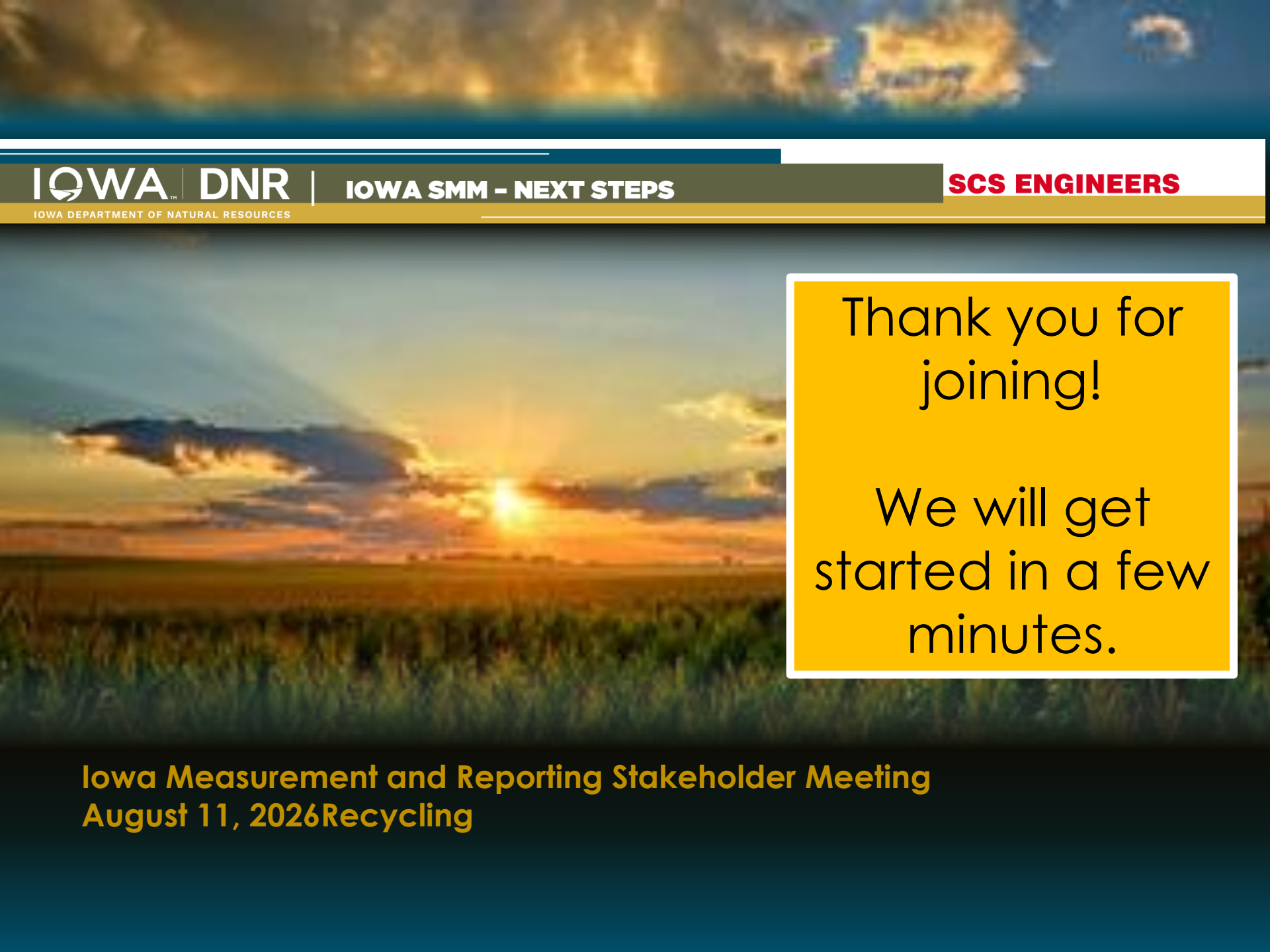


IOWA DNR | IOWA SMM – NEXT STEPS

IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

SCS ENGINEERS

Thank you for joining!

We will get started in a few minutes.

Iowa Measurement and Reporting Stakeholder Meeting
August 11, 2026Recycling

Reminder

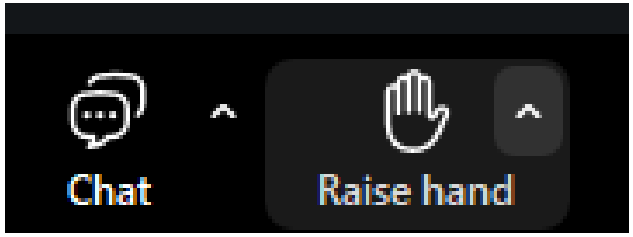
Instructions

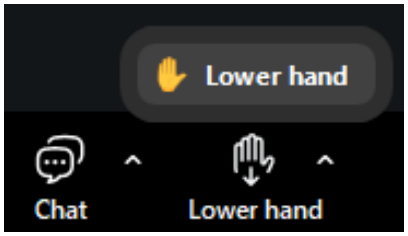
- Mute/Un-Mute and Camera Options.

Reminder Continued

Instructions

- If you have questions, please use the raise hand feature or type the question in the chat





Introductions

DNR Staff

Jennifer Wright
FABA Supervisor

Tom Anderson
Executive Officer II

SCS Staff

Jeff Phillips
Senior Project Manager

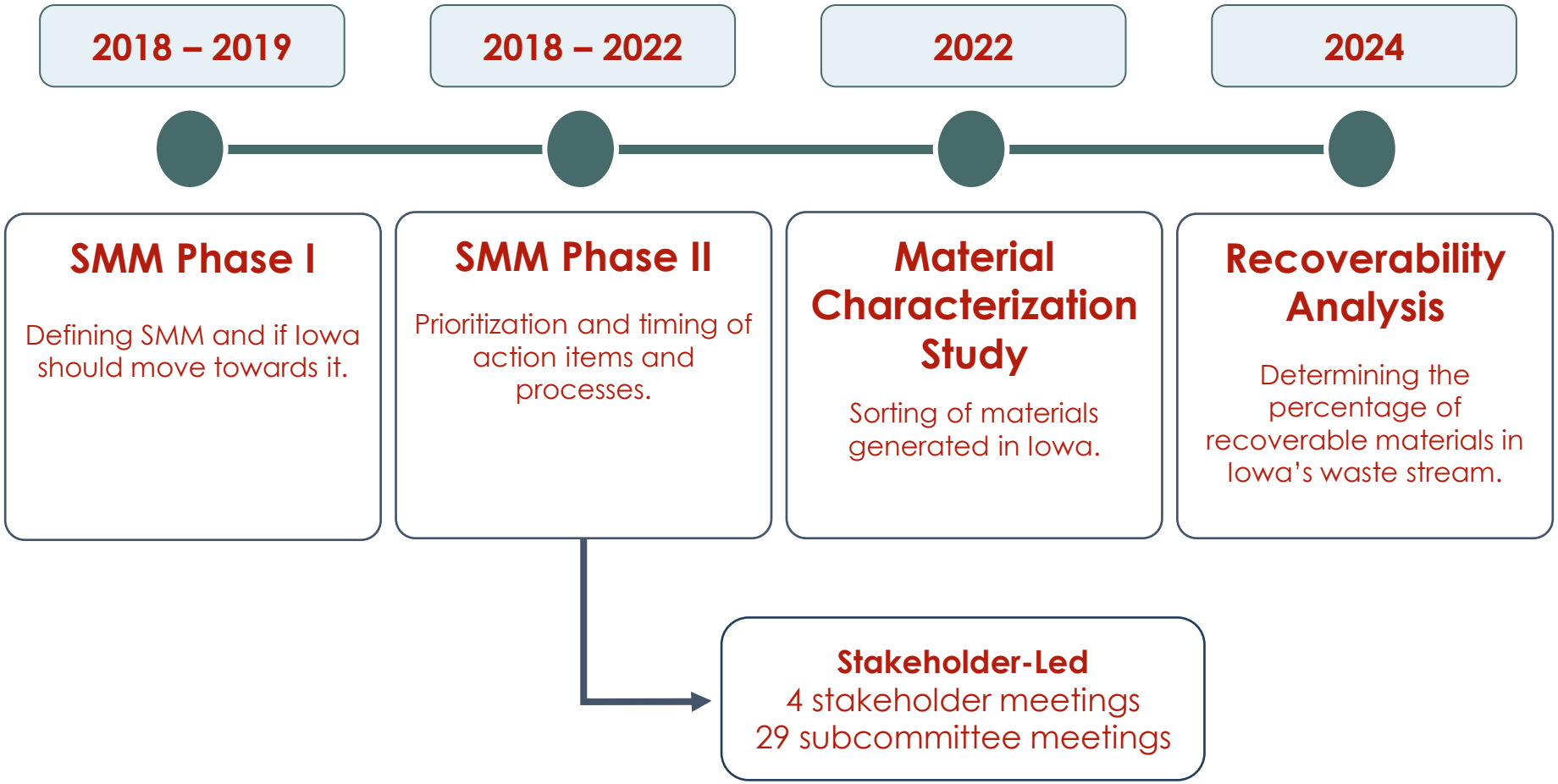
Lisa McDaniel
Project Manager

Erin Novak
Staff Professional

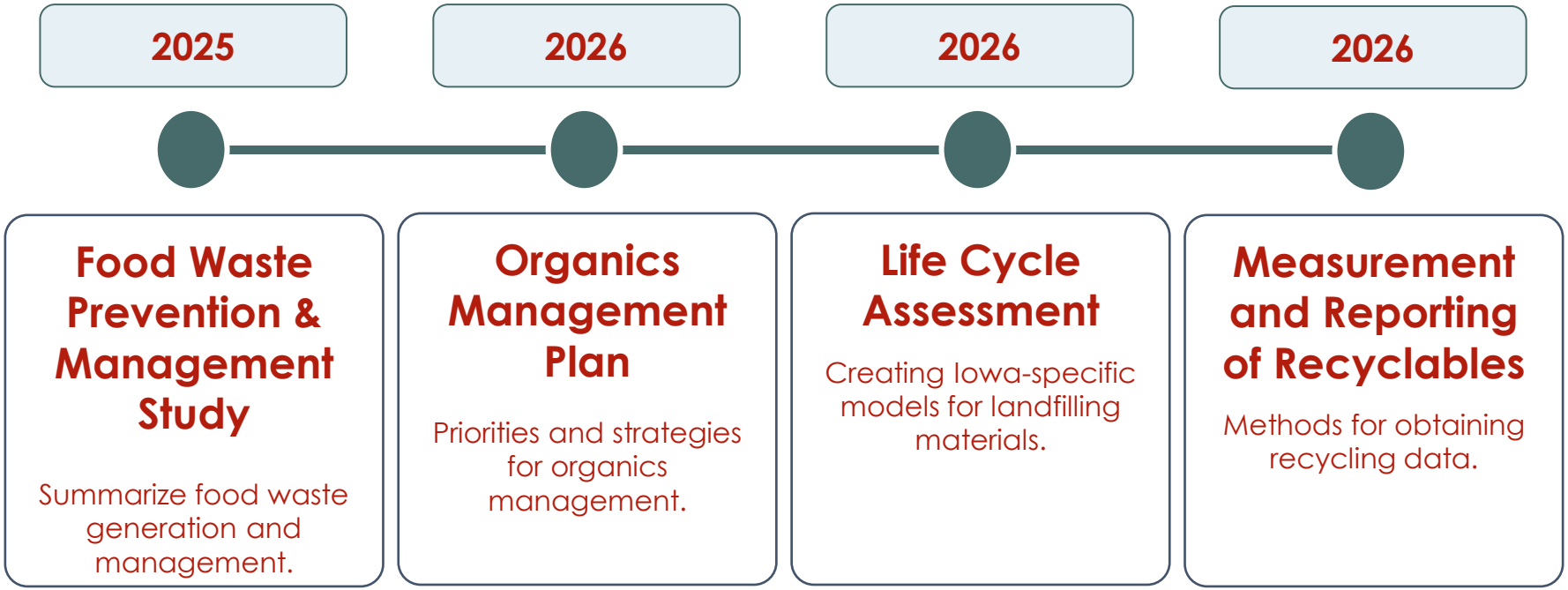
Today's Agenda

1	Welcome and Project Background	10:00 – 10:15
2	Review and Discuss Recommendations	10:15 – 11:45
3	Closing Statements and Next Steps	11:45 – 12:00

SMM Timeline



SMM Timeline Continued



Measurement and Reporting of Recycling Alternatives

Materials ❖ Data ❖ Decisions

Scope: Traditional Recyclables

Included in this study: Traditional municipal recyclables

Paper
Cardboard
Plastic containers
Metal containers
Glass

Not the focus of this study: Specialty / non-traditional materials

Scrap metal
Tires
Electronics
Batteries
C&D debris, organics, textiles, other specialty materials

Focus on the materials most commonly managed through residential and commercial recycling programs.

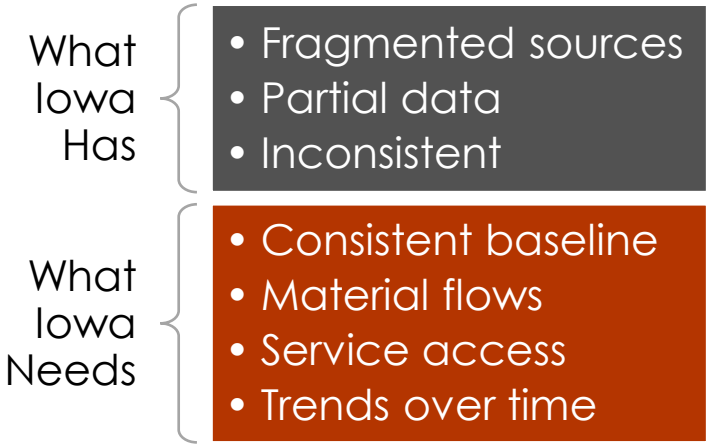
Why Recycling Data Matters

Recycling data → System understanding → Better decisions → Program improvement

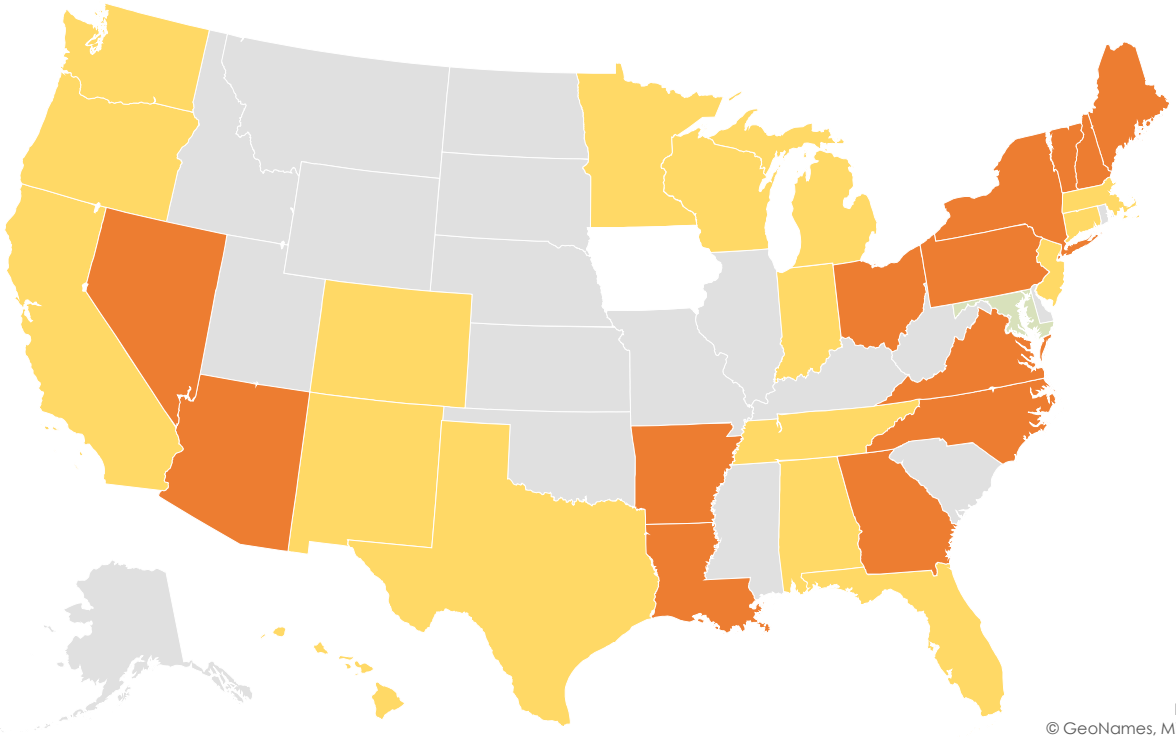
Grants
Infrastructure
Markets
Education

Iowa's Current Data Gap

- Iowa has no consistent, way to routinely collect, verify, and analyze recycling data
- Limits Iowa's ability to:
  - Track material flows and performance
  - Guide infrastructure investments
  - Measure policy outcomes



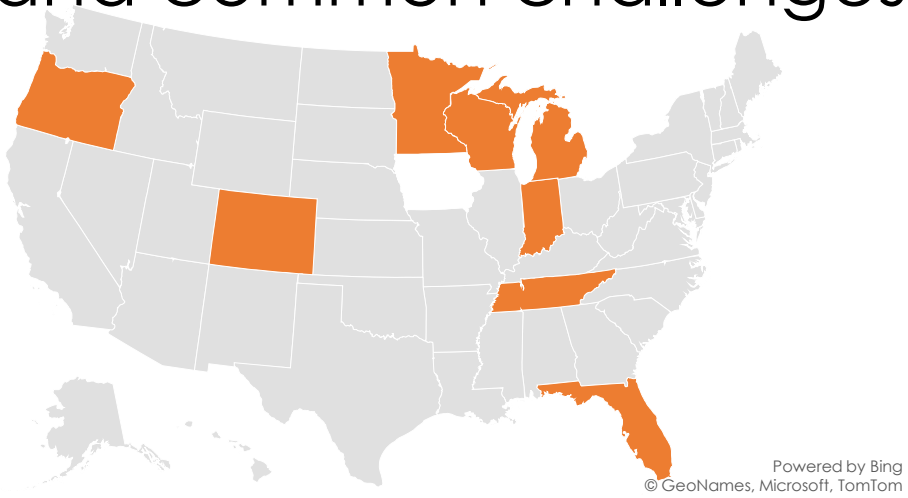
What Other States Are Doing



17	Mandatory reporting requirements for facilities, collectors, or transporters	**14**	Data collection relies on cities, counties, or districts. Voluntary, minimal, or no facility reporting.	**18**	No recycling data reporting or reliance on voluntary data reporting.

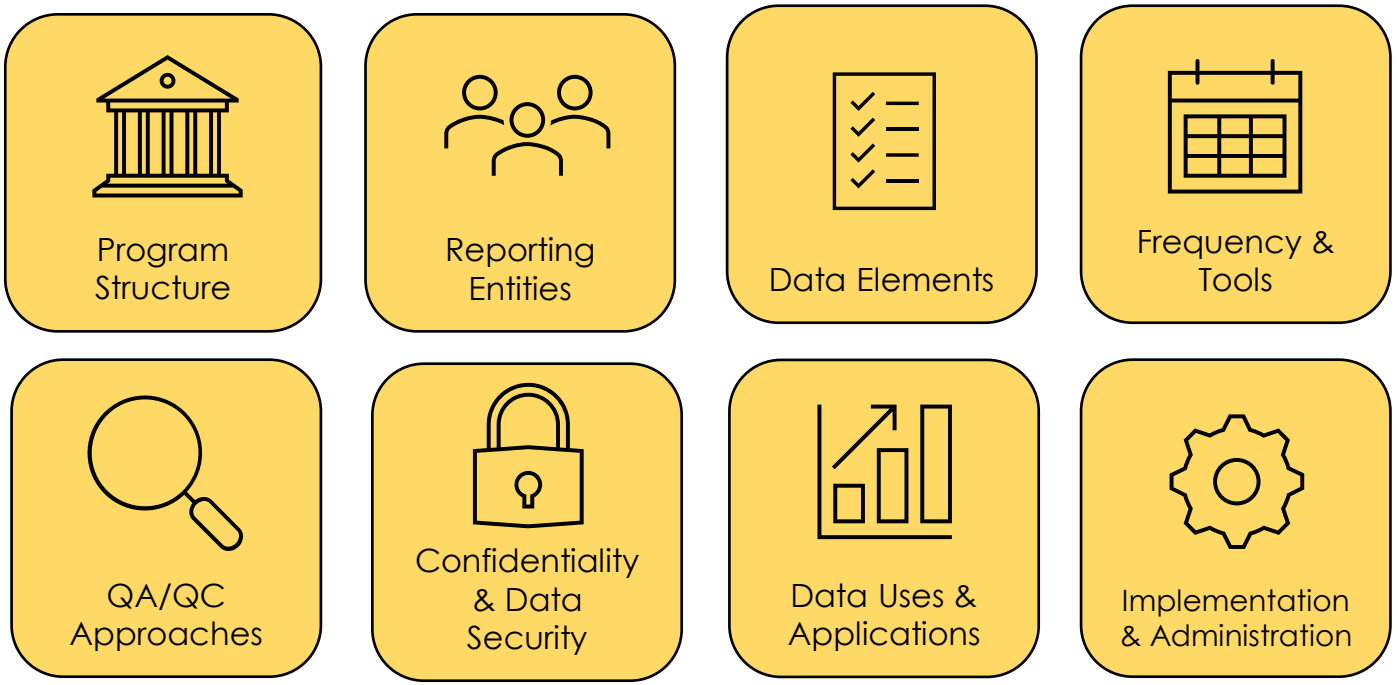
What We Heard from States

- We spoke with state agencies to understand how these systems work in practice.
- Gathered insights on implementation, staffing, and common challenges.



Information Categories

We evaluated state programs across consistent categories:



What We Learned (and Why It Matters for Iowa)

Insight	What This Means
No perfect system	Trade-offs are unavoidable
"Who reports" drives everything	This decision shapes complexity and burden
End-market tracking is difficult	Most systems stop short of full traceability
QA/QC requires real effort	Validation is the resource-heavy part
Double-counting is common	Needs to be addressed in system design
Definitions affect results	Metrics can mislead if not clearly defined

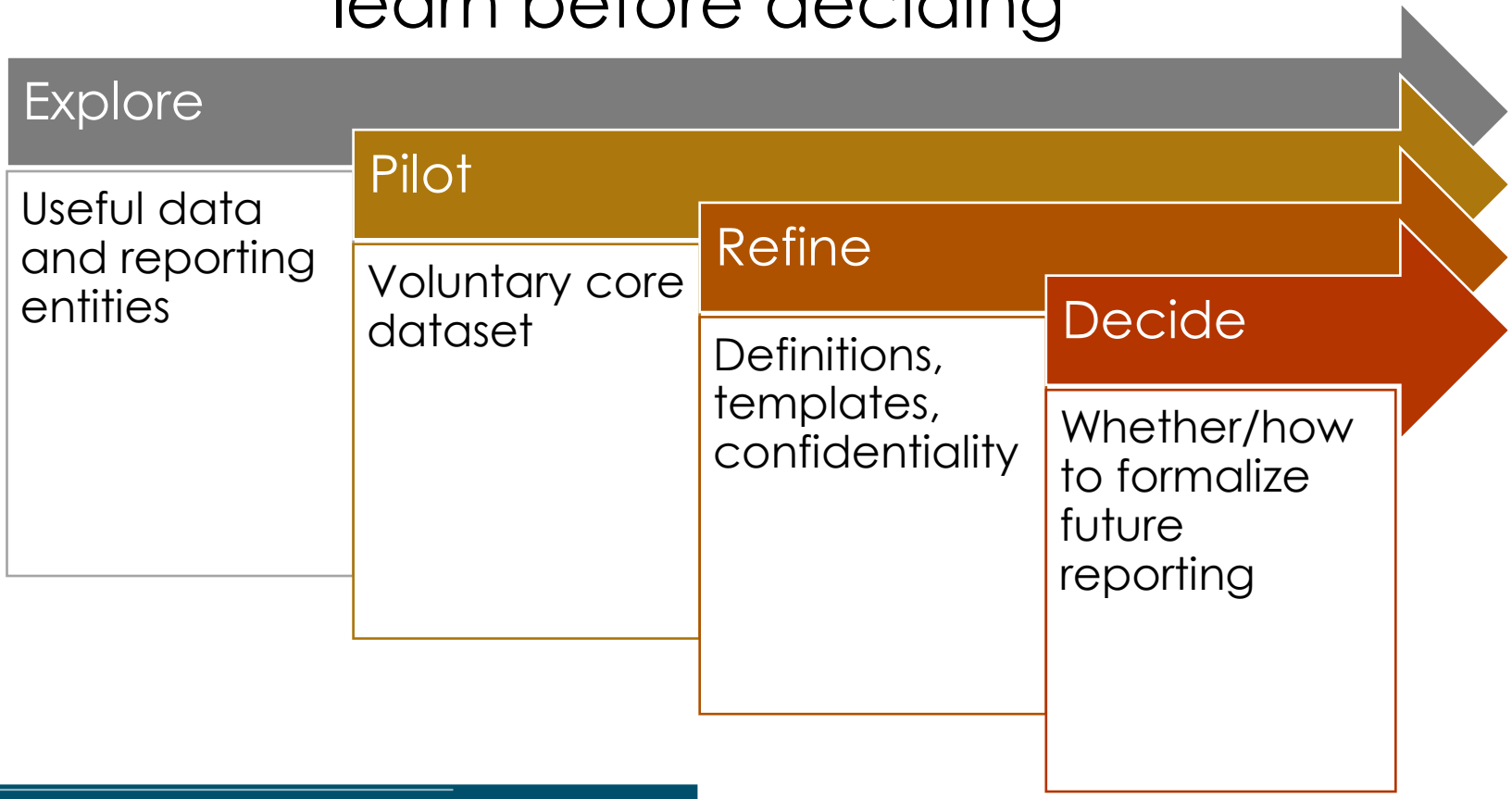
Designing the system requires making informed trade-offs — not finding a perfect model

Four Possible Pathways

Option	Best use	Limitation
Existing planning requirements	Uses current local planning structure	May not capture private facility data
Legitimate recycling authority	Supports compliance and enforcement	Not designed for routine statewide reporting
Voluntary surveys	Good near-term way to test data collection	Participation may be incomplete
New statutory authority	Creates durable, consistent reporting	Requires policy decisions and stakeholder input

Recommended / Potential Phased Approach

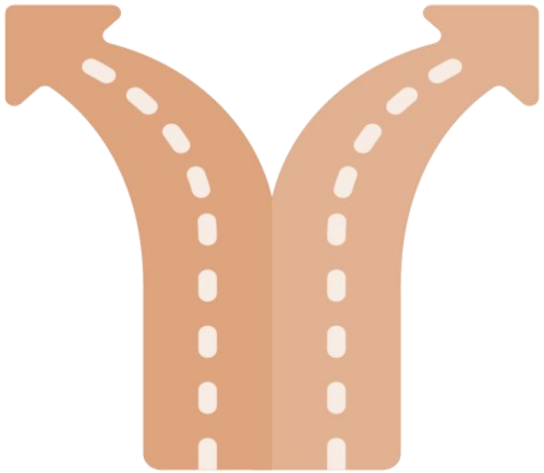
A phased approach could allow Iowa to learn before deciding



Two Approaches: Different Data

Facility-based reporting
Best for:
- Quantities
- Material types
- Movement through the system

Jurisdictional reporting
Best for:
- Programs
- Access
- Services
- Local planning context



Core Dataset: Who Reports What

Facilities (MRFs/processors)

- Total tons received/processed (or marketed), by broad material category
- Aggregated inbound geography (county/region)
- General destination type (in-state / out-of-state / export)
- Qualitative contamination indicator (e.g., low/moderate/high)

Municipalities/local programs (and haulers where available)

- Geography served
- Service availability (curbside/drop-off/both)
- Approx. residential vs. non-residential split (where feasible)
- Directional year-to-year change + key challenges

Implementation Considerations

Success depends on trust, clarity, and capacity

- Use simple reporting templates and clear definitions
- Establish confidentiality, aggregation, and publication rules up front
- Pilot the approach with willing participants
- Communicate how data will and will not be used
- Provide technical assistance and feedback to participants
- Plan for staffing, QA/QC, data systems, and long-term administration

Statutory Framework

Stakeholder Input Needed

What would a useful, fair, and practical recycling data approach look like for Iowa?

- What decisions should data support?
- What data are most useful?
- Who can best report?
- What is realistic voluntarily?
- What protections are needed?
- What should be resolved first?

Facilitated Discussion: Recycling Data Collection in Iowa

What decisions should Iowa be able to make with better recycling data?

- Infrastructure investment?
- Grant priorities?
- Service access gaps?
- Market development?
- Education and contamination reduction?
- Long-term policy development?
- Program performance tracking?

Which types of recycling data would be most useful for Iowa to collect, especially in an initial phase?

- Total recycling tons
- Tons by broad material category
- Recycling service availability
- Curbside and drop-off access
- Aggregated inbound geography
- General destination type
- Qualitative contamination information
- Year-to-year trends
- Program challenges

Who has the most reliable access to the information Iowa is trying to collect, and how should that shape the reporting universe?

- Are facilities, MRFs, or processors best positioned to report tonnage and material flow data?
- Are municipalities, counties, or planning areas best positioned to report service access and program context?
- Are haulers important for collection data, or would that be difficult to obtain consistently?
- Are there other entities that should be included for outreach, inventory, or future reporting purposes?

What information could your organization, or organizations like yours, reasonably provide through a voluntary reporting effort?

- What is already tracked?
- What would require manual compilation?
- What would require coordination with contractors, facilities, or local partners?
- What reporting frequency would be realistic?
- What format would be easiest?

What would make the reporting request feel manageable rather than burdensome?

- Short template
- Clear definitions
- Annual reporting only
- Ability to report unknown/not tracked
- Aggregated categories
- Technical assistance
- Third-party collection

What confidentiality protections would need to be in place for stakeholders to feel comfortable sharing data?

- Aggregated public reporting only
- No publication of facility-specific data
- Minimum thresholds before publishing regional data
- Third-party data collection
- Clear data use limitations
- Protection of customer lists, pricing, contracts, and named end markets

What would make voluntary participation more likely?

- Clear explanation of why data are being collected
- Simple forms and definitions
- Confidentiality commitments
- Aggregated statewide or regional summaries
- Benchmarking information returned to participants
- Demonstrated use in grants, planning, or technical assistance

What should Iowa resolve during a voluntary phase before considering required reporting?

- Clear explanation of why data are being collected
- Simple forms and definitions
- Confidentiality commitments
- Aggregated statewide or regional summaries
- Benchmarking information returned to participants
- Demonstrated use in grants, planning, or technical assistance

If Iowa could only collect five data elements in the first year, what should they be?

What would be most useful, realistic, and least sensitive?

What would success look like after the first year of voluntary reporting?

- Better facility inventory
- Enough participation to establish a baseline
- Tested reporting definitions
- Clearer understanding of service gaps
- Improved stakeholder trust
- Practical roadmap for next steps

Next Steps