



eco-cycle®

# 2024-2025 ANNUAL REPORT

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**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.**

These are undeniably challenging times for both people and the planet. Yet, within the uncertainty, **Colorado continues to shine as a source of hope and progress.**

[Eco-Cycle](#) remains steadfast, forging ahead in our mission statewide—**collaborating with local communities and advancing innovative programs, services, and policies** to reshape our state's approach to waste reduction, circular recycling and composting systems, and lowering our consumption of natural resources and climate impact.

Our progress is rooted in our theory of change: working with businesses, schools, governments, farmers, and residents to push for meaningful transformation, community by community, **building momentum toward solutions statewide and beyond.**

We see proof in action. Colorado has banned single-use plastic bags statewide and next year will be **among the first in the nation to implement Producer Responsibility for packaging and paper.** This year, Eco-Cycle helped prove the viability of on-farm composting from clean food scraps to enrich local soils, and we championed legislation to create a statewide battery recycling system.

**Step by step, we keep moving forward—making progress and making history, together.**

While the obstacles may seem daunting, our direction remains clear. **In partnership, we're driving transformational change in our own backyard**—showing what is possible and creating a future we can all believe in.

With gratitude for you, and hope for all—

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.



# ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION & ZERO WASTE SCHOOLS

## Developing Future Environmental Stewards



At Eco-Cycle, we believe future environmental change begins with students. Our [Environmental Education and Zero Waste Schools Programs](#) sparks curiosity, builds real-world skills, and gives students the power to lead the way toward a sustainable and Zero Waste future. From exploring the science of recycling to field trips to local recycling facilities, students experience sustainability in action.

During the 2024–2025 school year, we partnered with 115 local public schools—including 12 Title 1 schools—to deliver over 1,500 engaging presentations in English and Spanish, reaching more than 40,000 students from preschool through high school. Through our nationally recognized Green Star Schools® program, many of these schools have reduced their waste by an impressive 67%.

**2,196**



classroom presentations, field trips, and events

**68**



Green Star Schools enrolled across 3 school districts

**18**



Zero Waste school events supported by Eco-Cycle staff

## HIGHLIGHTS

**474,311 lb**



of recyclables from 48 schools diverted from landfill

**4,394**



Children's books redistributed in the community by the CHaMed Books Program.

**212,456 lb**



of food scraps from 42 BVSD Green Star Schools diverted from landfill

**2**

new Green Star Schools:



Monarch High  
(Louisville)



Coyote Ridge  
Elementary  
(Broomfield)

**405**



5-gallon plastic buckets repurposed into drums at 13 BVSD schools

[ecocycle.org/schools](https://ecocycle.org/schools)

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

# ZERO WASTE SCHOOLS

Developing Future Environmental Stewards



“We want to make sure that we’re providing the best resources and learning environment for our students. We felt this [the Green Star Schools Program] was a really authentic way to inspire kids to be environmental stewards in our community.”

- Jonathan Stein,  
Superior Elementary  
Principal

## What is the Green Star School difference?



Eco-Cycle’s Green Star Schools (GSS) program stands apart as a national model for Zero Waste education through daily practice—equipping students and staff with the knowledge, habits, and infrastructure to make sustainability part of school life.

From classroom lessons to cafeteria composting, students learn how their choices protect the planet and each other.

In the 2024–2025 school year, the program served **33,730 students and 4,213 staff across 68 local public schools**, including nine Title 1 schools, helping them achieve **waste diversion rates of up to 67%**.

We also launched the **HEART (Help the Earth And Reduce Trash) Contest**, inviting elementary students to reduce waste and collect cleaner food scraps for composting. Six schools competed, with Eisenhower and Heatherwood Elementary taking top honors—earning free books from Eco-Cycle’s CHaRMEd Books Program and a visit from local children’s author Laura Resau.

Together with local schools, we’re raising a generation learning not just to care for the Earth, but to live in balance with it.

## Thank You to Our Schools Program Sponsors



# POLICY & CAMPAIGNS

## Systemic Change Across the State and Beyond

Colorado currently recycles and composts less than 16% of its waste—half the national average. To change this, we need more than individual efforts; **we need a systemwide shift that makes recycling, composting, and other Zero Waste solutions accessible to every community.** That's why Eco-Cycle champions bold, practical policies like Colorado's **Producer Responsibility Program for Recycling Packaging** and the **Plastic Pollution Reduction Act**, while working hand-in-hand with communities across Colorado to turn policy into action.



### Protecting Integrity in Colorado's Recycling Future

Eco-Cycle helped make history in 2022 by championing the passage of Colorado's Producer Responsibility for Packaging law (HB22-1355), which creates a program where packaging producers pay to fund free and accessible recycling for all Coloradans, with implementation beginning in 2026.

But our work didn't stop there. We've continued to participate in the implementation of this law, most recently by urging the State to reject a deceptive industry proposal known as "free allocation."

This **accounting loophole would allow companies to overstate plastics recycling by counting plastics converted into fuel as "recycled."** Eco-Cycle is advocating that Colorado draws a firm line against this greenwashing practice to prevent companies from **making false recycling claims.** Colorado's Producer Responsibility program should rest on real accountability and measurable environmental progress.

### Powering Progress: Colorado's Battery Stewardship Act



In 2025, Colorado took a major step toward safer, more sustainable waste systems with the passage of the **Battery Stewardship Act** (SB25-163). This new law requires battery producers to fund and operate **a statewide collection and recycling program—keeping batteries out of landfills**, preventing battery-caused fires at recycling centers, and conserving valuable materials like lithium and cobalt.

**Eco-Cycle worked alongside partners and legislators to shape this landmark policy,** which will launch in 2027 and reach full implementation by 2029. Once in place, the program will dramatically expand battery recycling access, reduce costs for local governments, and ensure that batteries are responsibly recovered and reused.

# POLICY & CAMPAIGNS

## Systemic Change Across the State and Beyond

### VICTORY FOR ZERO WASTE: DENVER IMPLEMENTS WASTE NO MORE



Nearly three years after 71% of Denver voters approved the Waste No More ballot initiative, the City and County of Denver will officially begin implementation, marking a major milestone for Zero Waste policy in Colorado. This citizen-led initiative ensures that recycling and composting become standard practices across the city, including at restaurants, multifamily housing, construction sites, and large events. From the initial policy development to campaign advocacy to serving on Denver's implementation task force, Eco-Cycle supported the Waste No More campaign every step of the way.

When last-minute revisions threatened to exempt more than 500 restaurants from composting, **Eco-Cycle and our partners mobilized quickly, rallying community voices to defend the original intent of the law.**

Thanks to this collective effort, Denver City Council rejected the exemption and voted 10–2 to uphold a truly comprehensive waste diversion program. This victory demonstrates the power of grassroots action to create lasting environmental change.

### A RIPPLE OF ZERO WASTE ACROSS THE FRONT RANGE

Through the Colorado Circular Communities Enterprise (C3) STEPS program, **Eco-Cycle provided technical guidance to 14 communities and one school district—**Lafayette, Brighton, Denver, Fort Collins, Fort Lupton, Superior, Arvada, Broomfield, Steamboat Springs, Littleton, Sheridan, Englewood, Centennial, Erie, and Adams 12 Five Star Schools—**helping each chart a practical path toward its Zero Waste goals.**

Our team partnered with local staff, leaders, and residents to set priorities, craft strategies, and create action plans that turn ambition into measurable progress. **Each community now has a clear roadmap to expand recycling, composting, and waste prevention while cutting emissions and conserving resources.**

The first completed project in Lafayette is already having impact: in 2025, the city adopted a Universal Recycling Ordinance requiring all businesses and multifamily buildings to provide recycling services. This success proves how local collaboration and technical expertise can **accelerate Colorado's transition to a circular, resilient future.**

[ecocycle.org/legislation](https://ecocycle.org/legislation)

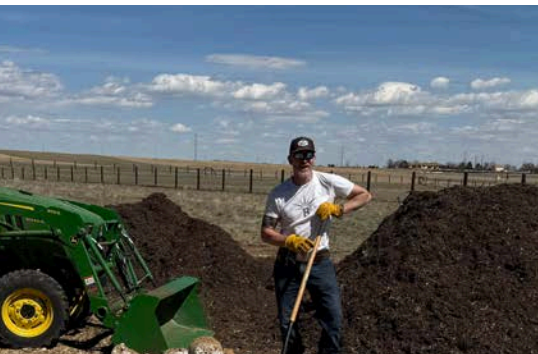
Learn more about our policy and campaigns work, which is creating systemic change across the state.



# COMPOST & CARBON FARMING

## Community-Powered Climate Solution

Across Boulder County, composting has long depended on distant, industrial facilities—making it expensive, energy-intensive, and disconnected from the people who create and benefit from it. Eco-Cycle's **Farmer First** community-based compost pilot is transforming that model by keeping organic materials local and bringing the community together around soil health and climate action.



Eco-Cycle launched this pilot to **connect schools, restaurants, and small businesses that produce clean food scraps directly with local regenerative farmers** who can use those nutrients to enrich their soils and grow food for our region. Working hand-in-hand with **eight Boulder County farms**, Eco-Cycle provided training, solar-powered composting systems, and ongoing technical support to help farmers effectively process both their own residues and food scraps collected from the community into compost to use on their farms.

In turn, local schools and businesses became key partners in supplying clean, contamination-free materials. Through our Green Star Schools program, students and staff at **twelve public schools** have been trained to properly sort their cafeteria food scraps, creating some of the cleanest compost feedstock in the state. Local businesses such as Avery Brewing also joined the effort by having their clean organic scraps collected by Eco-Cycle and delivered to local farms.

In the coming year, Eco-Cycle will grow Farmer First into a Local Compost Network, linking even more farms, schools, businesses, and neighborhoods to create a truly circular, regenerative system that keeps nutrients—and connections—rooted in our community.

### ONE-YEAR IMPACTS

**400 tons**

of organic material  
processed locally



**8,100 students**

creating clean organic discards  
in their school cafeterias



**3,600 miles  
avoided**

cutting 1.5 metric  
tons of CO<sub>2</sub>



Farmers save  
on average

**\$4,000  
per acre**

[ecocycle.org/organics](https://ecocycle.org/organics)

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



# OUTREACH AND ENGAGEMENT

## Our Volunteer Eco-Leader Network

Our [Eco-Leader program](#) is the engine behind our Zero Waste and climate work. With close to 1,300 trained participants across Boulder County and Colorado, volunteer Eco-Leaders bring solutions into homes, workplaces, schools, and community spaces, helping residents adopt new habits and understand how daily actions drive systems change.

### OUR TWO-WAY ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

This year, we introduced a more collaborative structure. Each month, Eco-Leaders complete a brief survey about messages, barriers, concerns, and priorities they're hearing in their communities. Their real-time insights shape our outreach, campaigns, and educational content, keeping our work grounded in lived experience.

We also expanded opportunities to tap the network's expertise—from psychologists and climate scientists to soil experts, teachers, and repair leaders. Volunteer-led trainings strengthened peer learning and engagement with complex topics.

### Community-Organized Nature-Based Climate Solutions

As a partner in Cool Boulder, Eco-Cycle helps advance citywide efforts to restore urban ecosystems, improve soil health, support pollinators, and expand the tree canopy. Eco-Leaders played a central organizing role this year.



In Spring 2025, they supported the distribution and planting of 150 tree saplings and pollinator-friendly shrubs at more than 100 homes across the Fairview, BCSIS, and Crestview neighborhoods. Participants also received Eco-Cycle Microbe Brew to strengthen soil biology, improve water retention, and boost heat resilience. We'll continue working with partners to grow this community-centered model for climate resilience.

### TRAINING, OUTREACH & PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Eco-Leaders led workshops and webinars, staffed Zero Waste stations, supported policy and outreach work, and helped neighbors make practical Zero Waste choices. Because these efforts come from trusted neighbors, each action—from planting trees to staffing events—creates lasting community impact and strengthens the cultural foundation for Zero Waste and climate solutions across the region.

[ecocycle.org/eco-leaders](https://ecocycle.org/eco-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 they're collected from your curb or alley? In Boulder County, the answer is simple: every hauler brings their materials to the [Boulder County Recycling Center \(BCRC\)](#), which Eco-Cycle has operated since 2001.

In the past year, the BCRC processed more than 50,000 tons of recyclables from Boulder County and beyond. Inside the facility, advanced sorting equipment—paired with a skilled team—separates materials into clean, high-quality streams like cardboard, paper, glass, metals, and various plastics. As a mission-based recycler, Eco-Cycle ships all materials to responsible North American end markets to be made into new products.

This year, Boulder County and Eco-Cycle completed major upgrades at the BCRC: a new Harris Badger baler and a Sparta conveyor system that improve efficiency and allow direct baling of source-separated materials.

Thanks to investments in sophisticated equipment, our rigorous quality standards, and the community's commitment to recycling right, the BCRC consistently produces some of the cleanest, most market-ready bales in the nation!

## RECYCLING AT THE BOULDER COUNTY RECYCLING CENTER

In FY 2024–2025, Eco-Cycle collected and processed over 50,000 tons of traditional recyclables—paper, cardboard, glass, aluminum, steel, and plastic—as operator of the Boulder County Recycling Center.



CARDBOARD

21,018 tons



PAPER

10,177 tons



GLASS

7,366 tons



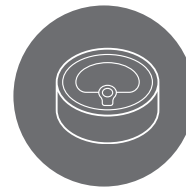
PLASTIC

3,468 tons



ALUMINUM

1,035 tons



STEEL

1,340 tons

[ecocycle.org/bcrc](https://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 leading the waste industry into a zero-emissions future. In 2023, we launched **the nation's first all-electric commercial compost collection truck**—proving that communities can capture the climate benefits of composting without the carbon cost of diesel hauling.

**Building on that success, we deployed a 100% electric recycling truck last year,** funded by Xcel Energy's EV Accelerate Innovation program. Compact and agile, this truck maneuvers through Boulder's tight downtown alleyways while delivering clean, quiet, and emission-free service.

With transportation remaining Colorado's largest source of greenhouse gases—and commercial trucks a major contributor—Eco-Cycle's rapidly electrifying fleet puts the state's EV goals into action. **By replacing diesel with electric, we're cutting emissions, reducing particulate pollution, and proving that Zero Waste systems can, and must, be Zero Emissions systems too.**

Eco-Cycle isn't just adopting new technology. We're setting a model for what a climate-focused, community-scale hauling fleet can look like across Colorado and the nation.

[ecocycle.org/hauling](https://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



The Eco-Cycle/City of Boulder [Center for Hard-to-Recycle Materials \(CHaRM\)](#) was the first facility of its kind in the US and remains a rare resource today. **CHaRM accepts over two dozen items that can't go in curbside recycling**—electronics, scrap metal, block foam, plastic film, mattresses, appliances, and more materials that require specialized processing not available in traditional recycling facilities. **By providing a dedicated drop-off site, the CHaRM keeps thousands of tons of materials in circulation each year and prevents hazardous or bulky items from being landfilled.**

The CHaRM also relies on targeted partnerships: Blue Star Recyclers handles electronics through certified, responsible recycling, and Spring Back Colorado recycles mattresses while offering jobs to people overcoming barriers to employment.

Together, this facility offers services that **fill a critical infrastructure gap**, managing materials that otherwise have few viable options, supporting both environmental and community benefits.

## THE CENTER FOR HARD-TO-RECYCLE MATERIALS

In 2024–2025, 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  
592,201 lb



MATTRESSES  
204,880 lb



BOOKS  
537,374 lb



PORCELAIN  
180,000 lb



PLASTIC FILM  
204,760 lb



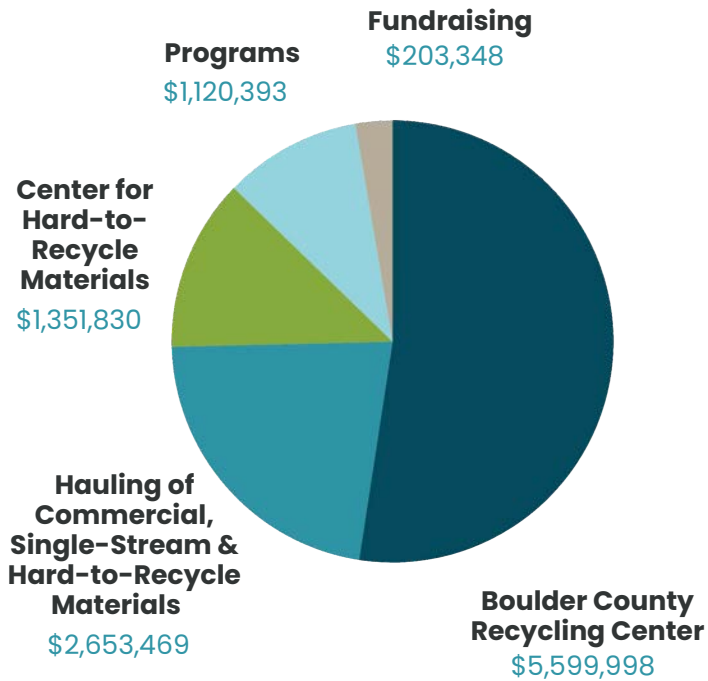
BLOCK FOAM  
118,663 lb

[ecocycle.org/charm](https://ecocycle.org/charm)

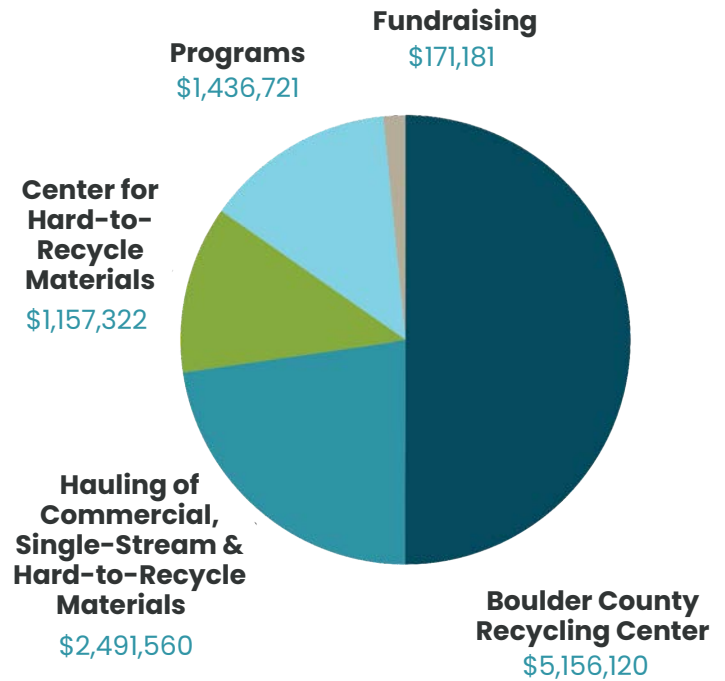
See all materials accepted at the CHaRM and learn how your business can set up a hard-to-recycle pick-up!

# 2024–2025 FINANCIALS

## Revenues



## Expenses



## Revenues

Boulder County Recycling Center	\$5,599,998
Hauling of Commercial, Single-Stream, and Hard-to-Recycle Materials	\$2,653,469
Center for Hard-to-Recycle Materials	\$1,351,830
Programs	\$1,120,393
Fundraising	\$203,348
<b>Total Revenues</b>	<b>\$10,929,038</b>

## Expenses

Boulder County Recycling Center	\$5,156,120
Hauling of Commercial, Single-Stream, and Hard-to-Recycle Materials	\$2,491,560
Center for Hard-to-Recycle Materials	\$1,157,322
Programs	\$1,436,721
Fundraising	\$171,181
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$10,412,904</b>



# Thank You

— TO OUR PARTNERS —

## Platinum Sponsors

The Hogan Lovells logo consists of a solid lime green square. Inside the square, the words "Hogan" and "Lovells" are stacked vertically in a black, serif typeface.

Hogan  
Lovells

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## Silver Sponsors



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## Bronze Sponsors

The ecoofficiency logo features the word "ecoofficiency" in a green, sans-serif font, with a small green leaf icon to the right of the word.

ecoofficiency



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