9 pickups, or 33.5 tons.
4.7 tons	Food waste avoided in dining, down 22%. Cost avoided: $25,742.
200+ bags	Donated to Benny's Closet, with about 800 lbs estimated diverted. More than 250 people came to four pop-up events.
24 meals	Donated from dining, up from zero.
224	Recycling bins on campus (2024 metrics).
2.25 million	Water bottles saved using bottle-filling stations (2024 metrics).
11	Goals on the Action Plan scorecard: 3 done, 6 ongoing, 2 in progress.

Action Plan scorecard

11 goals in motion

3
Done

6
Ongoing

2
In progress

Set up a centralized e-waste program	ONGOING
Multi-stream bins in four high-traffic buildings	ONGOING
Perform a campus waste audit	ONGOING
Track weight of waste sent to landfill	IN PROGRESS
Expand the Green Move-Out Program	ONGOING
Open a permanent campus thrift store	IN PROGRESS
Recycling campaign and staff training	ONGOING
Re-engage the Sustainability Club	DONE
Book recycling with Bulrushed Books	ONGOING
Food waste reduction in dining	DONE
Uniform recycling partnership with the City of Pocatello	DONE

Status is from project notes as of November 2026.

Ongoing means active, not finished.



Sustainability Action Plan



AY2024 to AY2029

The Action Plan is the campus roadmap for waste, reuse and engagement. The scorecard tracks progress on its goals. Status is from project notes as of November 2026. Ongoing means active, not finished.

NEXT STEPS WITH THE CITY OF POCATELLO

1. Train stakeholders, custodial teams, students and staff on waste and recycling.
2. Act as a transfer station for recycling bins on campus.
3. Expand uniform bin placement around campus.
4. Document how the City of Pocatello sorts and transports the waste, and share it openly.
5. Document where the waste goes in Utah and what happens to it, shared as video messages.



Partners who made it work

Road to Circularity is built with partners across campus, the city and industry.

Bengal Dining commits to cutting food waste at the source, donating surplus meals, and phasing out single-use plastics in dining.

OUR PARTNERS

Idaho State University
Office of Sustainability

CYCLERS OF IDAHO
ELECTRONICS RECYCLING CENTER

INL Idaho National Laboratory

Facilities Services

Idaho State University
Bengal Dining

CITY OF POCATELLO · THE ONE AND ONLY ·

WHERE TO FIND US

Website: https://www.isu.edu/sustainability/
Instagram: @idahostatesustainability
Email: pallavipokharel@isu.edu
On campus: Office of Sustainability, Physical Sciences Complex, Room 104B