

UK RECYCLING

2021

ANNUAL REPORT



411 S. Limestone, Lexington KY 40506
859.257.6234

recycle@uky.edu
[@UKYRecycles](https://twitter.com/UKYRecycles)

see blue.
recycle blue.



2021

ANNUAL REPORT

Even though our work continued to face the COVID-19 Pandemic, UK Recycling had a pretty great year! After a hybrid year of learning, August 2021 welcomed our students back to campus! With the return of students, faculty and staff, UK Recycling continued to work toward our Sustainability Goals.

In 2017, the University released its 5 year Sustainability Strategic Plan, which includes goals specific to waste reduction and recycling. Our four main goals include -

- Increase UK's waste diversion rate to 50% by the end of 2022.
- Develop and implement a sustainability purchasing protocol
- Conduct waste audits to understand the University's waste stream
- Increase education and outreach on waste diversion

One of our major sustainability goals is to reach a 50% Diversion rate by the end of 2022. **UK Recycling is excited to report that academic campus achieved a diversion rate of 47%!!** This achievement is especially noteworthy given the continued challenges throughout this past year!

Sustainability Strategic Plan Goals

- ✓ Increase UK's Waste Diversion Rate to 50%
- ✓ Develop and Implement a Sustainable Purchasing Protocol.
- ✓ Conduct Comprehensive University Waste Audit
- ✓ Increase Education & Outreach on Waste Diversion

Year in Review

CAMPUS & HEALTHCARE DIVERSION RATE

In 2021, three separate diversion rates are reported for the University of Kentucky.

1. A diversion rate for academic campus.
2. A diversion rate for the whole University (academic campus and healthcare).
3. A diversion rate for UK Healthcare Network.

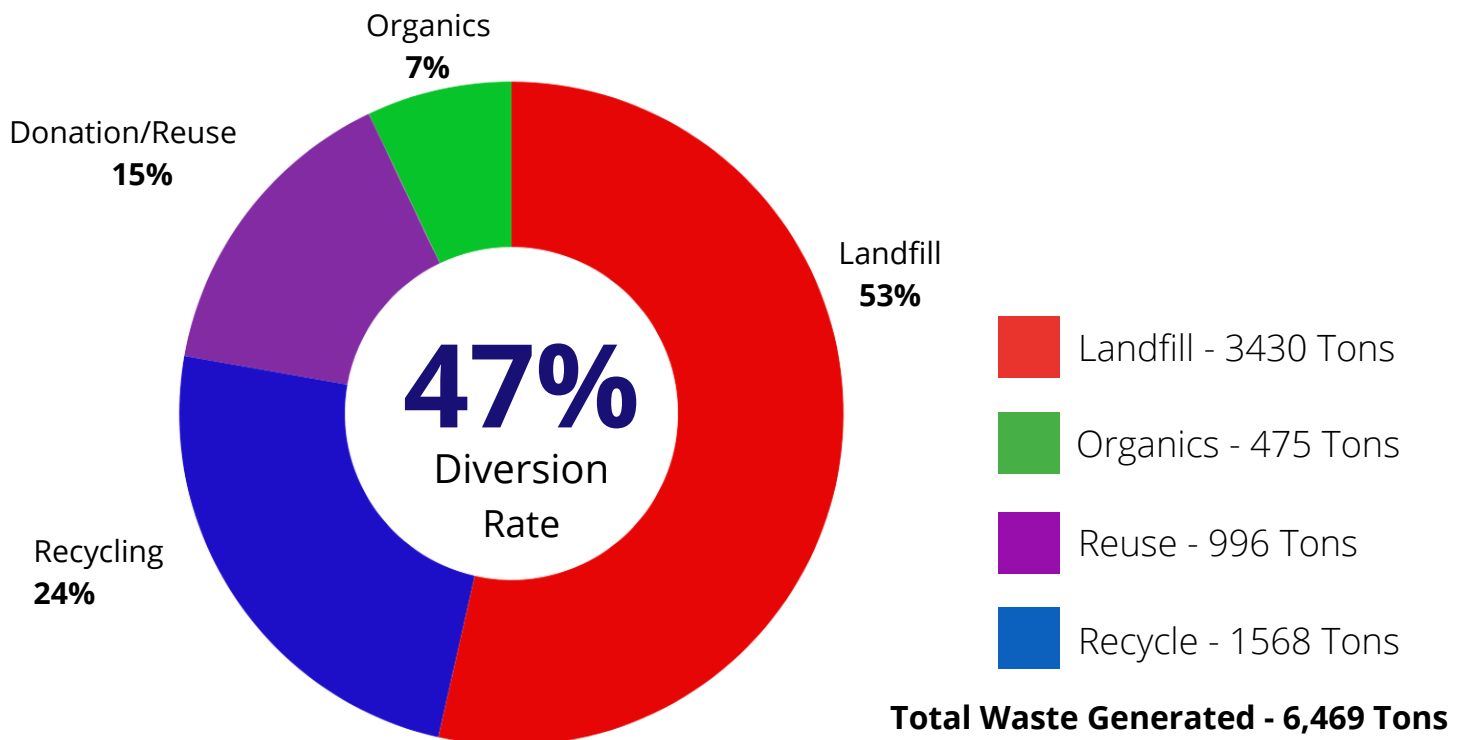
Year in Review

DIVERSION RATE

Calculating a diversion rate for the university helps us identify opportunities for campus to reach a diversion rate of 50% by the end of 2022.

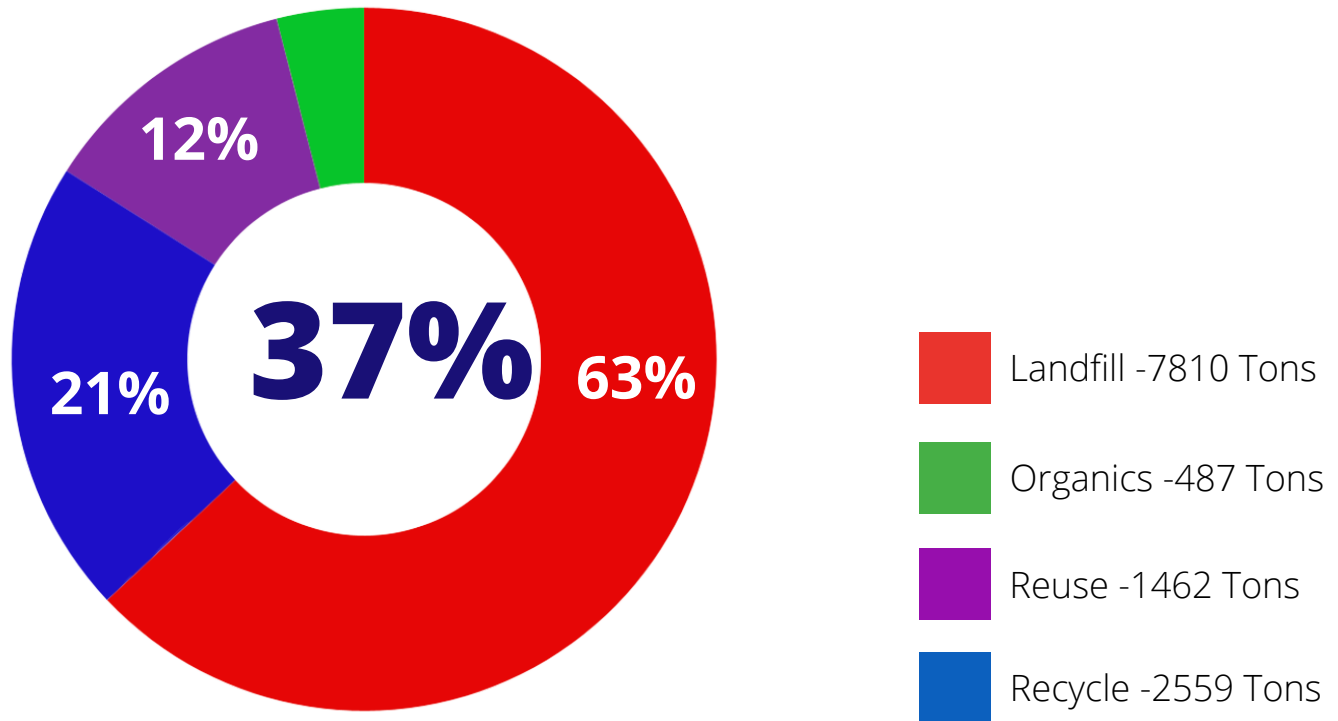
The 2020 diversion rate for UK was 42% for the academic campus side of the university. In 2021, we increased the diversion rate to **47%**. That is a 5% increase worthy of celebrating.

DIVERSION RATE FOR ACADEMIC CAMPUS



Given the campus diversion rate is 47%, the academic campus side of UK Recycling anticipates achieving the Sustainability Strategic Plan goal of reaching 50% diversion by the end of 2022.

DIVERSION RATE FOR TOTAL UNIVERSITY



Total Waste Generated - 12,318 Tons

All UK Healthcare (UKHC) facilities participate in waste reduction and recycling efforts. In 2021, their 22 facilities had a diversion rate of 25%. They recycled a total of 991 tons, reused and donated about 466 tons, diverted 11 tons of organic waste and landfilled 4,380 tons.

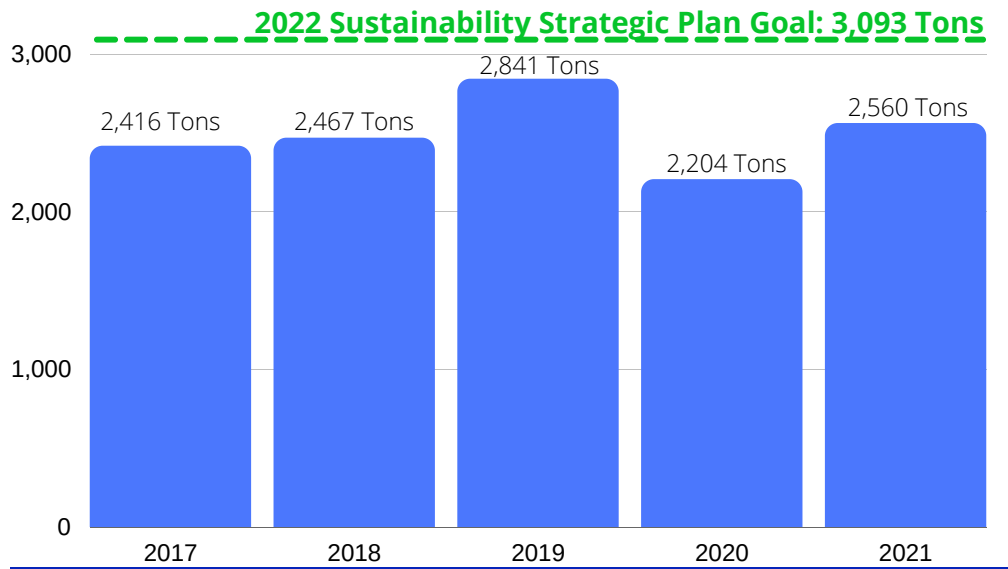
UKHC and their Sustainability committee continue to work at finding opportunities to increase their waste and recycling efforts. They recycled 991 tons of general recycling (paper, cardboard, plastic bottles and jugs, and metal cans) in 2021, an increase of over 100 tons, from 883 tons in 2020. They also recycled 478 tons of cardboard, in 2021, compared to 354 tons in 2020.

Year in Review RECYCLING

Recycling at UK includes more than just bottles and cans. UK Recycling accepts other material like scrap metal, light bulbs, and cardboard. Check out UK Recycling's [website](#) for information on all items that can be recycled.

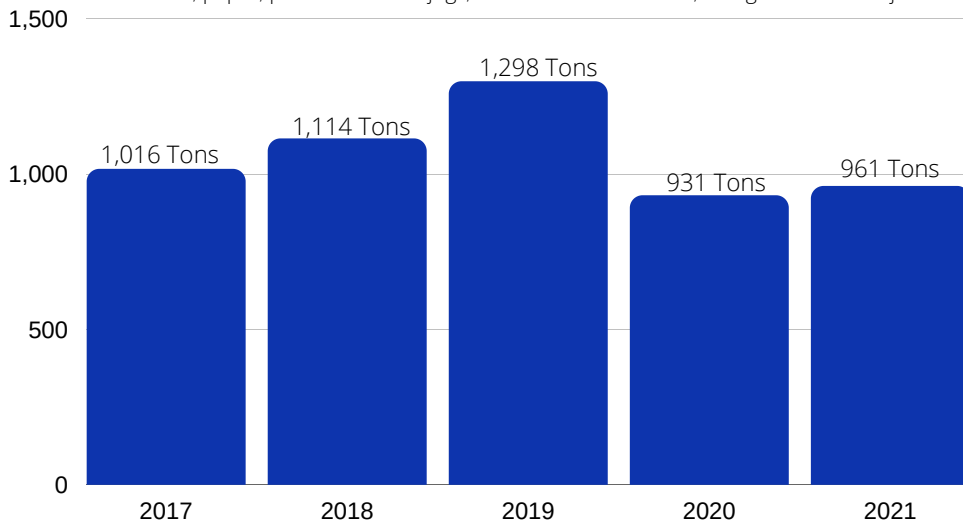


Recycling Goal vs. Actual Weight



All-in-One General Recycling

cardboard, paper, plastic bottles & jugs, aluminum & steel cans, and glass bottles & jars



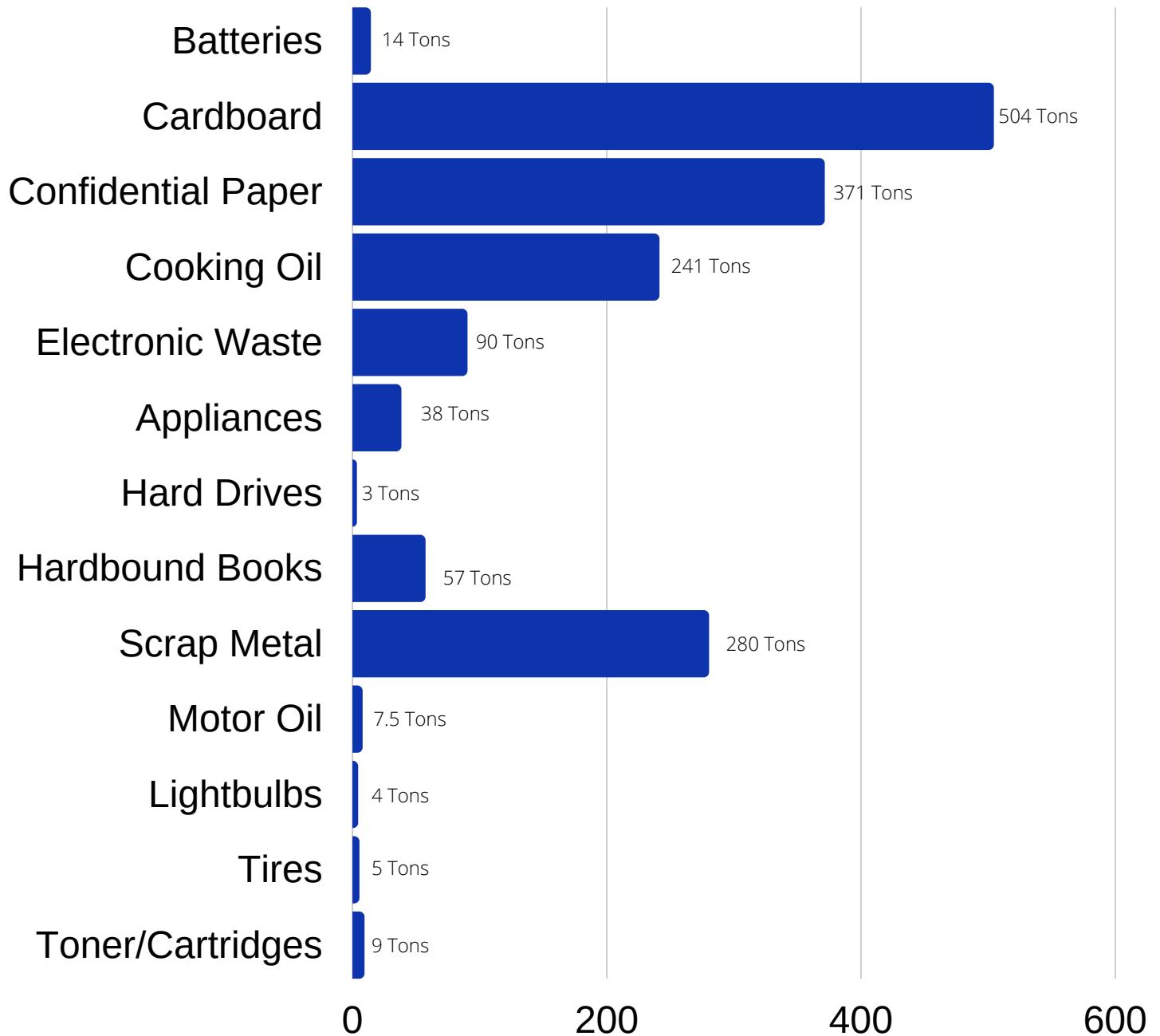
All-in-One general recycling is the largest portion of our recycling effort on campus. In order to achieve the 50% diversion rate, UK Recycling set a separate goal to increase recycling on campus by 25% compared to 2017 data.

Prior to 2020, UK Recycling was on track to achieve this goal. Due to the pandemic, the volume of material on campus has shifted and this goal hasn't been achieved yet.

Year in Review

OTHER RECYCLING

In addition to general recycling, UK Recycling has other recycling streams to capture a wider range of materials. Information on all items that can be recycled can be found on UK Recycling's [website](#).

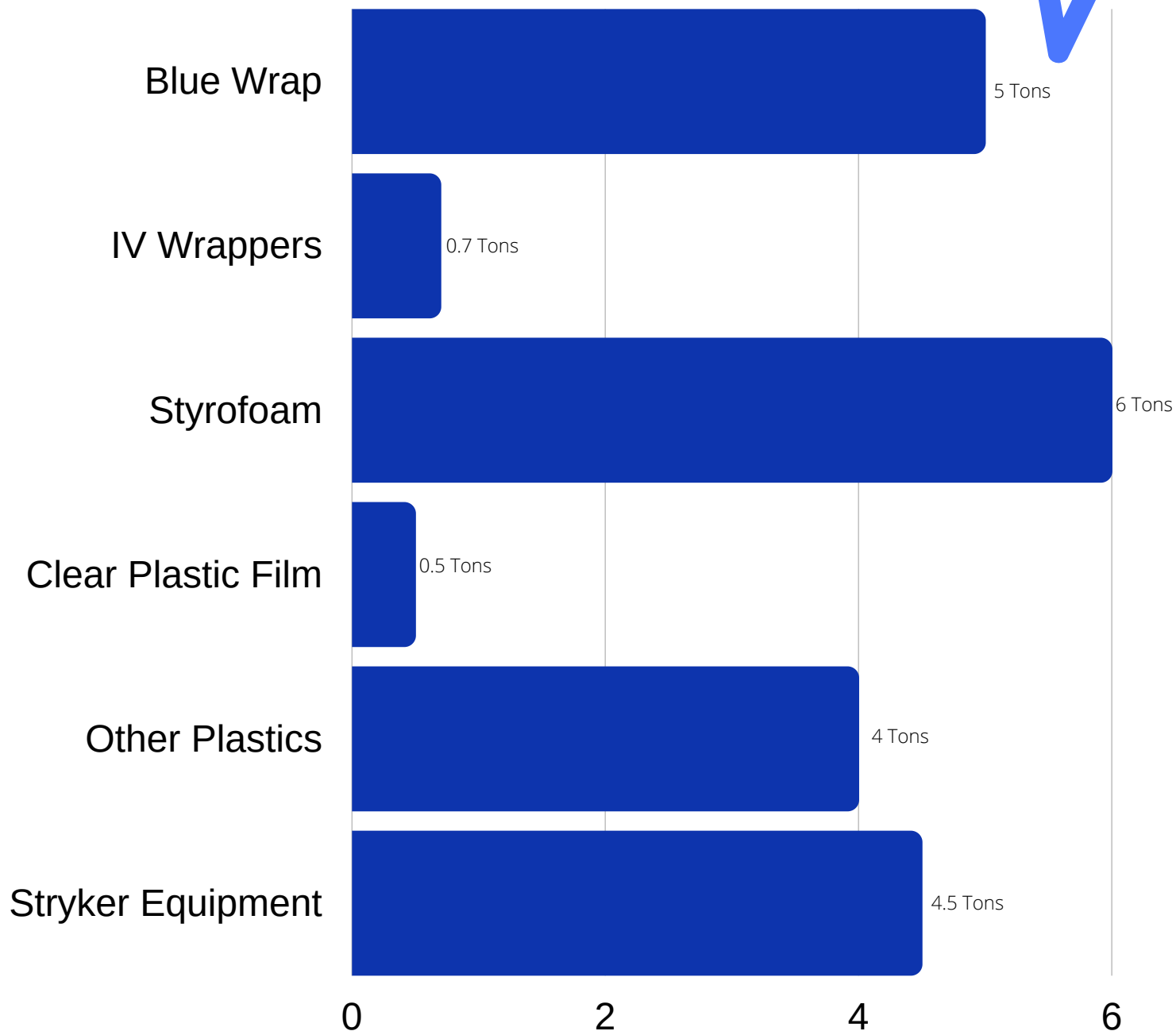


Year in Review

OTHER RECYCLING HEALTHCARE

UK Healthcare works with UK Recycling to increase their recycling efforts!

Check out the full list of items recycled at UKHC on [UK Recyclings website.](#)



Year in Review

AMERICA RECYCLES DAY

Each year, to celebrate America Recycles Day, November 15th, UK Recycling develops a campaign to encourage faculty, staff and students to recycle. The 2021 campaign focused on single-use plastics and the best ways our campus can continue to Pass On (single-use)Plastics.



In 2019, Sophie Beavin, a former UK Recycling intern, implemented a specialty Styrofoam Recycling Program as her independent project. That year, UK Recycling collected over 6,000 pounds of styrofoam. In 2021, a total of 11,860 lbs. were collected. To learn more about the program, click [here](#).

In order to celebrate America Recycles Day, UK Recycling partnered with College of Design - Professor Jordan Hines - to create an abstract "wave" made from styrofoam coolers. The wave was made from 72 coolers, many of which were collected from UK Healthcare and various research labs on campus. The coolers were recycled after the exhibit was torn down.



Year in Review

RECYCLING SPOTLIGHT

Even though 2021 looked a little different for everyone, UK Recycling is proud of the continued growth of waste reduction and recycling efforts on campus! Check out a few of our highlights included below.

**Yard Sign Reuse Program**

This year, UK Recycling began collecting yard signs for reuse and recycling. Any unwanted yard signs are collected by UK Grounds and brought to UK Recycling. Some are stored to be reused into new signs and the others are sent to be recycled. UK Recycling hopes to continue partnering with organizations on campus to grow this program.

In 2021, UK Recycling recycled 1,720lbs of yard signs from campus.

Plastic Processor

This year, UK Recycling joined a unique team of partners comprised of faculty and staff from College of Engineering, College of Arts & Sciences, College of Design, UK Healthcare and UK Facilities, and received grant funding to building and install a Trash-to-Tank (T3) processor at Vaughan Warehouse.

The T3 converts specific types of plastics into a diesel fuel, essentially taking a solid form of a petroleum plastic and stilling it down to a liquid form. UK Recycling is currently using IV plastic wrappers collected from UKHC in the processor. Finished diesel fuel will be used in some of UK Ground's mowers.



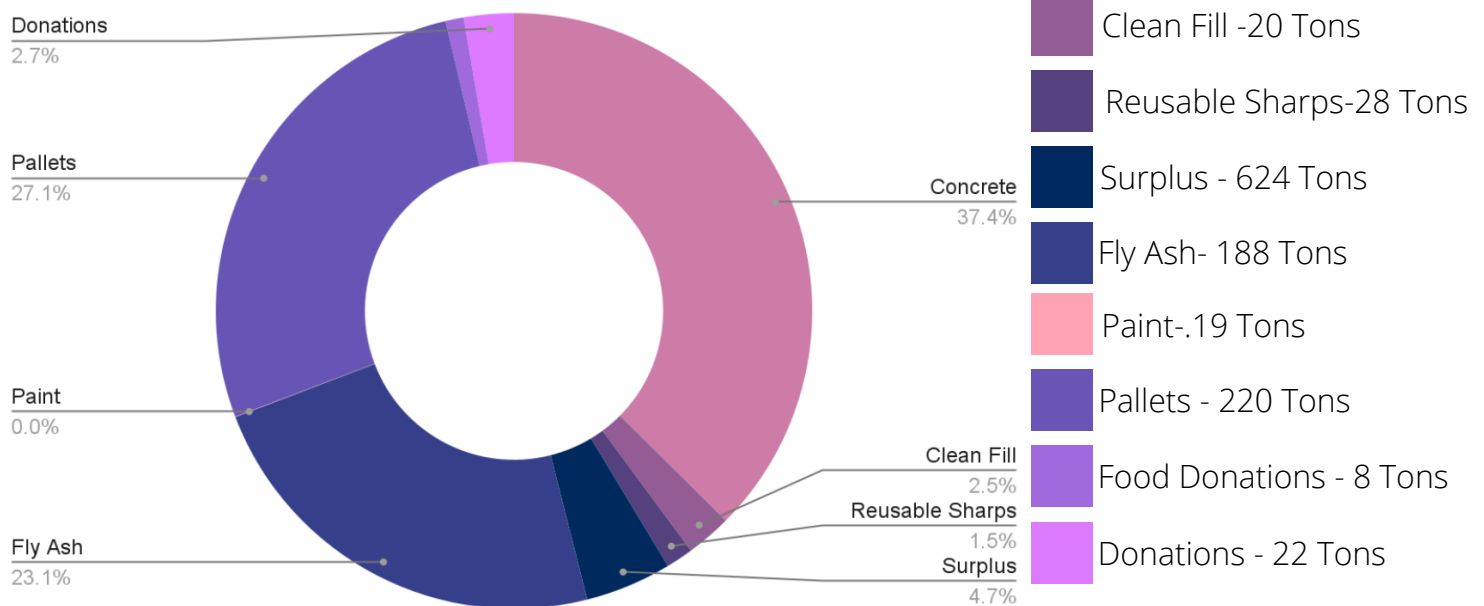
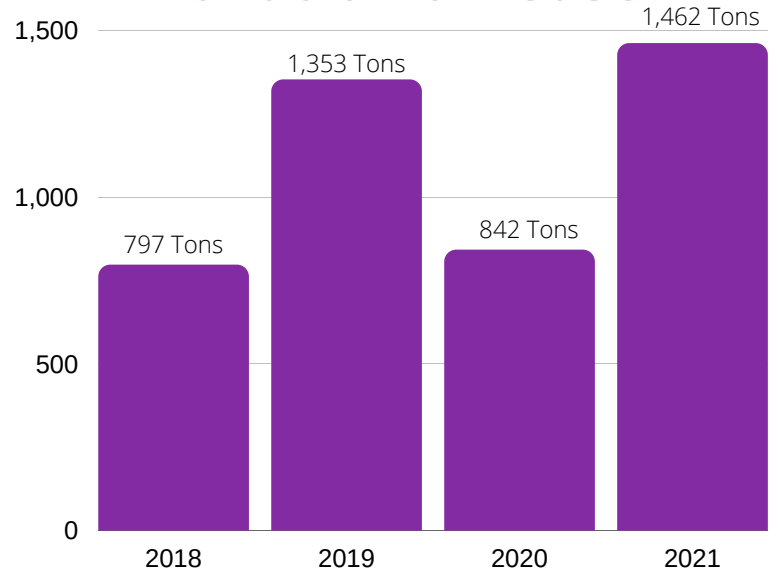
Year in Review

DONATION/REUSE

Although UK Recycling's donation and reuse efforts saw a decrease from 2019 due to COVID-19 and the temporary shut down, we are exceptionally proud of the efforts campus made to continue the program.

Partnerships continued to prove valuable in achieving waste reduction. UK Surplus began a new program to track actual weights instead of estimates. Additionally, Residences Life and Goodwill partnered with UK Recycling to continue the end of semester Give & Go Move Out program. In May of 2021, 14,600 lbs of donations were collected.

Donation & Reuse



*Items from UKHC that are properly cleaned and reused

Year in Review

WASTE REDUCUTION WEEK RECYCLING INTERN PROJECT

The Office of Sustainability partners with the Student Sustainability Council to provide exciting and meaningful undergraduate internship opportunities. UK Recycling happily hosted 2 interns. These two interns worked hard to coordinate and host 5 events throughout the week as well as a social media campaign to encourage waste reduction behavior change.



How to Fix: Your Car! Thanks to a partnership with UK Garage, the week started with a demonstration session teaching students how to maintain and properly upkeep their vehicle.

Dr. Beymer-Farris and Dr. Seay presented about their work in Africa, finding sustainable solutions to the plastic crisis.



A FREE pop-up Thrift Shop was held at W.T. Young walkway. Student donated unwanted clothes prior to the event. Anyone in need of clothes were able freely shop!



Just Eat It documentary screening took place at the Gatton Student Center. Participants were able to learn more about food waste and ways that can help the cause.



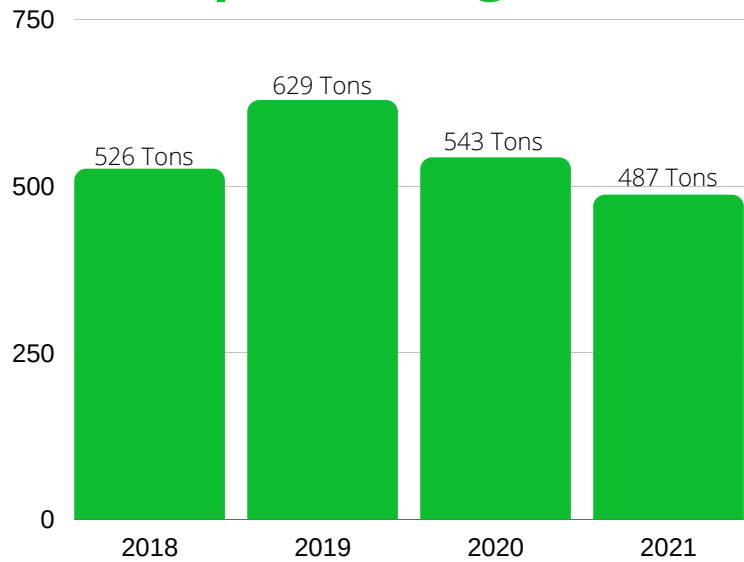
Year in Review

COMPOST & ORGANICS

The organics program at the University continues to expand. Not only did the food waste program continue in UK Dining facilities, but it expanded to include coffee waste. A new partnership was formed between the University and Shyco Wood products to more efficiently capture, reuse and/or shred pallets from campus.



Compost & Organics



Additionally, UK Grounds continued to collect yard waste - leaves, brush, wood chips, etc. - throughout campus. Additional locations for yard waste containers were identified and used to increase capacity and participation.

Organics by the numbers:

23 tons
mulched



PALLETS

188 tons
composted



LEAVES

42 tons
composted



FOOD WASTE

Year in Review

PAPER TOWEL COMPOSTING

UK Recycling, in partnership with UK Sustainability, UK Dining, UK Custodial and UK College of Agriculture, Food and the Environment, expanded the food waste compost program to include paper towels from W.T. Young Library. This pilot program was part of the Campus Race 2 Zero Waste Competition - Zero Waste Building Challenge.

PAPER TOWELS ONLY

BROWN PAPER TOWELS ARE NOW COMPOSTABLE AT UK.



UK is participating in Campus Race to Zero Waste's "Zero Waste Building Challenge."

Help us make W.T. Young a zero waste building! This container is for Brown Paper Towels ONLY.

Please place other waste in the waste containers in the hallway.



Life Cycle of a Paper Towel



Student Food Waste Pilot

Thanks to a partnership with Student Government Association (SGA), UK Recycling successfully piloted a program to collect prep-food waste from University Flats.

A total of 26 rooms participated, which means over 100 students had access to the program. Those students collected over 300 lbs. of food waste for composting!

