

# PROGRAM SUPPORT PORTFOLIO

---

Eco-Cycle has a nearly 50-year history of working with every sector of the community to innovate, implement, and advocate for local and global Zero Waste solutions.

With a range of entry points for support, your gift will help us transform our system of TAKE MAKE WASTE to one that is truly sustainable, conserves natural resources, and provides climate solutions.

eco-cycle®





# OVERVIEW

---

**As the impacts of climate change are being felt across the world and right here on the Front Range, more and more people are looking for ways to support practical solutions that lead to positive change. Many don't realize that Zero Waste is one of the fastest and most effective approaches we can take to protect the environment and curb climate change.**

Eco-Cycle's mission is to innovate, implement, and advocate for local and global Zero Waste solutions to foster a more regenerative, equitable, and climate-resilient future. We believe in individual and community action to transform society's throw-away ethic into environmentally responsible stewardship.

Zero Waste replaces our current one-way system of resource exploitation, pollution, and landfilling with a cyclical system in which new policies, better design, community programs, and resource recovery infrastructure (reuse, composting, and recycling) prevent environmental degradation, conserve natural resources, and support the local economy.

Eco-Cycle is actively working with communities across Colorado to build their capacity to effectively reduce their waste through Zero Waste policies, programs, and infrastructure.



# PROGRAM AREAS

---

Eco-Cycle's communications, education, and outreach programs encourage and motivate communities to rethink their consumption patterns, reduce waste, reuse, recycle, and compost to advance toward Zero Waste.

While our Zero Waste business operations—running both the Boulder County Recycling Center and the Center for Hard-to-Recycle Materials as well as hauling materials for businesses—help support our work financially, we must raise additional funds to support the following programs:



## **Statewide Zero Waste Legislation & Community Campaigns**

GOAL: To pass and help implement Zero Waste legislation and community campaigns that will grow Colorado's circular economy.



## **Environmental Education & Green Star Schools**

GOAL: To have every public school in Boulder Valley and St. Vrain Valley School Districts enrolled in our Green Star Schools program and to expand our Environmental Education programming to Weld and Broomfield counties.



## **Composting & Carbon Farming**

GOAL: To create a robust Circular Community Compost System in which residents and businesses understand the connection between what they put into the compost bin and how it is turned into compost—a soil amendment that has many environmental, nutritional, and climate benefits.



## **General Support**

GOAL: To advance Zero Waste solutions in all sectors of the community by ensuring our programs are financially sustainable and poised for growth.



# WHAT IS ZERO WASTE?

---

Zero Waste is a set of principles focused on waste prevention that addresses the entire system of how we make, consume, and dispose of our “stuff.” Using nature’s cyclical system as a guide, Zero Waste redesigns our processes and natural resource use—from product design to disposal—to prevent the careless and polluting practices that lead to so much waste. It then captures discards and uses them, instead of natural resources, to make new products, creating a much cleaner manufacturing process with far less pollution.



## ZERO WASTE BENEFITS

### Environmental

- Protects natural resources
- Reduces habitat-harming pollution
- Supports compost and regenerative agriculture
- Reduces methane in landfills

### Economic

- Creates local jobs
- Builds new markets
- Is often less expensive

### Social Justice

- Reduces health impacts due to air and water pollution, particularly in marginalized frontline communities
- Prevents food from going to waste
- Decreases conflict around resource extraction

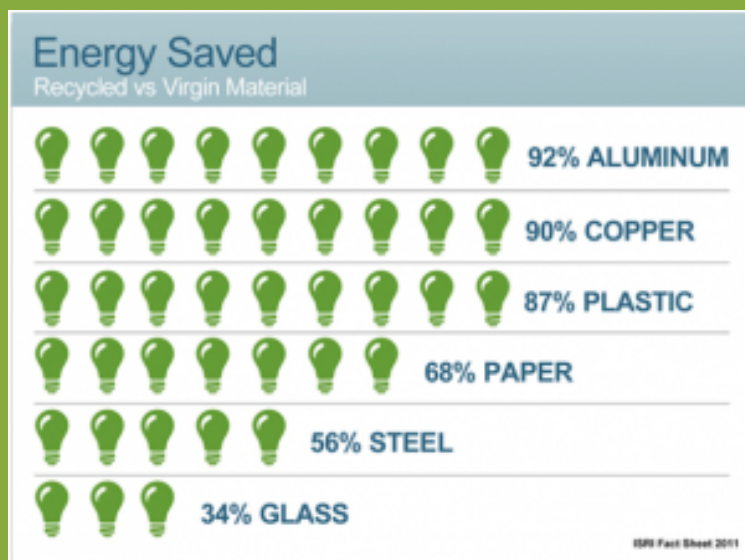




# HOW IS ZERO WASTE A CLIMATE SOLUTION?

According to the US EPA, 42% of our global greenhouse gas emissions come from the energy used to extract, process, produce, transport, and dispose of the goods that we use, including our food. These are called “consumption emissions.” Adopting Zero Waste strategies changes these systems and reduces carbon pollution in three critical ways: it saves energy and natural resources, reduces methane emissions from landfills, and pulls carbon out of the atmosphere by applying finished compost to our soils. By 2030, Zero Waste strategies, if widely adopted, could reduce greenhouse gas emissions by more than 400 million metric tons of CO<sub>2</sub> per year, the equivalent of taking over 80 US coal-fired power plants off the grid!

Through local Zero Waste actions, we can directly and positively impact the biggest global challenges of our time—climate change, human health risks, ecosystem collapse, and social/political conflicts over access to natural resources.



*The most immediate and largest climate savings from Zero Waste come from the energy we save when we use recycled materials to make new products. Using recyclables such as old newspapers, plastic bottles, and aluminum cans to make new products requires 30–90% less energy than making products from trees, fossil fuels, or metal ores. This means we burn fewer fossil fuels—including oil, natural gas, and coal—and produce fewer GHG emissions.*

# STATEWIDE ZERO WASTE LEGISLATION & COMMUNITY CAMPAIGNS

**Eco-Cycle's policy team works at both the state and local levels to advocate for systemic Zero Waste solutions that reduce waste, promote recycling and composting, address climate change, and foster a circular economy.**

While some communities, such as Boulder County, are Zero Waste leaders, Colorado recycles and composts only 16% of its waste—just half the national average of 32%. This is largely due to lack of access and the low price of landfilling. To significantly increase Colorado's waste diversion, we need to change the system. We need to make recycling, composting, and other Zero Waste solutions more accessible and convenient for everyone. And we believe the best way to achieve this is by adopting state policies and local ordinances that improve Zero Waste infrastructure, services, and programs, and help develop recycling end markets.

Over the past eight years, Eco-Cycle has taken the lead on drafting legislation, holding stakeholder meetings, and building public support while working with coalition partners to educate state legislators and the state executive branch on Zero Waste issues and to urge them to take action. We have engaged a growing cadre of Coloradans, tapping into their desire to improve recycling and composting rates and help create more sustainable production and consumption systems.

While we have made significant progress,  
we still have more to do!



## OUR GOAL

**TO PASS AND HELP IMPLEMENT  
ZERO WASTE LEGISLATION AND  
COMMUNITY CAMPAIGNS THAT  
WILL GROW COLORADO'S  
CIRCULAR ECONOMY.**



# OUR RECENT SUCCESSES

- **Producer Responsibility Act** – Colorado’s Producer Responsibility law (passed in 2022) will fundamentally transform our state’s recycling system by requiring companies that sell printed paper, cardboard, metal, glass, and plastic packaging in the state to pay for a statewide, producer-run recycling system, ensuring that every Coloradan will have free, convenient recycling that is as accessible as trash service.
- **Plastic Pollution Reduction Act** – With the passage of the PPRA in 2021, Colorado became the 11th US state to ban single-use plastic bags, the 8th state to ban polystyrene food and beverage takeout containers, and the first state to strike a plastic preemption, restoring the rights of local communities to take further actions to reduce plastic pollution.
- **Waste Diversion and Circular Economy Development Center** – The new center, launched in the summer of 2023, will attract new entrepreneurs and businesses to the state to utilize recycled materials diverted from the landfill to make into new products. Additionally, it will offer assistance to existing and new businesses, develop incentives and provide necessary infrastructure, logistics, and marketing to create a sustainable circular economy for recycled commodities.

## YOUR SUPPORT WILL HELP US:

- Provide greater opportunities for residents to advocate for Zero Waste policies at the state and local level.
- Assist municipalities across Colorado in implementing Zero Waste policies.
- Build strong coalitions among stakeholders to create a wave of support for proposed legislation.
- Educate and engage elected officials to develop them into Zero Waste champions.
- Empower communities to address ZW issues through local action.

**\$1,000**

Would allow us to provide literature and communications on important Zero Waste bills to over 2,500 constituents.

**\$5,000**

Would help fund reports, like our annual *State of Recycling and Composting in Colorado*, highlighting challenges and opportunities to engage elected officials and direct policy solutions.

**\$10,000**

Would fund development of community toolkits to ensure municipalities and businesses successfully implement Zero Waste policies, including education, trainings, communications, and more.

**\$20,000**

Would help expand our capacity to advocate for Zero Waste programs and policies in more frontline Colorado communities that are directly impacted by climate and waste issues.

PROGRAM CATEGORY

# ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION & GREEN STAR SCHOOLS



**Eco-Cycle provides science-based, award-winning educational programs that inspire environmental learning and create the next generation of environmental stewards.**

Since 1987, Eco-Cycle has been cultivating the next generation of environmental stewards through our School Recycling and Environmental Education Program. Over the past 36 years, our offerings have expanded well beyond recycling to include 26 different science-based presentations and three field trips in nine topic areas, reaching over 45,000 students and staff in schools located in Boulder, Broomfield, and Weld Counties in the 2022-23 school year.

In 2005, Eco-Cycle created the Green Star Schools Program to move participating schools closer to Zero Waste. Since then, the program has grown to include 64 public schools with an additional 25 currently on the waitlist. This program offers innovative waste-reduction activities and projects, expands recycling at participating schools, and implements a collection system for food scraps, substantially cutting the amount of school waste sent to the landfill.

Participating students bring their enthusiasm and knowledge home, expanding the impact of our programs to their families and communities. And these same students often grow into adults who are invested in waste diversion and protecting our environment.

## OUR GOAL

TO HAVE EVERY PUBLIC SCHOOL IN BOULDER VALLEY AND ST. VRAIN VALLEY SCHOOL DISTRICTS ENROLLED IN OUR GREEN STAR SCHOOLS PROGRAM AND TO EXPAND OUR ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION PROGRAMMING TO WELD AND BROOMFIELD COUNTIES.



*Eco-Cycle's CHaRMed Books Program returns gently used books recycled at the Eco-Cycle/City of Boulder Center for Hard-to-Recycle Materials (CHaRM) to local schools, teachers, and students. Financial support of Eco-Cycle's CHaRMed Books Program enables Eco-Cycle's Environmental Educators to sort and donate books to local underserved and under-resourced communities. Support this program by making a gift of any amount!*



## OUR RECENT SUCCESSES

- Since 2005, public schools throughout Boulder County have partnered with Eco-Cycle to become Green Star Schools, and 64 are currently enrolled. This award-winning environmental education program addresses waste reduction and the collection of compostables and recyclables, helping schools reduce their waste by up to 67 percent.
- In 2022, we released the Zero Waste Schools Activity Guide to help educators in other communities replicate our Zero Waste programming for schools.
- Using age-specific group discussions, activities, field trips, presentations, crafts, and games, students come to understand the relationship between solid waste issues and many other environmental problems. Our popular schools presentations have increased from 180 in 1989 to approximately 1,600 given annually.

## YOUR SUPPORT WILL HELP US:

- Educate students from preschool through 12th grade about the impacts of waste reduction, reuse, recycling, and composting on the environment.
- Provide participating schools—including teachers, kitchen & custodial staff, and parents—with extensive and ongoing support, feedback, incentives, rewards, and special projects.
- Make our award-winning educational programs accessible to students beyond Boulder Valley and St. Vrain Valley school districts.
- Expand our work in schools with fewer financial resources, making experiential environmental education accessible to all students.

**\$1,000**

Would provide planning and staffing support for five school community Zero Waste events.

**\$5,000**

Would fund 25 Zero Waste presentations reaching over 600 students.

**\$10,000**

Would fund field trips for over 200 children from under-resourced communities to local farms at no cost to their families or their school.

**\$15,000**

Would help launch one new Green Star School, providing support and daily Zero Waste practice for all students and staff.

## PROGRAM CATEGORY

# COMPOST & CARBON FARMING

**Eco-Cycle is modeling how a circular compost system—processing clean organic discards to produce high-quality compost that is applied to farm lands and gardens—builds healthier soils and draws carbon dioxide from the atmosphere, turning a waste and climate problem into a soil, food, water, and climate solution.**

To avoid the worst effects of climate change, we must not only reduce emissions, we must remove excess CO<sub>2</sub> from our atmosphere. Eco-Cycle is creating a model community-based Circular Compost System for Boulder County that demonstrates the production and use of compost by farmers and gardeners, helping the community understand that composting organic materials is not just a waste-management strategy; it is a critically important climate solution and a key component of a circular economy.

When organic materials decompose in the landfill, they create methane, a gas that traps 84 times more heat than CO<sub>2</sub> in the short term (20 years). When we divert organic materials from landfills and instead use them to make compost, it becomes one of our best tools for fighting climate change. Plants and healthy soils enriched by compost help draw down excess CO<sub>2</sub> from the atmosphere and store it long-term in the soil, and also helps soil absorb and hold more water, providing both drought resistance and fire risk reduction.

Our program connects our community to the “why” behind the need for clean compost, teaches them how to keep compost streams clean, trials a distributed compost system, and allows the public to see first-hand how their organic discards are made into compost that is used by farmers and gardeners. While Boulder County will still likely need a regional or centralized compost facility, a vibrant distributed system of small compost operations can support our local food system, create solutions for remote communities in the county, and provide a model for other communities searching to establish compost infrastructure solutions.

## OUR GOAL

**TO CREATE A ROBUST CIRCULAR COMMUNITY COMPOST SYSTEM IN WHICH RESIDENTS AND BUSINESSES UNDERSTAND THE CONNECTION BETWEEN WHAT THEY PUT INTO THE COMPOST BIN AND HOW IT IS TURNED INTO COMPOST – A SOIL AMENDMENT THAT HAS MANY ENVIRONMENTAL, NUTRITIONAL, AND CLIMATE BENEFITS.**





# OUR RECENT SUCCESSES

- We have established four on-farm compost demonstration sites using aerated static pile systems (air is delivered through pipes underneath the pile instead of through turning, which controls odors and is thus ideal for urban compost production) and two on-farm carbon farming demonstration sites—all with the capacity to offer public educational tours.
- In 2021, we developed our Carbon Farming Toolkit, which showcases current carbon farming practices and gives recommendations to those communities looking to engage in urban carbon farming and involve residents in the larger vision of a Community Compost System.
- We initiated a statewide organics management plan that was completed by Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) in 2022, detailing the state of organic waste in Colorado and making recommendations on policy and infrastructure changes needed to meet the state's landfill diversion and greenhouse gas reduction goals.
- We successfully lobbied CDPHE to review state compost facility permitting regulations to allow for more sizes and types of compost systems, and we are working with Boulder County to modify land use code to be more friendly for distributed community composting.

## YOUR SUPPORT WILL HELP US:

- Continue our policy work at the state and local levels to leverage organic waste diversion and compost infrastructure as a climate solution.
- Bolster local agriculture by empowering farmers to create their own compost on-farm and conducting scientific trials of how to make and use high-quality compost for regenerative agriculture.
- Demonstrate how a distributed Community Compost System can benefit communities, and how each sector of the community (residents, businesses, farmers, local government) has an important role to play.
- Provide education and outreach on the critical importance of clean organic discard streams in creating high-quality compost.

**\$1,000**

Would help us provide tours of our on-farm compost production sites to help connect farmers and the community in this climate solution.

**\$5,000**

Would fund trials of innovative climate-compost solutions, such as inoculating wood chips with mycelium to create drought-resistant soils and more fire-resistant forests.

**\$7,500**

Would fund one new compost production site on a local farm, providing them with a free and convenient source of compost for their regenerative farm practices.

**\$15,000**

Would fund video production to educate communities on the local climate solutions Eco-Cycle and regenerative farmers are developing.

## PROGRAM CATEGORY

# GENERAL SUPPORT

**As one of the nation's oldest and largest recyclers, and a leader in the Zero Waste movement, we leverage our unique position to advance community-driven solutions that address resource depletion and our climate crisis.**

If you're excited about the work we do at Eco-Cycle and trust us to use your gift where it's needed most, we invite you to support our general fund. Some examples of cross-programmatic projects that Eco-Cycle has already done and continues to expand upon include:

## DEVELOPMENT OF EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES FOR COMMUNITIES

**PPRA Toolkit:** When the Colorado Plastic Pollution Reduction Act passed in 2021, we knew communities would need assistance in implementing this new law. In response to this need, we developed a step-by-step guide for municipalities and businesses to comply with phase 1 of the legislation—adopting a minimal bag fee of \$0.10/checkout bag. The toolkit includes signage, employee training materials, FAQs, system recommendations, and more. We will expand on this toolkit for Phase 2 of the legislation—phasing out plastic bags and Styrofoam take-out containers starting January 1, 2024.

**Colorado Community Compost Toolkit:** In April 2023, the regional compost manufacturer began enforcing new, simplified compost guidelines for Colorado Front Range communities that include food scraps and yard trimmings only. Eco-Cycle created a toolkit of resources including alert messaging, new guidelines for residences and businesses, cart and dumpster stickers, and a social media kit, and shared this toolkit across the Front Range.

**Producer Responsibility Advocacy Resources:** In 2021, Eco-Cycle championed a historic Producer Responsibility bill, making Colorado the third state in the nation to hold producers financially responsible for funding the recycling of their packaging. A crucial part of our advocacy included the development of tools for stakeholder engagement, education for legislators and businesses, petitions for residents, and the promotion of a coalition of supporting businesses. The bill was signed into law in 2022, and Eco-Cycle and its partners now share our customizable resources with other states working to pass Producer Responsibility legislation.

## OUR GOAL

TO ADVANCE ZERO WASTE SOLUTIONS IN ALL SECTORS OF THE COMMUNITY BY ENSURING OUR PROGRAMS ARE FINANCIALLY SUSTAINABLE AND POISED FOR GROWTH.





## EDUCATION AND ENGAGEMENT THROUGH OUR ECO-LEADER VOLUNTEER NETWORK

Our Eco-Leader Network includes community members from Denver, Broomfield, and Boulder Counties who are passionate advocates for Zero Waste. They play a critical role in engaging their communities to help successfully advocate for and implement circular solutions.

## ECO-CYCLE'S CENTER FOR HARD-TO-RECYCLE MATERIALS (CHaRM)

This first-of-its-kind facility currently diverts 25 (and counting!) categories of hard-to-recycle materials (which are not accepted in curbside recycling) from the landfill. We are always striving to expand this list and explore new and emerging markets for additional materials.

## PILOTING RECYCLING SOLUTIONS FOR BUSINESSES

**Polybag Research Program:** Polybags are single-use plastic film bags used throughout the fashion industry to pack and protect clothing as it moves from the production site to retail stores or consumers. We are expanding our pilot project—collecting polybags from retailers on Pearl Street to quantify their impact—to create a comprehensive toolkit for outdoor brands that will guide them in responsible usage, recycling, customer communication, and alternatives to single-use plastic polybags.

**Grain bags:** We have partnered with several local breweries to solve an ongoing waste issue arising from woven polypropylene “grain bags” used throughout the craft beer industry for the storage and delivery of malt. Through our Center for Hard-to-Recycle Materials (CHaRM), we have established a collection process and developed end-market recycling partners for this valuable material, creating a replicable model and new opportunities for a closed-loop system.

## UNDERWRITING ON PUBLIC RADIO

*Is there an Eco-Cycle program that you want more communities to know about? Consider becoming an underwriting sponsor for local, nonprofit community radio stations like KGNU.*

***A donation of \$750 will allow us to air 50 spots over the course of a month, and \$5,500 will cover a whole year!***



# WAYS YOU CAN GIVE

Donate on our website at [ecocycle.org/donate](https://ecocycle.org/donate).

Mail a check made payable to Eco-Cycle at  
P.O. Box 19006, Boulder, CO 80308.

If you own a business, you can give through partnership in 1% for the Planet. This network connects businesses to nonprofits working to protect the planet. Learn more at [onepercentfortheplanet.org](https://onepercentfortheplanet.org).

It's simple to make a gift to Eco-Cycle through your donor advised fund (DAF). Our tax ID is 42-1622670, and checks can be made payable to Eco-Cycle at P.O. Box 19006, Boulder, CO 80308.

Make a tax-saving gift by donating stock or distributions from your IRA.

Consider including Eco-Cycle in your will or estate plans. You can enjoy tax benefits and help sustain our work for generations to come.

---

To learn more about giving options, please contact Eco-Cycle's Philanthropy Manager, Anna Leske, at [anna@ecocycle.org](mailto:anna@ecocycle.org).











**Our mission is to innovate, implement, and advocate for local and global Zero Waste solutions to foster a more regenerative, equitable, and climate-resilient future.**

Mailing Address:  
P.O. Box 19006  
Boulder, CO 80308

Eco-Cycle Office  
& CHaRM Address:  
6400 Arapahoe Road  
Boulder, CO 80303

Recycle Hotline:  
303.444.6634