

## Ponca City Part of “What’s in Oklahoma’s Trash” Study

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**In November 2025, the Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality partnered with SCS Engineers to conduct the 2026 Oklahoma Statewide Material Characterization Study - the first statewide study of its kind in Oklahoma.**

The study is taking place at five landfills across the state, including the Ponca City Landfill. Its purpose is to learn what types of materials Oklahomans are throwing away and how much of that waste could potentially be reused, recycled, composted, or otherwise kept out of landfills.

Here is how it works: After a selected garbage truck unloads at the landfill, study workers collect a sample weighing approximately 250 pounds. They carefully sort the sample into different material categories, such as paper, plastic, glass, metal, food waste, yard waste, textiles, and other discarded items. Each category is then weighed and recorded.

Why does this matter? The information will give Oklahoma a clearer picture of what is entering our landfills. State and local leaders can use the results to identify opportunities for recycling and other waste-diversion programs, make informed policy decisions, improve existing services, and educate the public about reducing waste.

Keeping reusable and recyclable materials out of the trash helps conserve natural resources and protects valuable landfill space. Because landfills have limited capacity, reducing the amount of waste sent to them can help extend their useful life and reduce the need to develop additional disposal sites.

The 2026 study will establish an important starting point, allowing Oklahoma to measure changes in its waste stream and track progress toward waste-reduction and recycling goals in the years ahead.

Every item we reuse, recycle, compost, or avoid throwing away can help protect Oklahoma’s landfill space for future generations.