



FORGING — A PATH — FORWARD

eco-cycle®



Eco-Cycle's mission is to innovate, implement, and advocate for local and global Zero Waste solutions to foster a more sustainable, equitable, and climate-resilient future.

We face many enormous challenges today—resource depletion, biodiversity loss, plastic pollution, climate change, and social injustices, to name a few. How can we possibly address them all?

Eco-Cycle finds solutions by going to the root cause of these problems: our linear “take-make-waste” production system. We extract natural resources, produce goods, and discard them in landfills and incinerators. This system is broken; we are destroying the very resources we and future generations will rely on for survival.

This is Eco-Cycle's work and our vision of nearly 50 years is to replace our “take-make-waste” system with one that is circular so we may live and thrive within our planet's limits for generations to come.

We pass policies that slow natural resource extraction by eliminating the production of unnecessary and wasteful products. We create programs and support businesses to build a reuse economy where we keep resources in circulation for as long as possible, making disposability the exception and reusing the norm. Instead of landfills, we create Zero Waste infrastructure like recycling facilities and compost systems. And we change the culture to adapt to this new approach with education and strategic communications.

Through your engagement and support, **we're making meaningful systemic change toward a circular economy that sustains both people and the planet.**

With gratitude and hope,

Suzanne Jones
Executive Director



COMMUNITY PROGRAMS

— HIGHLIGHTS —

Forging a path toward Zero Waste requires the collaboration of businesses, schools, local governments, and neighborhoods.

We're here to support every step of the way.

ZERO WASTE SCHOOLS

— Developing Future Environmental Stewards —



Eco-Cycle's Schools Program equips students with the knowledge, tools, and daily practice they need to become environmental stewards. Through our environmental education and hands-on activities, students learn about waste reduction, recycling, composting, and resource conservation.

In the 2023–2024 school year alone, we reached 115 local public schools—including 12 Title 1 schools—by **delivering over 1,500 science-based presentations in English and Spanish to more than 40,000 students** from preschool to 12th grade. Our award-winning **Green Star Schools program, the most comprehensive Zero Waste initiative for schools in the nation, reduces waste by up to 67%.**

CELEBRATE MORE, WASTE LESS! Eco-Cycle's Zero Waste Reusable Event Kits

Classroom celebrations often create excessive waste from single-use items like plastic cups, utensils, and paper plates. To tackle this, Eco-Cycle launched Zero Waste Reusable Event Kits for schools, supported by Boulder County, the Town of Superior, and the City/County of Broomfield.

Instead of buying disposable supplies, families can borrow everything they need for a celebration without the waste: plates, cups, utensils, even napkins. After celebrations, volunteers simply wash and return the items. So far, we've distributed 74 kits, including four kits to Title 1 schools. These kits save money, reduce waste, and teach adults and students that celebrations can be joyful and responsible, shaping a future where sustainability is second nature.



ZERO WASTE EDUCATION

Developing Future Environmental Stewards

Turning the Tables: A Return to Composting at Green Star Schools



Exciting changes are afoot! Last year, new regional guidelines limited composting to food scraps and plant trimmings only, which affected Eco-Cycle Green Star Schools that were composting throughout the school, including paper towels, napkins, compostable plates and cups, and more. To adhere to these new compost guidelines, student participation in composting came to a halt in many schools.

Now, one year later, Green Star Schools have resumed composting thanks to our team of environmental educators, who provided extensive support in schools to re-educate students on the new compost guidelines. Eco-Cycle also championed reusable plates and cups as an alternative to compostables and other single-use products. **The result? Green Star Schools are back to composting in their cafeterias, diverting organic waste from local landfills!**

ecocycle.org/schools

Learn more about our Schools Program, including which schools participate!

Thank You to Our Schools Program Sponsors



POLICY & CAMPAIGNS

Systemic Change Across the State and Beyond

Colorado recycles and composts only 15.5% of its waste—half the national average. To improve waste diversion, we need a systemic shift that makes Zero Waste solutions like recycling and composting accessible and convenient statewide. That's why Eco-Cycle and partners have advocated for transformative policies like the Producer Responsibility Program for Recycling Packaging and the Plastic Pollution Reduction Act, while working with communities in Colorado and beyond to advance Zero Waste. Eco-Cycle also collaborates nationally to reduce packaging and redesign systems, is a founding member of the Alliance for Mission-Based Recycling, and partners with consumer brands and the US Plastics Pact.



Colorado's Producer Responsibility for Packaging Program

Eco-Cycle successfully advocated for passage of Colorado's Producer Responsibility for Packaging legislation in 2022, which will make recycling free for all Coloradans when it is fully implemented in 2026! A final legislative hurdle was cleared this spring when the state legislature's Budget Committee gave its approval to proceed with the development of a detailed implementation plan. Eco-Cycle has been there every step of the way to help shape Colorado's Producer Responsibility program to be a national model for providing free statewide recycling for all AND incentivizing consumer brands to reduce packaging, use less toxic and more recyclable materials, and ensure materials go to responsible and transparent end markets.

Eco-Cycle's Role in Reducing Plastic Pollution



Plastic pollution isn't limited to the oceans—it's affecting Colorado, too. That's why Eco-Cycle championed the Plastic Pollution Reduction Act, which phases out single-use plastic bags distributed by large retailers and bans polystyrene foam food and beverage takeout containers. We're leading implementation of the policy, providing the resources for municipalities, businesses, grocery stores, and restaurants to adopt more sustainable alternatives. In just one year, it is estimated that some 1.5 billion plastic bags have been saved in Colorado, showcasing the policy's impact. This legislation goes beyond reducing waste—it's driving a cultural shift toward sustainability as more residents use reusable bags and more restaurants offer reusable or recyclable to-go containers.

POLICY & CAMPAIGNS

Exporting the Model

PARTNERING ON A NATIONAL BLUEPRINT FOR CURBSIDE COMPOSTING

Diverting food scraps from landfills to composting is a powerful climate solution, yet access to composting services remains limited across the United States. Despite its potential, only about 10% of US communities have access to composting programs. In 2024, Eco-Cycle and Closed Loop Partners released the “Blueprint for Municipal Composting.”

This comprehensive guide offers a clear roadmap for communities across the nation to launch or expand effective curbside composting programs. By empowering cities with strategies for policy development, community outreach, and necessary infrastructure, the blueprint enhances community resilience and fosters circular economies.



A RIPPLE OF ZERO WASTE ACROSS THE FRONT RANGE



Eco-Cycle, in partnership with RRS, is leading the charge in helping Colorado communities adopt Zero Waste policies, programs, and infrastructure. As the State’s contractors for the Technical Assistance for Sustainable Communities Program (which started with Colorado’s Front Range and is now expanded statewide as the Colorado Circular Communities Enterprise), we’re empowering

municipalities, including lower-income communities lacking access to services, with expert guidance to implement groundbreaking Zero Waste initiatives. This past year, Eco-Cycle helped the City of Lafayette adopt a universal recycling ordinance to ensure all residents and businesses have access to recycling. These efforts are driving higher recycling rates, cutting greenhouse gas emissions, and reducing landfill waste—bringing communities closer to a Zero Waste future.

ecocycle.org/legislation

Learn more about our policy and campaigns work, which is creating systemic change across the state.

COMPOST & CARBON FARMING

Changing the Landscape of Composting

When organic material decomposes in landfills without oxygen, it produces methane—a climate super pollutant that traps 84 times more heat than carbon dioxide over the short term. Instead, diverting organics away from landfills to be made into compost and applying this finished compost to gardens and farms not only reduces greenhouse gasses, it also promotes soil health and more robust plant growth that helps sequester carbon from the atmosphere and mitigate climate change impacts.

Eco-Cycle is transforming how we manage organic discards by pioneering **a new community-based Circular Compost System in Boulder County**. Instead of relying on one large, distant compost facility, **we're building a local, decentralized network of composting sites**.



In 2023, we teamed up with regenerative farms to install aerated static pile composting systems directly on farms and successfully advocated for changes in land use regulations to allow local farmers to bring organics generated off-site onto their farms to be composted.

Looking ahead, we will expand this initiative by partnering with local businesses and restaurants to source clean organic food scraps for larger on-farm compost production.



With support from Boulder County's Office of Sustainability, Climate Action, and Resilience, our closed-loop system directly connects the community's organic discards with local farmers. This approach helps produce larger volumes of high-quality compost, specifically tailored to improve soil health and support regenerative farming practices.

ecocycle.org/carbon-farming

Learn more about our compost and carbon farming initiatives, including our **community-based Circular Compost System**.

OUTREACH AND ENGAGEMENT

Our Volunteer Eco-Leader Network

Volunteers are part of Eco-Cycle's DNA. We believe that training and empowering local residents to become Zero Waste ambassadors—in their neighborhoods, schools, workplaces, churches, and more—is an essential and effective way to transform communities and change our culture to live more sustainably on our one planet. Eco-Cycle engages Eco-Leaders in numerous volunteer projects, legislative campaigns, and education and outreach efforts throughout the year.

Planting an Urban Forest

Eco-Cycle is a key partner in Cool Boulder's campaign, a collaborative effort with the City of Boulder, local organizations, and communities to combat climate change and biodiversity loss by restoring and expanding healthy ecosystems. As part of this initiative, we're helping create a Neighborhood Urban Forest—a connected canopy of thousands of trees and shrubs planted throughout the community.

In September 2024, Eco-Cycle volunteers distributed and helped plant tree saplings at 80 homes in the Fairview, BCSIS, and Crestview school neighborhoods. When fully grown, these trees will enhance ecosystems, provide shade, and mitigate rising temperatures. In spring 2025, we will launch the program city-wide, engaging residents and local school kids to build the canopy further and incorporate pollinator health, shade equity, and absorbent landscapes.

ECO-LEADER OUTREACH BY THE NUMBERS



EARTH DAY EVENTS

Outreach to
1,950 attendees

CHARM VOLUNTEERS

Outreach to
2,400 visitors



RESOURCES

Provided to over
10,000 residents



ZERO WASTE WEBINARS

Training for over 500
registrants



ADVOCACY LETTERS

1,800 letters sent to
elected officials



FARMERS MARKETS

Outreach to over
800 visitors

ecocycle.org/eeco-leaders

Learn more about our Eco-Leader Volunteer Network and how you can join over 1,000 peers in advancing Zero Waste!



SERVICES & FACILITIES

— HIGHLIGHTS —

Eco-Cycle's innovative services and facilities provide residents and businesses with sustainable waste solutions, empowering them to reduce waste, recycle more, and achieve Zero Waste goals.

BOULDER COUNTY RECYCLING CENTER

State of the Art Recycling Technology



Have you ever wondered where your recyclables go after being collected from your curb or alleyway? **All recyclables collected in Boulder County, regardless of the hauler, are taken to the Boulder County Recycling Center (BCRC), operated by Eco-Cycle since 2001.** Upon arrival at the BCRC, your recyclables are processed through advanced automatic sorting equipment and dedicated employees who separate them into categories like cardboard, paper, glass, steel, aluminum, and various plastics. Once sorted, the materials are baled and loaded onto railroad cars and trucks and sent to end markets as feedstocks to be made into new products.

In 2024, the facility received significant upgrades to enhance its efficiency and expand its capabilities, including the **installation of advanced automated sorting technology that utilizes artificial intelligence and optical scanners to accurately identify and separate recyclables.** This upgrade helps ensure that more materials are accurately recovered and sent on to end markets for remanufacture!

RECYCLING AT THE BOULDER COUNTY RECYCLING CENTER

In FY 2023–2024, Eco-Cycle collected and processed over 45,000 tons of traditional recyclables—paper, cardboard, glass, aluminum, steel, and plastic—as operator of the Boulder County Recycling Center.



CARDBOARD
20,714 tons



PAPER
10,206 tons



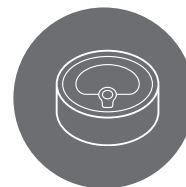
GLASS
7,341 tons



PLASTIC
3,424 tons



ALUMINUM
905 tons



STEEL
955 tons

ecocycle.org/bcrc

Learn more about the Boulder County Recycling Center and see a video of recycling machinery at work!

ZERO WASTE HAULING SERVICES

— An Electrifying Path Toward Zero Emissions —



Eco-Cycle is proud to be leading the waste industry in the transition to commercial fleet electrification. In 2023, Eco-Cycle's first-in-the-nation electric compost collection truck hit the road, collecting organic discards from businesses and schools across Boulder County. **Our electric compost collection truck is helping realize all the climate benefits of collecting and composting organic discards while eliminating transportation emissions.**

Building on recent momentum, Eco-Cycle deployed a 100% electric recycling truck in September 2024, funded by Xcel Energy's EV Accelerate Innovation program. With its short wheelbase, this EV truck easily navigates downtown Boulder's narrow alleyways. **In addition to eliminating emissions, it enhances the energy, water, and natural resource savings that come with effective recycling.**

Eco-Cycle's fleet electrification efforts align with the goals outlined in Governor Polis's Colorado EV Plan 2020. As transportation remains the largest source of greenhouse gas emissions in Colorado—with commercial trucks being a significant contributor—our Zero Waste, Zero Emissions initiative is essential to effective climate solutions. By replacing traditional diesel trucks with electric alternatives, **Eco-Cycle is not only reducing emissions but also driving sustainability changes in the waste industry.**

ecocycle.org/hauling

Learn more about our commercial hauling program serving over 600 customers throughout Boulder County!

CENTER FOR HARD-TO-RECYCLE MATERIALS

A Rare Community Resource



Photo courtesy of
Blue Star Recyclers



Photo courtesy of
Spring Back Colorado

Established as the first of its kind in the US, **the Eco-Cycle/City of Boulder Center for Hard-to-Recycle Materials (CHaRM) accepts recyclable items that aren't appropriate for curbside recycling**, like electronics, scrap metal, block foam, plastic film, and more. Unlike standard recyclables, these "hard-to-recycle" materials require specialized processing, which makes CHaRM an invaluable resource in diverting waste from landfills.

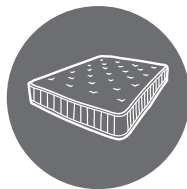
CHaRM stands out as a rare facility, offering a solution for managing challenging materials. Beyond recycling, CHaRM creates social impact through partnerships. We partner with Blue Star Recyclers, an e-Stewards certified organization that focuses on recycling electronics while providing job training for individuals with disabilities. We also partner with Spring Back Colorado, which recycles mattresses and box springs while employing people overcoming barriers like addiction and former incarceration. **These partnerships support sustainability and promote social equity in the community.**

THE CENTER FOR HARD-TO-RECYCLE MATERIALS

In 2023–2024, we collected more than 5.3 million pounds of materials from over 52,000 customers at the Center for Hard-to-Recycle Materials (CHaRM) in Boulder, which Eco-Cycle founded and continues to operate with support from the City of Boulder.



ELECTRONICS
625,258 lb



MATTRESSES
173,760 lb



BOOKS
493,652 lb



PORCELAIN
196,000 lb



PLASTIC FILM
148,565 lb



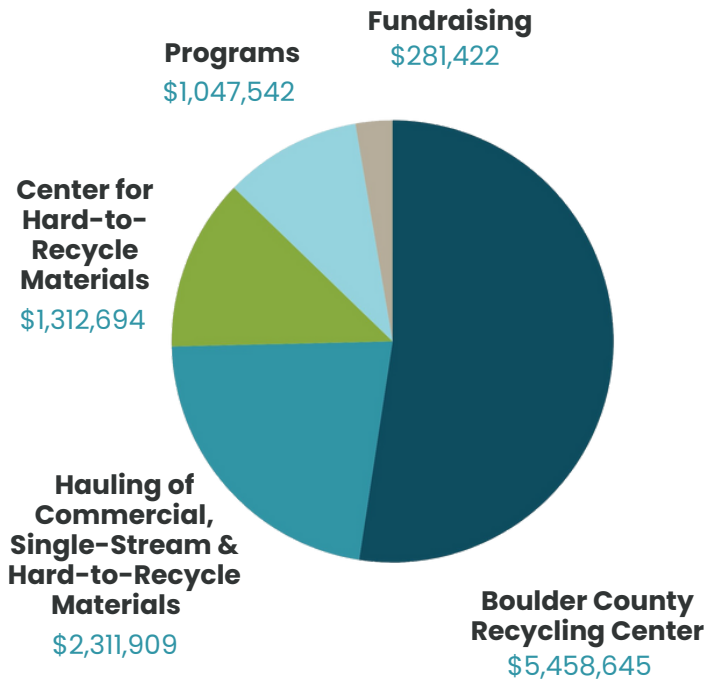
BLOCK FOAM
94,976 lb

ecocycle.org/charm

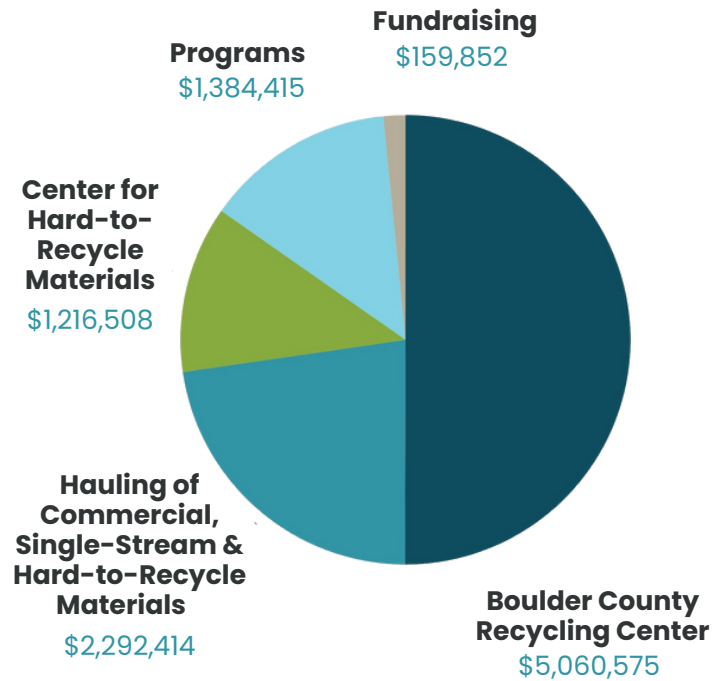
See all materials accepted at the CHaRM and learn how your business can set up a hard-to-recycle pick-up!

2023–2024 FINANCIALS

Revenues



Expenses



Revenues

Boulder County Recycling Center	\$5,458,645
Hauling of Commercial, Single-Stream, and Hard-to-Recycle Materials	\$2,311,909
Center for Hard-to-Recycle Materials	\$1,312,694
Programs	\$1,047,542
Fundraising	\$281,422

Total Revenues **\$10,412,212**

Expenses

Boulder County Recycling Center	\$5,060,575
Hauling of Commercial, Single-Stream, and Hard-to-Recycle Materials	\$2,292,414
Center for Hard-to-Recycle Materials	\$1,216,508
Programs	\$1,384,415
Fundraising	\$159,852

Total Expenses **\$10,113,764**

Thank You

— TO OUR SPONSORS —

Platinum Partnerships

The Hogan Lovells logo consists of a solid green square with the words "Hogan" and "Lovells" stacked vertically in a black, serif font.

Hogan
Lovells

Silver Partnerships



Bronze Partnerships



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