



NOVEMBER 2025 RECYCLING PROGRAM UPDATE

MONTHLY OUTREACH TOPICS

The ROT focused our November social media campaign to America Recycles Day - "a day all about spreading the word on how recycling helps us reduce waste, save energy, and conserve precious resources." Jane Goodall created "No Waste November" – which we celebrated with a social media raffle gifting the book Repair Revolution as a prize to a random winner who shared their zero waste tips. In recognizing the winter holiday season, the ROT began promoting low-waste tips for meal planning and shopping, which will continue in December. Major projects completed this month include a Town Website Review (for recycling education) and our Festival Media Project. ROT Staff also participated in the 2025 New York Association for Reduction, Reuse, and Recycling Annual Conference and Trade Show in Cooperstown NY for professional development.

MEDIA ANNOUNCEMENTS

FACEBOOK 1,532 FOLLOWERS	INSTAGRAM 1,487 FOLLOWERS	MAILCHIMP 6,023 SUBSCRIBERS	YOUTUBE 175 VIEWS / 12.2 HRS
SOCIAL MEDIA	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Recycling Compliance Series – Renters Recycle Responsibly• FAQ Friday – Batteries• Monthly Calendar – Where will you find us this month?• Recycling Tip Tuesday – E-Commerce Packaging• Celebrating America Recycles Day Series• Sustainable Swaps – Holiday Shopping• Celebrating "No Waste November"• Thanksgiving Food Waste Reduction Tips• Choose "Green Friday" Instead of Black Friday		
RADIO	<p>"Textile Recycling"</p> <p><i>Do you have an eco-friendly wardrobe? The average New Yorker throws away 70 pounds of clothing each year. Make a difference by shopping second hand, choosing natural fibers, and donating your unwanted clothing, shoes, and fabrics– did you know, they're recyclable! Learn more at UCRRA.ORG</i></p> <p>"America Recycles Day"</p>		

	<p>America Recycles Day is November 15th. When we recycle correctly, recycling creates green jobs, conserves natural resources, and creates less pollution. But when we wish-cycle, it can damage equipment, harm workers, and ruin the value of other recyclables. Know before you throw. Check your local recycling guidelines. Visit UCRRA.ORG</p> <p>“Recyclopedia” (30 sec)</p> <p>Before throwing something in the trash, have you ever wondered – is there a better way to recycle this? This is Angelina Brandt, from the UCRRA . Visit our online A – to-Z Recyclopedia and find out the best way to get rid of things like old paints, chemicals, tires, air conditioners, electronics, and more! Visit UCRRA.ORG</p>
PRINT	No ads this month
WEBSITE/BLOG	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New Festival Resource Page https://ucrra.org/resources/for-festivals/
OTHER MISCELLANEOUS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> +1 Media Kit requested for Kingston Town Board (41 kits YTD)

OUTREACH EVENTS

+327 CALLS / 10.6 HOURS HOTLINE (11/01- 11/30) (3,878 CALLS/147.85 HRS YTD)		+27 ADULT PARTICIPANTS (2,120 ADULTS YTD)	+8 YOUTH PARTICIPANTS (701 YOUTH YTD)	24.5 HOURS (243.25 HRS YTD)
PRESENTATIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 11/03 Cold Weather Composting at Saugerties Public Library 11/06 Upcycled Crafts for Kids at Ulster Public Library 11/19 7R's to Rethinking Our Waste at SUNY New Paltz 			
FACILITY TOURS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 11/17 Animal Mortality Composting Tour 			
EVENTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 11/01 Fall Festival hosted by Ulster County Community Action Committee 			
SITE VISITS, CONSULTATIONS	None this month			
NEW MEDIA OR TEACHING TOOLS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NEW Festival Waste Sustainability Guidebook NEW Zero Waste Sorting Station Signs 			
MISCELLANEOUS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 11/12 – 11/14 NYSAR3 Annual Conference & Trade Show 10/28 NYSAR3 Organics Council Town Website Review Project MCR Volunteer Engagement Survey 			

Festival & Event Waste Sustainability Guide





Our mission is to protect public health and the environment and to promote sustainable materials management by managing Ulster County's waste with a focus on resource conservation.

Ulster County Resource Recovery Agency (UCRRA)

For over 30 years, UCRRA has been developing, financing, and implementing sustainable waste management programs for Ulster County. UCRRA is a solid waste authority, public benefit corporation, and operates two permitted solid waste facilities that coordinate the final disposal for all of the municipal solid waste generated in Ulster County.

UCRRA Recycling Outreach Team

Ulster County Recycles is a county-wide outreach education and community engagement program administered by UCRRA's Recycling Outreach Team (ROT). The Agency proudly fosters environmental literacy in the communities we serve, believing that educating the public about recycling, composting, and waste reduction has incredible social, environmental, and economic impacts.

By promoting literacy in these areas, UCRRA strives to help build resilient communities that engage youth and citizens to demonstrate concern for the environment, so residents and community leaders can act on the environmental challenges of the future. The ROT is available to help improve or implement waste reduction programs for residents, apartment buildings, businesses, and schools! Our team provides free, professional, expertise to not only manage waste, but to reduce, reuse, and rethink waste. Please contact us at **845-336-0600** to ask about our services.

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Why Green Events Make a Difference

Community Members Want Green Events

Eco-conscious events appeal to community members who value clean neighborhoods and environmental responsibility. By actively reducing waste and promoting recycling and composting, events can deliver the community experiences that people want to support, while building a loyal following that appreciates these efforts - and are more likely to have a positive experience of the event! Green events can position the organizers as community leaders by setting an example for others to follow, and in many cases, eco-friendly policies are more appealing to sponsors and vendors.

In 2025, the Woodstock Library Fair (1,000+ attendees) implemented new zero waste practices that resulted in a 70% waste diversion rate, thanks to Ulster County's Green the Scene initiative. They collected 4 bags of recycling, 8 bags of food scraps, and only 5 bags of trash.



Green Events Save Money

Even modestly small-scale, street events can generate a significant amount of waste. Recycling and composting can significantly reduce the total volume of waste requiring disposal, so zero waste efforts can result in cost savings! It's possible to reach 75% diversion or more with careful planning, strategic bin placement and signage, and other considerations. And when we recycle, it supports up to ten times more jobs than if we were to throw those items away as trash!

In 2025, the Rosendale Street Festival (8,000+ attendees) collected 300 lbs. of food scraps from its new zero waste efforts, thanks to Ulster County's Green the Scene initiative.

Event Organizers Have Legal Obligations to Think Green

Ulster County has a strong environmental ethos with many environmental protections in place. These local laws are intended to reduce the amount of non recyclable waste generated in various food service and community spaces.

Planning green events is a matter of compliance with one or more of the following policies:

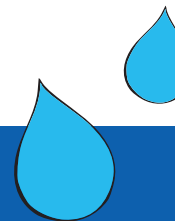
- The Mandatory Source Separation and Recycling Law, LL 4 of 2010
- The Food Service Waste Reduction Act, LL 4 of 2015
- The Skip the Straw Act, LL 2 of 2019, as amended by LL 7 of 2019
- The Ulster County Food Waste Prevention and Recovery Act, LL. 1 of 2020.

Visit [UCRRA.org/about-us/laws](https://ucrri.org/about-us/laws) to learn more.



Green Events Conserve Resources

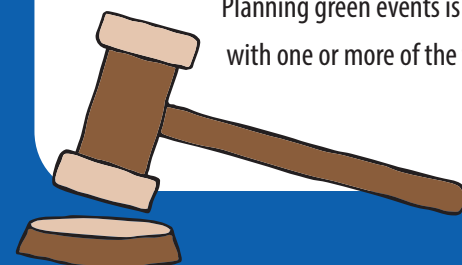
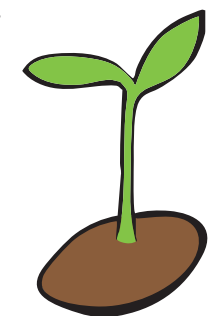
Recycling reduces the need for land disturbances to harvest our society's high demand for raw materials and natural resources. Making new products from recycled materials uses less water and energy. By creating low landfill waste and capturing as much recycling as possible, eco-friendly events help increase these benefits. By prioritizing sustainability, eco-conscious events demonstrate a commitment to protecting the planet and contribute to the ecological health of our community and natural resources.



Since 2022, the Hudson Valley Garlic Festival (20,000+ attendees) has collected between 10 - 15 TONS of food scraps each year through it's zero waste program, with the help of 100+ volunteers and participating food vendors.

Green Events Reduce Pollution and Improve Soil Health by Composting

When food waste and other organic materials decay in a landfill, it produces methane, a greenhouse gas more potent than carbon dioxide. Nationwide, food waste makes up the largest component of material that gets buried in landfills - approximately 22% or over 30 million tons per year. Composting allows food scraps to be recycled into a soil-like material called compost - an organic matter resource that, when added to the soil, has many benefits and uses! Compost can reduce the need to use chemical pesticides and fertilizers and it helps improve soil structure and the soil microbiome, increased moisture retention, adds micro-nutrients, and makes any soil easier to work and cultivate.



Bringing a Plan to Life – Green Teams, Waste streams, and more!

Building Your Dream Team

Successful events have a strong crew behind the efforts. A Green Team is a sustainability committee consisting of key members who collectively have the skills and resources necessary to design, plan, and implement a successful waste reduction goal. Having a dynamic, diverse, and enthusiastic green team can bring your goals into reality. Consider your particular event and what types of stakeholders may play a role or otherwise be helpful on the Green Team: property owners, event sponsors/donors, City/Town staff, vendors, contractors (waste, recycling, composting, cleaning services, equipment rentals, etc.), and volunteers. An effective Green Team should represent the entire ecosystem of event planning. Designate a leader to take notes, gather information, and direct the team's efforts. For large events, consider having subcommittees that can specialize in a certain area (recycling, composting, packaging, etc.). Meet regularly and give the team several weeks to plan and develop the strategy.



Getting to Know Your Waste Streams

Deciding which materials (waste streams) can be recycled is one of the first decisions for your Green Team. Some common materials produced at events are:

- Cardboard boxes
- Beverage containers (plastic, glass, or metal bottles or cans)
- Food scraps
- Food packaging (single use plates, bowls, utensils, cups, napkins, etc.)
- Paper brochures
- Used cooking oil
- Wood pallets
- Plastic shrink wrap or plastic films



Local Recycling & Disposal Options

Waste: Licensed haulers provide waste collection in rolling tote bins, dumpsters, or roll off rentals. Alternatively, waste may be delivered to UCRRA directly according to the applicable fees, hours, and policies.



Find a Local Waste Hauler:

<https://ucrra.org/waste-recycling/find-a-curbside-hauler>



List of Roll Off Rentals:

<https://ucrra.org/waste-recycling/find-a-provider-for-dumpsters-roll-off-containers>



UCRRA Trash Disposal:

<https://ucrra.org/about-us/fee-schedule>



Pro Tip



Researching these options and coordinating services can take time - so don't race the clock! Pricing and services can vary, so when collecting service quotes, be prepared to know your plans thoroughly, which can help you compare options.



Recycling: Licensed haulers provide recycling collection in rolling tote bins or dumpsters (single stream recycling). Alternatively, recyclables may be delivered to UCRRA directly (dual stream recycling) by a commercial business with a commercial vehicle according to applicable fees, hours, and policies.

When creating your recycling plan, consider how waste generated by attendees may be different from waste generated by the vendors, food trucks, or entertainment. Most commonly, vendors will generate lots of cardboard boxes and film plastics, and attendees will primarily generate bottles and cans, and not a lot of other types of recyclables. Bottles and cans can be collected and returned for a 5 cent deposit, raising funds for the event or for a charitable organization of your choice.

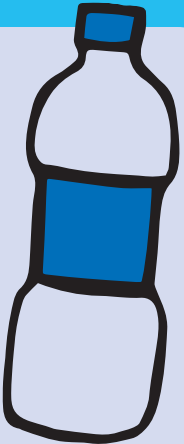
Find a Local Recycling Hauler:
<https://ucrra.org/waste-recycling/find-a-curbside-hauler>



UCRRA Recycling:
<https://ucrra.org/waste-recycling/recycling>



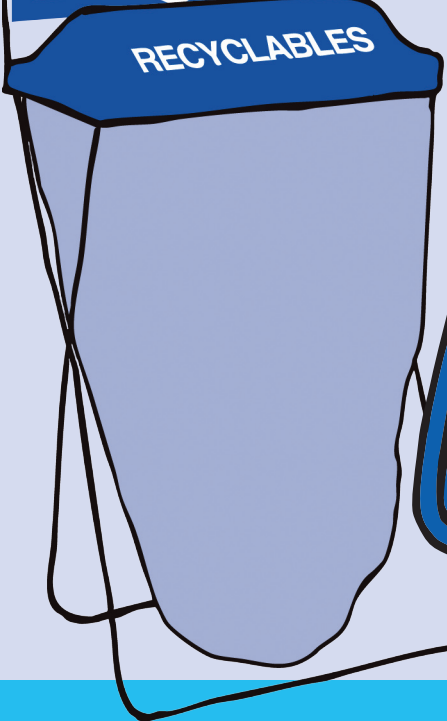
Learn more about the NYS Bottle Bill:
<https://dec.ny.gov/environmental-protection/recyclingcomposting/bottle-bill>



Pro Tip



While film plastics are not acceptable for curbside recycling, NY State policy requires large grocery stores and retail centers to collect plastic bags and a range of other thin plastic films for recycling. Check with your local grocery store about the possibility of a one time drop off for collected film plastics.



Composting: Local food scrap collection services are on the rise! Some local companies offer organics collection in rolling tote bins. Alternatively, organics may be delivered directly to a composting site, like UCRRA or other local compost sites.



List of food waste haulers:
<https://ucrra.org/waste-recycling/food-waste/haulers>



UCRRA Partners in Composting Program:
<https://ucrra.org/waste-recycling/food-waste/compost-food-ucrra>



Other Wastes or Recyclables: Check our A to Z Recycleopedia for local options
<https://ucrra.org/recyclopedia>



Pro Tip



Some event organizers get creative to keep composting costs low by seeking out partnerships with local farmers or community gardens.



Envisioning the Path Ahead

Gather Support

Identify key stakeholders, sponsors, and community partners who can provide funding, resources, and buy-in for your sustainability goals.

6 months out



Build a Green Team

Assemble a dedicated group of staff, volunteers, and stakeholders who bring the skills and resources to design, implement, and champion your sustainability efforts. A strong Green Team will set goals, train others on recycling and composting protocols, and keep your festival organized and on track through regular communication.



5 months out



Evaluate the Waste Stream & Outlets

Take stock of all the materials your festival will generate, from vendor packaging and food prep scraps, to what attendees will purchase and discard. Understanding these streams will help you match materials with the right recycling, composting, or disposal outlets, and guide decisions about purchasing, vendor contracts, and bin station setup.

4 months out

Design a System for Collecting, Sorting, and Transporting Materials

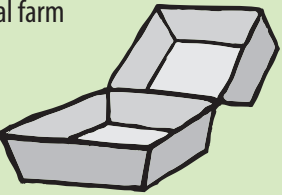
Develop a comprehensive plan for managing waste from both attendees and vendors. This includes placing well-marked stations in public areas, consideration of vendors' recycling and composting requirements, and how you'll train staff or volunteers on proper sorting. Coordinate logistics for moving materials from bins to central points. A strong system reduces contamination, keeps the site clean, and ensures your sustainability goals are met.



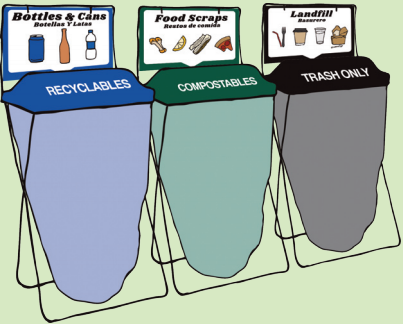
3 months out

Put the Plan Into Action!

Use the findings from your waste evaluation to target specific materials or areas for reduction, recycling, and composting. Set realistic, measurable goals—like diverting a percentage of food waste, replacing single-use plastics with reusable options, or reducing overall trash volume—and take practical next steps, such as contacting UCRRA to reserve free festival bins, or partnering with a food scrap hauler or local farm to manage food waste.



2 months out



Promoting Your Zero Waste Goals

Share your zero-waste plan with attendees and staff to encourage participation and set expectations. Communicate your sustainability objectives clearly before and during the festival using your website, signage, social media, announcements, and vendor briefings. Highlight waste reduction procedures. After the event, showcase success in achieving your zero-waste vision!

1 month out



Educate the staff, volunteers, and attendees

Train everyone involved in the festival on how and where to recycle, compost, and dispose of materials, and explain why these changes matter. Use creative outreach—through briefings, signage, and fun campaigns—to inform, motivate, and inspire participation in your waste reduction efforts.

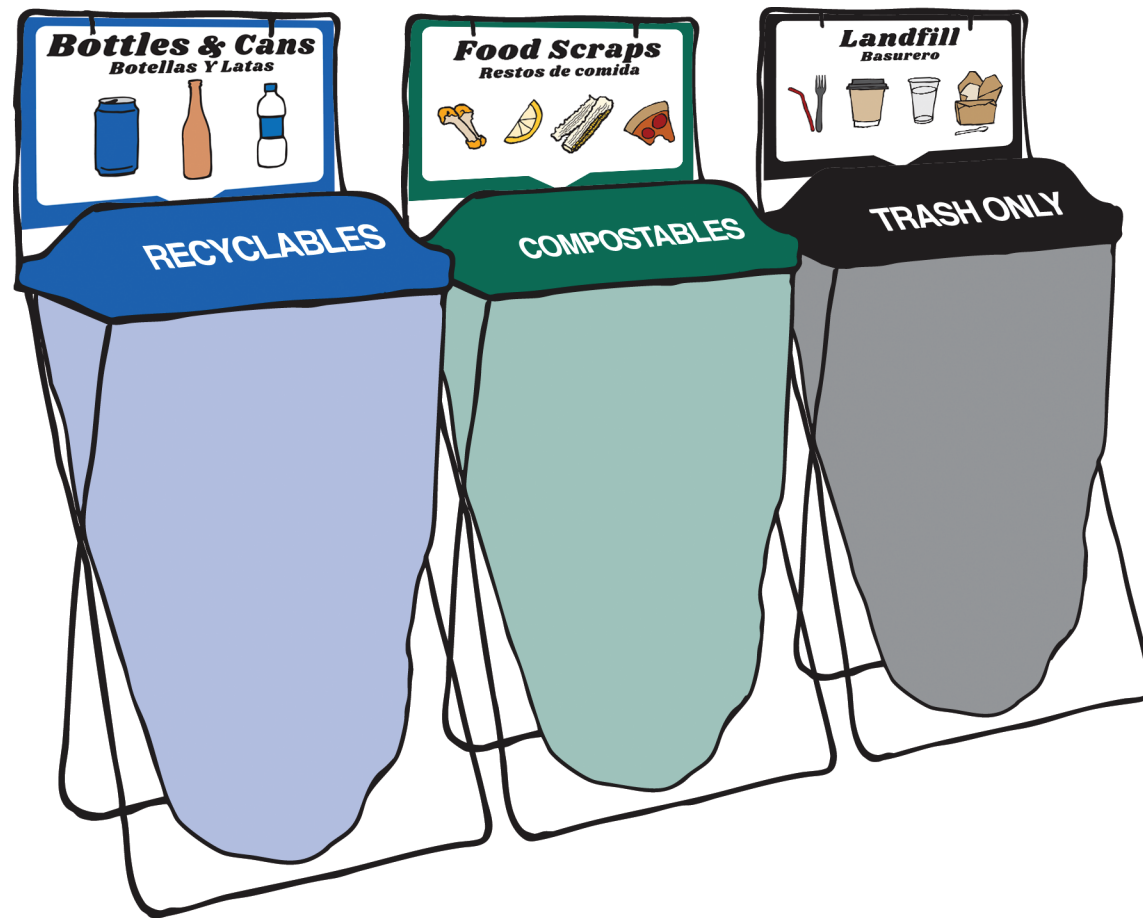
4-1 weeks out



Evaluate Your Success

Keep your Green Team engaged after the festival by gathering feedback from staff, volunteers, vendors, and attendees to identify challenges and opportunities for improvement. Track outcomes such as waste diverted, contamination rates, or cost savings, share successes with participants, and celebrate the team's efforts to keep everyone motivated for future events.

Sort It Out! The Inside Scoop About Sorting Station Best Practices

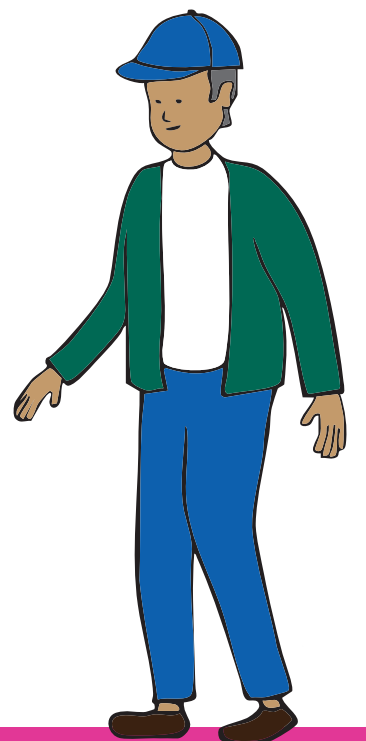


Zero waste sorting stations consist of a collection bin area where all materials can be sorted into separate categories for recycling, composting, and landfill trash. Sorting stations that are strategically placed, color-coded, and clearly-labeled are effective for several reasons:

- Consistently using the **same bin shapes, sizes, and color systems** provides visual cues and helps people associate how to sort trash and recycling effectively.
- By placing bins in **convenient areas** like near food trucks, seating/dining areas, entrances/exits, bathrooms, and other high traffic spots. People are less likely to recycle if they can't find a bin or have to walk too far.
- Make sure **all three bins are always grouped together**. People tend to use the first bin they come across regardless of how it is labeled, so offering centralized stations that offer all three options together helps capture more and reduce cross - contamination.
- **Signage with simple, easy-to-understand images** showing what goes in each bin, reduces contamination and confusion about what goes where. Colorful pictures are universal and easier to understand at a glance. Avoid long, wordy lists. Keep the message simple and visual. If possible, include tangible examples of what to recycle, compost, or trash based off of what can be found at that particular event.
- Sorting stations that are **clean, well maintained, and emptied regularly** prevent unsightly overflow that can lead people to litter or trash items that they could otherwise recycle.
- Tap into people power! A little positive encouragement can go a long way in motivating people to do their part and sort correctly. An essential part of any zero waste plan is to have staff or volunteers monitor the sorting stations. Ensure there is always a Green Team member at each station, especially during high traffic times. These helpful heroes can answer questions, remind people to recycle, and assist attendees with sorting items correctly.

Pro Tip

Discuss with your green team: How many trash, recycling, and composting bins will be needed for this size event? Will the venue, property owner, hauler, or other partner provide the bins, or should the team use UCRRRA's FREE Bin Rental Service?



Pro Tip

UCRRRA Festival Bin Rental Program

UCRRRA has simplified all these considerations for you by offering a FREE Festival Bin Rental Program! Each Sorting Station includes three bins—trash, recycling, and compost—along with frames, color-coded lids, and signs. To reserve bins, simply contact the Recycling Outreach Team a few weeks before your event, complete an application, agree to the Terms and Conditions, and schedule a pick-up and drop-off time.

Find more info and details at <https://ucrra.org/resources/for-festivals>

**Please note that while the bin rentals are provided at no cost, parties are responsible for the disposal costs of any collected waste, recycling, or organics.*

Recycling Tips



NYS Bottle Bill

New York's Returnable Container Act, or the "Bottle Bill," requires a 5-cent refundable deposit on certain types of beverage containers less than 1 gallon in size, including; water, carbonated soft drinks, mineral water, soda water, wine products, beer and other malt beverages. **Collecting these beverage containers separate from other recyclables can raise funds for the event or a charitable organization.**

Know Your Recycling Program

Recycling rules can vary significantly, depending on many factors. When the wrong items end up in the recycling stream, "wishcycling" can damage recycling facility equipment or seriously harm workers. In some cases, it can also ruin the value of the recyclables, which outweighs the benefits of recycling. **Always follow the guidelines of the service provider, and understand the acceptable and unacceptable items listed.**

Recycle By Shape, Not By Number

The number printed on plastic objects is called a resin identification code, and it is used to identify the type of plastic (resin) that a container is made from and is NOT an indicator of recyclability. Increasingly, the shape of the object is a much clearer way of understanding if a plastic object is recyclable or not. **The most recyclable shapes are bottles, jugs, jars, cans, tubs, and container lids.**

Chasing Arrows Symbol Confusion

80% of NYers still think the "chasing arrows" (recycling) symbol printed on objects means that the object is recyclable. The chasing arrows symbol is not a regulated trademark; it can be printed on objects regardless of their actual recyclability. Sometimes, the recycling symbol can indicate that the object is made from post consumer recycled content, not to imply that it is recyclable. **When in doubt, recycle by shape and not by number or symbols.**

Single Use Disposables

A "single use disposable" is anything designed to be used only one time. Most single use disposable products in food service (paper plates, paper or plastic "to-go" boxes, paper or plastic cups, forks, straws, etc.) are widely NOT acceptable for recycling. These objects contaminate other clean recyclables and are highly likely to end up as litter. **It's best to avoid single use disposables as much as possible.**

Film Plastic Recycling

While festival-goers may not be generating a lot of plastic bag waste, Vendors will likely be generating film plastics that can be recovered and recycled separate from bottles and cans.

It's the Law

The Mandatory Source Separation and Recycling Law, LL 4 of 2010; makes it unlawful for any person to discard or fail to separate regulated recyclable materials for the purpose of recycling.

Recycling questions you may consider discussing as a Green Team, and/or with your hauler:

- How many people will be attending and what will they be doing that will generate recyclables?
- How many vendors will be participating and what should be targeted for collection (bottles and cans only, cardboard boxes, other)?
- Will vendors be asked to 'carry in – carry out' or will the event provide recycling services?
- What logistics or communications are needed to collect the vendor trash or recyclables?
- Where can public collection bins be strategically staged throughout the event to maximize the recycling plans?
- Whose responsibility will it be to set up bins, change bags, empty the bins, and take down the bins that are staged throughout the event?

See page 6 for more resources.

Composting Tips



Pro Tip

Labels like plant-based, biodegradable, and compostable all mean different things. How do you know what's the best option to choose? The Biodegradable Products Institute (BPI) is a trusted resource for finding certified compostable products. Always choose BPI certified products, and opt for paper or fiber-based options wherever possible!

Backyard Composting Versus Industrial Scale Composting

Backyard composting happens in small heaps or containers, reaching relatively low temperatures during active composting. Industrial scale composting occurs in massive piles or windrows, with more controlled processes that reach higher temperatures. As a result, industrial composting can more readily handle foods that are resistant to decay, such as meat, bones, dairy, etc. These are generally not advised for backyard composting due to their potential for unpleasant odors and attractiveness to wild animals. **Always follow the guidelines of the service provider, and understand the acceptable and unacceptable items listed.**

Pre Consumer Versus Post Consumer Food Scraps

Pre-consumer food scraps include vegetable or fruit peelings, or any food scraps generated during the preparation of a meal. Post-consumer food scraps are characterized as plate-scrappings or any food scraps resulting after a meal has been consumed. Pre-consumer scraps may be generated by food vendors during a festival or event and are generally cleaner and easier to collect. **Post-consumer scraps are generated by attendees and require more logistical considerations to collect and may be much more prone to contamination.**

Compostable Products: The Good, The Bad, The Ugly

Compostable products can be fiber-based (made from paper or plant fibers like wood pulp and bamboo) or they can be bio-based polymers (made from corn or other plants with high starch content). These renewable resources are often highly regarded as plastic alternatives. **However, local composting options may be very limited due to various factors.**

Composting Myths

Some people may perceive composting as complicated, difficult, or expensive. They might hesitate to separate food scraps if they worry about odors or attracting pests. **These are myths about composting that can easily be overcome with thoughtful consideration and some common-sense planning.**

It's the Law

The Ulster County Food Waste Prevention and Recovery Act, LL. 1 of 2020, established a hierarchy for the reduction, reuse, and recycling (composting) of food scraps and excess edible food by certain large food waste generators in Ulster County, and a similar policy was enacted statewide in 2022. **Visit www.UCRRRA.org/about-us/laws/ to learn more**

Composting questions you may consider discussing as a Green Team, and/or with your hauler:

- What (if any) foods will be served? How many food vendors are there? What types of food waste (food scraps) will the vendors be generating (pre-consumer) and what types of food scraps will the attendees have (post-consumer)?
- How is food currently being served (single use plates, bowls, cups, plastic forks, etc.) and what sustainability improvements can be made? How will the team inform, educate, encourage, or require vendors to change their practices?
- What composting options/services will be used? What are the guidelines provided by the vendor? Is compostable packaging expressly allowed, or are there any requirements? How will food vendors be notified or trained about compostable packaging?
- What are the costs for organics collection? Does the container size or collection frequency affect the cost? What collection frequency is needed? Who will pay these costs?

See page 7 for more resources.

Waste Reduction Tips

Collaboration is Key

Having a diverse Green Team is essential. Include venue partners and vendors while planning and brainstorming ways of reducing waste or working through logistics.

By ensuring the groups impacted by the changes will have a seat at the table, they can contribute meaningfully, bring insights and practical ideas, and help bring the overall vision into reality.

Be a Reuse Champion

Where practical, invest in reusables (plates, cups, mugs, linens, etc.) even if they can only be reasonably used during event planning meetings or areas for event staff and vendors. Success starts with small steps before thinking more broadly. Can a reusable cup exchange be implemented for beverages? Can reusable food trays eliminate some single use items? What about using real silverware? Can vendors be provided with washable cleaning rags instead of wasteful paper towels? Can any of the decorations be reused next year or donated to a local charitable organization? Is it possible to provide a water bottle refill station and give away customized promotional reusable bottles? **Discuss ideas as a Green Team to see what's possible.**

Reduce Paper

In the digital age, it's easier than ever to go paperless. Maintain your event agenda, site map, and event calendar online to limit printed brochures and media. A centralized QR code at the entrance or other key areas can make the info readily available to attendees. Post large, central, easy-to-read display boards or signs instead of distributing programs. Find other ways to reduce paper by digitizing files using fillable forms for vendor agreements. **Reducing paper not only saves the trees, it can add up to be great cost savings, too!**

Bulk is Best

In dining areas, bulk dispense options for condiments like ketchup, mustard, cream, sugar, etc. reduce the quantity of pre-packaged single use items. Find other ways of reducing unnecessary packaging by buying in bulk wherever possible. Look out for recycled goods and those packaged in recycled materials. **Get creative about how you can eliminate waste, recycling, and packaging at the source.**

It's the Law

The Food Service Waste Reduction Act, LL 4 of 2015, prohibits the use and distribution of expanded polystyrene containers with prepared foods, and a similar policy was enacted statewide in 2022. The Skip the Straw Act, LL 2 of 2019, as amended by LL 7 of 2019, provides that **single use plastic straws, plastic stirrers, plastic cutlery and condiment packets can only be made available upon the customer's request.**



Pro Tip

No one really wants to carry the event program/schedule. Strategically place centralized event schedule signs or create reusable, laminated QR code signs that lead to a landing page with all event details!

Pro Tip

Check with your local event supply rental companies for bulk condiment dispensers.

Pro Tip

Investing in reusables for green team meetings during the planning process sets the tone for the goals of the event. Bringing sustainability practices to all stages of the event process will bring momentum and excitement to those who are participating in the event's sustainability efforts and goals. Consider it warming up for the main event!

Outreach Tips

Find an Ambassador!

If possible, find a recycling ambassador for your event! A local celebrity, artist, chef, or public figure spotted walking around your event and promoting recycling and composting, or even helping to sort materials at your zero waste station, can make recycling the "cool" thing to do! People are more likely to follow trends endorsed by someone they admire or recognize – whether that be a popular public figure, or their neighbor volunteering, or a staff member they recognize.

Educate staff and volunteers about the importance of recycling and proper recycling procedures.

Pro Tip

Get even more attention and support for your event, partner with a popular local business to serve as an ambassador via social media and in store pre-promotion.

- Make sure each volunteer understands why sustainability is important to the event. Use pages 2-3 of this guidebook as a reference for your training!
- Make sure sorting station volunteers are knowledgeable about which materials can be sorted for recycling and composting. They should also know some basic talking points to be able to answer questions. Use pages 10-13 of this guidebook as a reference for your training.
- The Recycling Outreach Team can help with volunteer training. Contact us to learn more!

Tell Your Story In As Many Ways As Possible

If possible, connect waste-sustainability to the theme of the event or emphasize it in brochures, promotions, and/or announcements during the event. Incorporating eco-friendly

messaging in the decor, signage, or entertainment helps establish your environmental values, and letting people know that recycling and composting is important and expected.

#CreateZeroWasteBuzz

Social media is a great tool for creating a buzz. Let attendees know about your recycling and composting efforts in your social media campaign leading up to, during, and after the event. You can post tips, fun facts, vendor spotlights, and sneak peeks at the recycling stations to get people excited to do their part or interview your recycling ambassador about how much recycling has been collected at the event.

When people see the numbers and the impact they're making, it turns recycling into a community achievement, and who doesn't want to be part of a big success? If possible, set up real-time tracking for waste diversion, such as signs that show how much waste has been recycled throughout the day—people love to see tangible progress! Otherwise, tell the story after the event has wrapped up.

If you get attendees engaged, they're more likely to carry that enthusiasm throughout the event and also into their personal lives when they leave. Plus, showing people what you're doing behind the scenes can help them feel part of the recycling effort.

Pro Tip

Bringing a zero waste event to life takes thoughtfulness and planning, and the public will love the effort. Make sure your team gets credit for their service. Consider writing a post event letter to the editor thanking your event partners and volunteers for making this ZeroWaste event possible.

Here are some Outreach/Education questions you may consider discussing as a Green Team:

- Why is waste-sustainability important to your event? What communications can help with educating staff, vendors, or volunteers on these plans?
- What role (if any) can volunteers have in your plans? How many volunteers will be needed? How will you recruit, train, and thank the volunteers?

Working with Vendors

Building Positive Relationships

Vendors play a critical role in achieving zero waste at festivals, and a successful waste strategy starts with clear communication and collaboration. Transparent communication helps vendors feel like valued partners rather than restricted participants, leading to stronger collaboration and buy-in. **Decide early whether vendors must follow a carry-in/carry-out model or if the event will provide on-site recycling and composting services.**

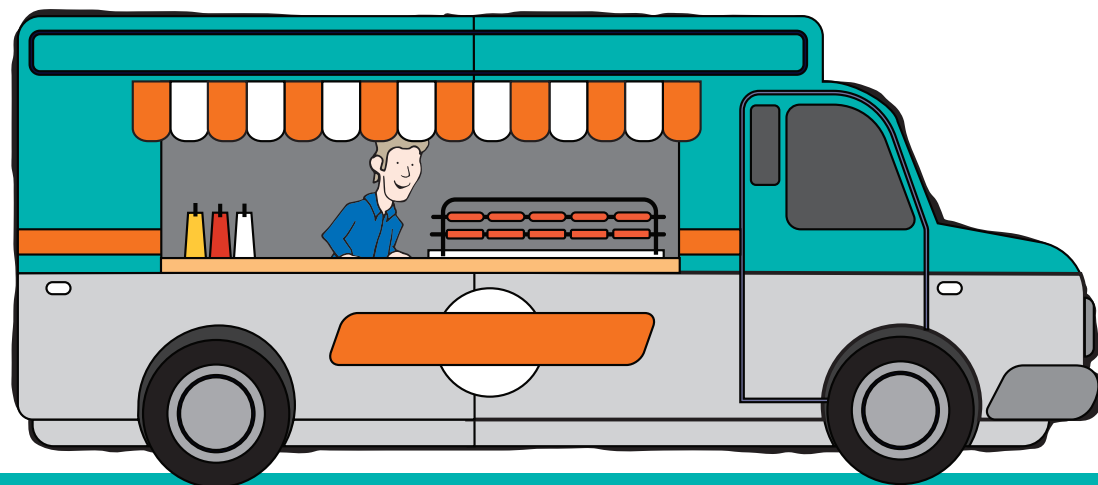
Increasing Participation or Compliance

Event organizers can help outline waste expectations in vendor agreements, and if desired, include things like bans on single-use plastics, requirements for bulk condiment dispensing or refill stations, and only offering items like straws and utensils upon request. Specify preferred packaging materials (e.g. plastic-free alternatives or certified compostable products), and either provide a list of approved compostable products or supply them directly to vendors. To make compliance easier and cost-neutral, consider providing compostable serviceware for the food vendors, waiving vendor fees for those who meet sustainability criteria, or offering shared purchasing options. Refer back to pages 2-3 for tools and messaging tips to effectively convey zero waste goals and inspire vendor commitment. Signage at points of sale, provided by the event, should clearly explain the zero waste goals to attendees, reinforcing community support and improving compliance. **Consider including incentives and recognition for vendors who fully participate in the event's zero waste goals.**

Keeping it Local

Favoring local food vendors not only supports the local economy but also strengthens your sustainability mission. Local businesses are often more invested in community values and environmental stewardship, making them ideal allies. Keeping it local also keeps money local and makes our economy and sustainability initiatives even stronger. Maintaining high standards while offering support, flexibility, and incentives builds lasting vendor relationships. **To access a list of local food truck vendors, reach out to the County Health Department.**

For more helpful resources visit our webpage <https://ucrra.org/resources/for-festivals>



Additional Resources

BPI - Biodegradable Products Institute

info@bpiworld.org
<https://bpiworld.org>

Compost Research & Education Foundation International Compost Awareness Week

info@compostfoundation.org
<https://compostfoundation.org>

EPA - Environmental Protection Agency

See also: National Recycling Strategy
See also: Advancing Sustainable Materials Management:
Facts and Figures Report
See also: National Strategy to Reduce Plastic Waste
<https://www.epa.gov>

ILSR- Institute for Local Self Reliance

info@ilsr.org
<https://ilsr.org/composting>

Keep America Beautiful America Recycles Day

info@kab.org
<https://kab.org>

New York Product Stewardship Council

contact@nypsc.org
<https://nypsc.org>

New York State Center for Sustainable Materials Management

info@centerforsmm.org
<https://www.centerforsmm.org>

NYSAR3 - New York State Association for Reduction, Reuse and Recycling

info@nysar3.org
<https://www.nysar3.org>

NYSDEC - New York State Department of Environmental Conservation

See also: Plastic Bag Reduction, Reuse, and Recycling Law
(film plastics)

See also: Returnable Container Act (Bottle Bill)

See also: Organic Materials Management

See also: Expanded Polystyrene Foam Containers Ban

<https://dec.ny.gov/environmental-protection/recycling-composting>

Plastic Free Foundation

Plastic Free July

<https://www.plasticfreejuly.org>

Pollution Prevention Institute P21 Community Grants Program

nysp2i@rit.edu
<https://www.rit.edu/affiliate/nysp2i>

Recycle Right NY

info@recyclerightny.org
<https://recyclerightny.org>

SWANA - Solid Waste Association of North America

<https://swana.org>

The Recycling Partnership

<https://recyclingpartnership.org>

Ulster County Department of the Environment

<https://www.ulstercountyny.gov/Departments/Environment>

Ulster County Green the Scene Grants:

Zero Waste Bound

<https://participate.ulstercountyny.gov/green-the-scene>

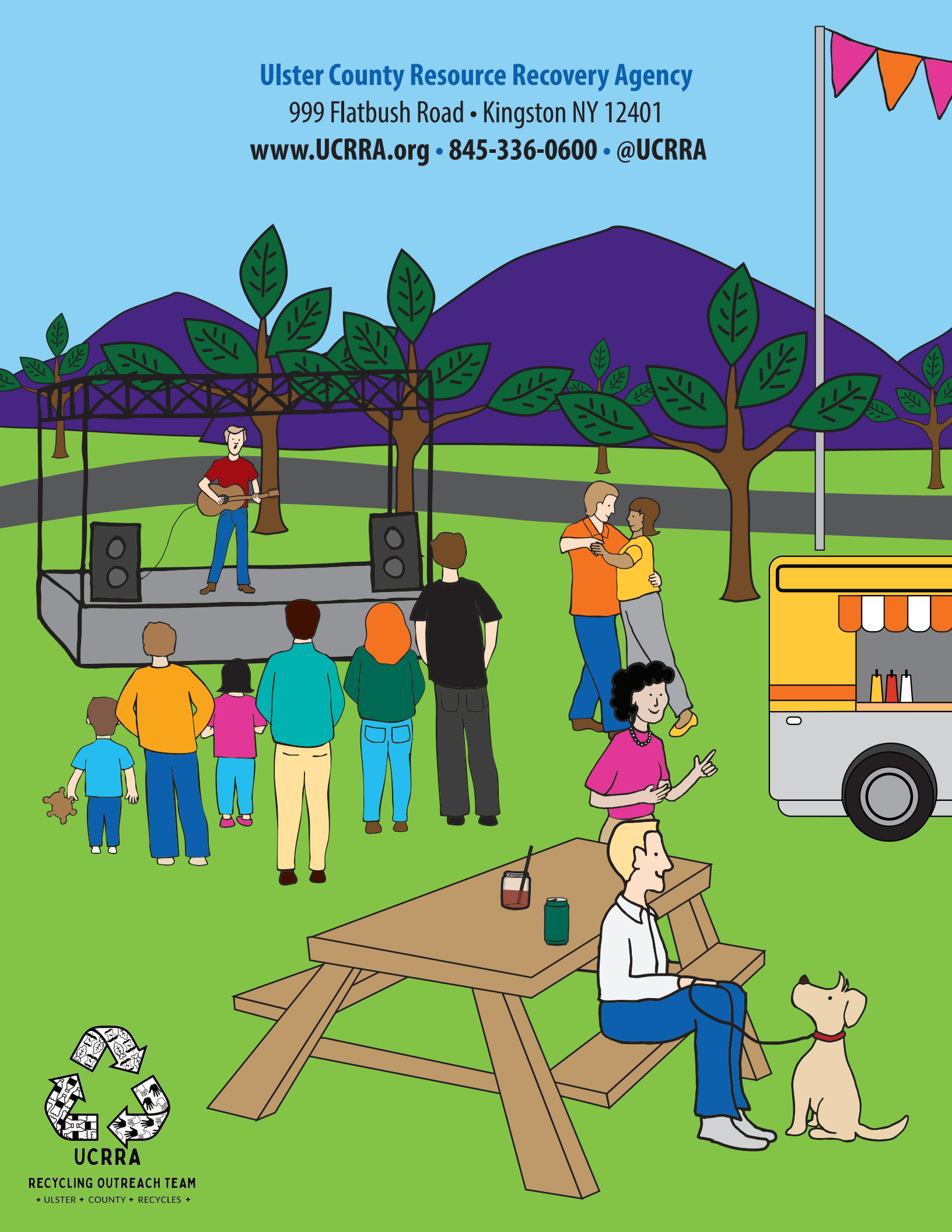
USCC - US Composting Council

support@compostingcouncil.org
<https://www.compostingcouncil.org>

U.S. Zero Waste Business Council

true@gbci.org
<https://true.gbci.org>

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