

ULSTER COUNTY RESOURCE RECOVERY AGENCY

ANNUAL FINANCIAL REPORT PUBLIC AUTHORITIES LAW - SECTION 2800

2025

Operations and Accomplishments

Solid Waste and Recycling Operations

The Ulster County Resource Recovery Agency (“UCRRA”) continues its commitment to find ways to decrease expenses, increase revenues and to make operations more efficient while striving to provide quality solid waste management and recycling services.

The Agency’s net position declined by \$3.4 million, from \$14.9 million at December 31, 2024 to \$11.5 million at December 31, 2025.

Total operating revenue in 2025 increased from the previous year by \$2 million. During 2025, the Agency experienced an overall decrease in volume, but related operating revenues increased due to an increase in the price per ton that was being charged. Recycling markets weakened and volumes received for processing decreased in correlation with waste volume decreases. Nonoperating revenue decreased from the previous year by \$71,000. The majority of this decrease was from Investment income which decreased due to the maturity of long-term investments which were used to pay debt service.

Total operating expenses in 2025 increased from the previous year by \$5.6 million. In 2024 the Agency went out to bid for transportation and disposal services. Transportation costs per ton remained consistent but disposal costs increased by \$20 per ton (approximately \$2.9 million) in 2025. Effective January 1, 2025, the Agency implemented a health insurance policy for retirees. The initial fiscal impact of this policy is an accrual of \$2.3 million of other postemployment benefit obligations in 2025, the year of implementation. Nonoperating expenses, specifically interest expense, decreased by \$1.3 million, directly attributed to the interest portion of the final debt service payment that was made in 2025.

Overall, waste volume decreased by 3.7% from the prior year. Predicting waste volume can be very difficult from year to year, and 2025 was no different as post COVID volumes continue to trend downward. Commercial hauler, municipal, and business self-hauler volumes decreased by 3.6%, 3.5%, and 4.5% respectively. The most notable category driving the decreases was MSW volume at our New Paltz transfer station which decreased by 3,615 tons, or 8.3%.

Total recycling/diversion volumes were consistent with the prior year. News, commingle and glass decreased by 2.0%, which is in direct correlation with municipal MSW, as most of these commodity volumes are received from municipalities. OCC increased from the prior year by 5.4% due to an increase in volume received from a few private haulers. The Agency's NYS DEC permit limited the intake of food waste to 5,000 tons in 2024, but it was expected that a requested increase to 7,500 tons will also increase food waste in 2025. The Agency received its requested increase but lost volume from its largest food waste hauler in the fourth quarter of 2025, resulting in a loss of approximately 500 tons.

Capital Activities

There were no major projects that were undertaken during 2025. Agency capital purchases addressed the replacement of fleet vehicles, heavy equipment, and office heating/cooling units. In 2024, Agency management and its Board of Directors approved the purchase of EV roll-off trucks for recycling collection purposes and related infrastructure. Installation of the charging stations and delivery of the EV roll-off trucks is expected in 2026.

The following capital assets were purchased in 2025:

- Addition of a 4k solar powered camera for continuous monitoring of our Ulster closed landfill tank farm
- Replacement of two commercial RTU heating/cooling units at the main administrative office
- New CAT 320 Excavator
- New Mack PI64T Tractor
- New Mack GR64F Roll-off Truck
- Online customer payment portal became fully operational during 2025

Communications & Public Outreach

Ulster County Recycles is a county-wide outreach education and community engagement program administered by UCRRA's Recycling Outreach Team. 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.

This program is made possible with the support of funding by the New York State Environmental Protection Fund, as administered by New York State Department of Environmental Conservation via the State's Municipal Waste Reduction and Recycling Grant Program (MWR&R).

Another highly successful year, 2025 marked the third year of our bagged compost sales, an emphasis on festival waste and recycling, the growth of our volunteer program, a new Compost Book list, a revamp of our Reuse, Repair, & Resources Directory, the launch of a new Race to Zero Waste game, improved resources like our new 7Rs to Rethink Waste and other media. Staff participated in NYSAR3 Legislative Advocacy Day, the NYSAR3 Organics Council, and other industry conferences and events that continuously deepen our expertise. We built new collaborations with Ulster County libraries through our innovative Compost Awareness Week campaign, hosted meet ups for the local municipal recycling workforce, and continued key programming summarized below:

- The program's direct community engagement strategies resulted in **245 hours** of programming in classes, tours, and special events. These programs reached over **2,061 adults** and **768 youth** participants.
 - 28 public speaking events
 - 14 facility tours
 - 27 tabling events

- The program grew indirect outreach strategies as well;
 - The Recycling Outreach Team is the area's local subject matter experts for recycling guidelines on various materials in addition to the regulated recyclables. The ROT responded to **100+ questions** through its website 'contact us' form, and **3,900+ questions via the Agency's Recycling Hotline, totaling an additional 170 hours** of education over the Hotline.
 - **5,794 newsletter subscribers** received quarterly e-news
 - @UCRRA social media audience grew to **over 1,533 followers on Facebook and 1,499 followers on Instagram.**
 - @UCRRA on Youtube **had 69,882 views, 379+ hours of streaming,** and featured a short, unskippable, pre-roll video campaign that generated over 103,000 impressions with an impressive 63% view rate
 - Public Service Announcements were aired across two local radio stations, reaching **60,000 estimated radio listeners.** Traditional print ads and digital ads reached hundreds of thousands of local readers, according to the publisher's available metrics. The Recycling Outreach team also utilized some paid advertising to sponsor ads on social media which had impressive results.

Some other program highlights include:

- The **Annual Tree and Shrub Giveaway Event** was held on Earth Day, providing free native pollinator plants to **100+ residents**, made possible in partnership with the Ulster County Soil and Water Conservation District.
- **87 customers** participated in the **Agency's Annual Compost Bin & Rain Barrel Sale** event in May, during International Compost Awareness Week. Approximately 44 compost bins, 47 rain barrels, 15 misc. tools were sold by the partner Vendor Brand Builders LLC..
- The **Master Composter – Master Recycler Volunteer Training Program** continued as a 20 hour certification course, which allows community members to enroll in courses and become eligible for volunteer opportunities with the ROT. **Eight (8)** adults completed the training in June, bringing our total MCR cohort to 21 volunteers. Volunteers collectively contributed to **204 service hours** in 2025.
- Each year UCRRA hosts an outreach booth in “Climate Row” to educate the public at the **Ulster County Fair**. This week-long event is an impactful way of reaching hundreds of citizens. The new “Race to Zero Waste” game is an interactive sorting game that asks participants to consider the best options for how they would "depart" with various household items, with an emphasis on local reuse options. The ROT achieved **64 hours** of direct outreach and reached **748 adults and 340 children** at the Fair during the first week of August.
- UCRRA offers a **FREE Festival Bin Rental Program** to help events reduce waste and improve recycling and composting. Our zero-waste sorting stations make it easy for attendees to sort materials correctly and reduce contamination. Each station includes three clearly labeled bins— trash, recycling, and compost—complete with frames, color-coded lids, and simple, visual signage. Strategically placed and easy to use, these stations support cleaner events and better waste diversion. **Seven (7) events utilized our bin rental in 2025.**

The Recycling Outreach Team also supports the Agency with coordination, promotion, and program tracking for its seasonal programs, described below.

Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) Program

Hazardous wastes are substances that are toxic, flammable, chemically reactive, or corrosive. These hazardous substances should not be discarded in the trash or introduced into municipal water supplies. The Agency offers HHW Collection Events as a safe, convenient, and free way for Ulster County households to dispose of hazardous materials such as: fluorescent lightbulbs, paints and stains, cleaning chemicals, and more.

The Agency's HHW Program is made possible with the support of funding by the New York State Environmental Protection Fund, as administered by New York State Department of Environmental Conservation via the State's Household Hazardous Waste State Assistance Grant Program.

In 2025, the Agency conducted four HHW Collection Events - in April, June, August, and October, at its two facilities in Kingston and New Paltz. **Nine hundred seventy one (971) residents** participated in this program and approximately **seventy six thousand, one hundred and seventy three pounds (76,173 lbs.) of toxic wastes were recovered** including; 28,400 lbs. paint, 30,200 lbs. flammable liquids, 8,500 lbs. pesticides, and other materials such as household acids, caustics, ammonia, aerosols etc. All materials collected are chemically neutralized, treated, and safely disposed in the most environmentally-responsible way possible via a third party vendor, in a manner approved by the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation. The vendor, Clean Harbors, is North America's leading provider of environmental and industrial services. Clean Harbors provides collection, packaging, transportation, recycling, treatment, and disposal services at over 100 company-owned recycling, incineration, landfill, wastewater, or other treatment facilities.

Following the implementation of the New York State Paint Stewardship Law (enacted December 16, 2019), the Paint Care NY Program launched May 1, 2022. The Paint Care Program allowed the Agency to expand its HHW service to include nonhazardous latex paint in 2022, where it previously only allowed oil and lead based paints in the HHW program. Since then, the Agency has seen a significant increase in the amount of paint recovered from its HHW program.

Electronics Recycling

NYS consumers are required to recycle many electronic waste items, such as computer peripherals, televisions, etc., in an environmentally responsible manner in accordance with the NYS Electronic Equipment Recycling and Reuse Act (Environmental Conservation Law, Article 27, Title 26). The Agency operates a free electronics recycling program that is open to residents (regardless of Ulster County residency status), businesses (<50 employees) local government entities, and non profit organizations (<75 employees). The program is open every Saturday from April through November, from 8:00 AM - 2:00 PM outside of the Main Office. Following the program season end in November, the Agency held two special collection events following holidays to accommodate residents. Additionally, the Agency practices waste diversion of covered electronic devices if incidental to trash loads at both the Agency transfer stations, achieved through inspection practices. All electronics are consolidated and exported to vendor Electronics Recyclers International (ERI) in Holliston, MA.

The Agency's electronics recycling program has been very successful. According to the Agency's tracking procedures, **two thousand and three (2,003) drop offs occurred** in 2025, including 1,984 residents, 5 non-profit organizations, and 13 businesses. According to the vendor ERI, the Agency collected **246,348 lbs. of electronic devices** in 2025, including over 55,000 lbs. of computer peripherals, over 48,000 lbs. of televisions,

119,000+ lbs. of small electronic equipment as well as various other electronic devices. Inclusive of these metrics is consumer drop off of electronics at participating towns; Town of Esopus, Town of Ulster, Town of New Paltz, and the Village of Saugerties.

Organics Recycling (Composting) Program

Organic materials (such as food and yard waste) make up a significant portion of the municipal solid waste stream and can be recycled by composting. Beginning in 2012, the Agency operates a composting program using Extended Aerated Static Pile (EASP) methods of industrial scale composting, resulting in a high quality finished compost that which the Agency sells in bulk and in 1 cubic foot bags. In 2022, the Agency celebrated it's ten year compost program anniversary and was awarded the US Composting Council's Small Scale Compost Manufacturer of the Year Award.

The Agency Composting program accepts source-separated organics, (food waste, food scraps) from commercial entities, such as restaurants, grocery stores, food processors, schools, or other institutional waste generators, at a cost 80.5% lower than the cost to dispose of trash. The food scraps are blended with municipally sourced wood chips to achieve the proper composting ratios, and then undergoes a 90 day process cycle using forced aeration.

In 2025, the Agency processed **4,975 tons (9.9 million pounds)** of source separated organics. If this food waste were instead managed as municipal solid waste, it would have cost the public an estimated **\$ 671,625** in solid waste tipping fees (\$135/ton). By recycling this material onsite, the Agency reduced hauling of 142 tractor trailer transport trips to the landfill (35 tons per trip). This represents a conservation of 13,490 gallons of diesel fuel (95 gallons per trip).

The Agency also processed **1,092 tons of brush, and 836 tons of woodchips and 242 tons of clean wood** through it's composting operation in 2025. In a separate area of the site, the Agency is permitted to compost animal mortalities (roadkill deer) in a similar manner and uses the resulting compost material on site for landscaping purposes. In 2025, the Agency **sold 1,098 tons of bulk compost**. The Agency launched its bagged compost operation in April of 2023, providing customers with an opportunity to access smaller quantities of compost. The Agency worked with its website developer to launch an e-commerce platform to manage compost sales efficiently. Approximately **2,465 bags of finished compost were purchased via 348 orders/transactions by 188 returning customers and 158 new customers!**

Compost is as a valuable soil amendment that can be used to grow trees and shrubs, fruit/vegetable/flower gardens, lawn and turfgrass, or can be used in other landscaping and stormwater management applications. UCRRA's Grow Ulster Green Compost is sold to the general public, to landscapers, farmers, and hobby gardeners for use growing vegetables, flowers, trees/shrubs, turf, and in accordance with the Compost Sales Policy approved by the Agency's Board of Directors.

UCRRA is a proud partner of the US Composting Council’s certified STA Compost Program. The Agency’s compost bears the Seal of Testing Assurance. Compost is sampled quarterly and tested at a certified agronomy laboratory in Delaware. Compost Technical Data Sheets are available online at www.ucrra.org

Real Property

The following property is owned by UCRRA as of the end date of this report:

<u>Property</u>	<u>Fair Market Value</u>
999 Flatbush Road	\$16,195,939
1951 Frank Sottile Blvd	\$ 3,902,439

Internal Control Assessment

UCRRA management has a good understanding of the need for internal controls and the existing control structure at the Agency. Opportunities to strengthen controls are taken into consideration daily. During 2025, the Agency emphasized the use of technology to try and improve efficiencies which ultimately leads to a stronger overall internal control structure: 1) The Agency created a detailed spreadsheet for tracking employee paid time off (“PTO”). In the past, the Agency relied on a summary sheet and Paychex reports for tracking. The new tracking system includes detailed information by employee that can easily be tracked back to specific pay periods/work weeks, creating a more effective and efficient paper trail. This allows the Paychex summary report to have easily identifiable primary source supporting documentation, making the information more reliable. 2) Agency staff implemented a customer portal for invoicing, ticketing, and payments. Digitizing this process has saved a full day or more in productivity when compared to creating and mailing out hard copies. 3) Weekly tonnage tracking with waste classification has allowed management to stay on top of tonnage trends and adapt when necessary. 4) Agency staff began researching potential software for digital purchase order tracking. The ability to move away from paper purchase orders will allow the process to become more efficient, effective, and accessible, thus strengthening internal controls. Improved efficiency generally strengthens and improves internal controls. Enhancing operational efficiency often involves streamlining processes, reducing human error, and leveraging technology, all of which directly bolster the control environment. The items noted above supports improved efficiency and further enhances the Agency’s internal control system which was previously evaluated as very strong.

This statement certifies that management has documented and assessed the internal control structure and procedures of the Ulster County Resource Recovery Agency for the year ending December 31, 2025. The Agency has strongly relied on the reporting of its internal and external auditors, both past and present, for noted documentation and assessment. This assessment found the Agency’s internal controls to be adequate, and to

the extent that deficiencies were identified, the Agency has developed corrective action plans to reduce any corresponding risk.

Timothy DeGraff, CPA
Director of Finance & Administration