

City of Alexandria, Virginia
FY 2026 Proposed Operating Budget & CIP
Budget Questions & Answers

March 25, 2025

Question:

What would be the cost of adding textile recycling to Alexandria's existing recycling program? Even a semi-annual collection would be greatly appreciated.

Response:

The City is aware of Fairfax County's efforts to launch a new textile recycling initiative in partnership with Helpsy. Helpsy has worked with other municipalities and offers textile-only recycling at no cost. The service includes the provision of recycling equipment, in exchange for a designated location to place the collection container. Fairfax County has initiated this trial program at one location to evaluate how this cost-free model functions. In addition to the recycling service, Helpsy claims to provide valuable data related to the environmental, community, and economic impacts of their collection work, which could be used in Fairfax County's sustainability reports.

Our Resource Recovery Division has already discussed this initiative with Fairfax County and has scheduled a call with Helpsy to learn more about their program.

We are also monitoring the progress of Fairfax County's trial as we assess the potential for a similar program in the City of Alexandria. Unlike Fairfax where the program is implemented at a monitored site with controlled access, most of Alexandria's drop-off locations are not staffed and are open 24/7, which contributes to issues such as illegal dumping. To address this, we are evaluating the most suitable approach, whether it's integrating the program into one of our Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) facilities, which have controlled hours of operation, or partnering with organizations like Mom's Organic Market, with whom we already collaborate on glass recycling.

It's also important to note that the City already offers various recycling options for residents, including textiles. For example, if one searches "fabric" in "What Goes Where" tool on the City's website, a local donation center is listed as an option for residents.