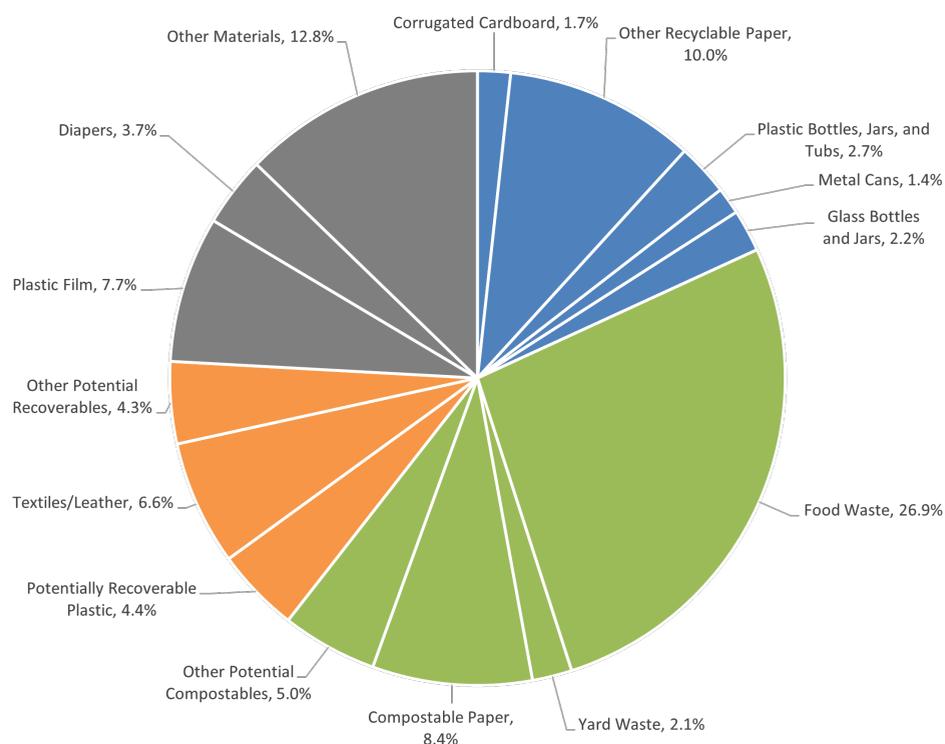


# Waste Matters

Summer 2025

[www.orangecountync.gov/Recycling](http://www.orangecountync.gov/Recycling)  
Services available to Orange County residents

## What's In Our Trash?



Results from the County-sponsored municipal solid waste composition study undertaken in November 2024. To learn more about these results and other waste diversion topics, subscribe to the monthly E-News on the Solid Waste website.

## Director's Corner



The Department of Solid Waste Management wants to keep you up to date about an important environmental issue that could affect our community: the potential leaching of PFAs (Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances) from local landfills. If you are not aware, PFAs are a group of man-made chemicals that can persist in the environment for long periods and may pose serious health risks.

Recent studies have shown that PFAs can seep from landfills into groundwater. The North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality (NCDEQ) is increasingly focused on regulating landfills to address PFAs contamination and in that pursuit have released maximum contamination levels for landfills.

In preparation for stricter environmental enforcement from the NCDEQ, Orange County's Department of Solid Waste Management has taken the following steps:

- Began testing for PFAs at landfills owned and operated by the County
- Partnered with TRC Engineering firm to monitor PFAs and determine the most suitable treatment method for PFAs if needed.

Join us in advocacy by being mindful of the products you dispose of, particularly those containing chemicals like PFAs. Together, we can protect our community and environment. If you have questions or would like more information, feel free to reach out to the Department.

*Waste Matters is a publication of the Orange County Solid Waste Management Department. Its purpose is to provide information to citizens and businesses of Orange County on solid waste management issues. Orange County Solid Waste Management does not endorse the businesses or products mentioned in this newsletter.*

## Household Hazardous Waste Swaps

When disposed of incorrectly, household hazardous waste (HHW) poses a threat to the environment and human health because the materials can be flammable, reactive, explosive, and toxic. HHW is produced when household hazardous materials are no longer wanted or needed or have been used. According to the NC Department of Environmental Quality, U.S households generate about 30 lbs. of HHW a year.

Keeping hazardous materials out of landfills and water systems by disposing of them safely reduces potential pollution and protects groundwater. However, instead of continuing to purchase materials that become HHW, consider making non-hazardous alternatives out of common household products. Some common alternatives:

HAZARDOUS WASTE	ALTERNATIVE
Drain cleaner	Use a plunger or plumber's snake; Or pour a few tablespoons of baking soda in drain, follow with a cup of vinegar, let sit for 10 minutes, rinse with boiling water (non-PVC pipes) or hot water.
Glass cleaner	Mix one tablespoon of vinegar or lemon juice in one quart of water. Spray onto glass and wipe with newspaper.
Furniture polish	Mix one teaspoon of lemon juice in one pint of mineral or vegetable oil. Polish furniture with solution.
Rodent bait	Rodent traps.
Herbicides, insecticides, fungicides	Pyrethrin; neem oil spray, vegetable oil spray, garlic spray, soap spray (check for plant sensitivities); add compost.
Insect repellent	Citronella; marigold plants; garlic or rosemary oil spray.
Toilet cleaner	Mix equal parts baking soda and vinegar. Allow to fizz and clean toilet with solution and brush.
Stain remover	Mix one part liquid dish soap (with a degreaser) and two parts 3% hydrogen peroxide. Apply to stain and dab.
Aerosol cans: hair spray; air fresheners; disinfectant spray; rodent/bug spray	Hair gel; candles or essential oil diffusers; hand sanitizer/soap/spray bottle with cleaning product; see rodent bait and insect repellent

# Personalize Your Road to Zero Waste

As Orange County Solid Waste embarks on implementing new programs for the Path to Zero Waste plan, the County asks residents to ask what zero waste means to them, and how they implement small changes towards a greater goal. Zero Waste looks different for everyone, depending on your family, where you live and work, and your daily needs.

Below are a few examples of how you can reduce waste across different places in your life. Choose one area in which you can reduce your waste. Make a goal of implementing one realistic idea each week, month, or year, depending on where you are on your journey to zero waste.



## At Home

IDEAS	EXAMPLES
Repurpose unused or unwanted items into something new.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Instead of using paper towels, turn old clothing into reusable cleaning rags.</li> <li>Create decorations and crafts from miscellaneous items (CD's, beads, bottle caps).</li> </ul>
Use fiber-based, paper, 100% bamboo, or reusable products	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Opt for reusable items, like fabric rags for dishes and washable dishware, instead of disposables.</li> <li>Use washable fabric rags and scrubbers instead of synthetic sponges and wool dryer balls instead of sheets.</li> </ul>
Fix, sell, or donate items.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Look into local Repair Cafes to fix broken items.</li> <li>Sell or donate something broken if you can.</li> </ul>
Buy secondhand. Secondhand items usually have little to no packaging!	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Check out your local thrift stores for secondhand clothing, furniture, home goods, and more.</li> <li>Look for secondhand websites and groups online.</li> </ul>

## At the Store

IDEAS	EXAMPLES
Refuse plastic grocery bags.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bring your own reusable bags.</li> <li>Use paper bags as needed.</li> </ul>
Buy in bulk.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Shop the bulk section in stores and bring your own container.</li> <li>Avoid individually packaged items and snack-size packages.</li> </ul>
Buy items in recyclable packaging or less packaging.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Instead of bagged items, choose items in paper, metal, glass, or plastic jugs, jars, bottles, and tubs.</li> <li>Opt for bar soaps instead of liquid since liquid bottle pumps are not recyclable.</li> </ul>
Shop for loose produce instead of prepackaged produce.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Instead of plastic produce bags, bring your own bags.</li> <li>Don't bag your produce.</li> </ul>

## At the Dinner Table

IDEAS	EXAMPLES
Refuse single-use items from restaurants.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bring your own water bottle to avoid cups. If you cannot bring your own, skip the lid and the straw.</li> <li>Bring your own reusable silverware.</li> </ul>
Bring your own containers to restaurants and dining events for leftovers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Don't waste food, bring it home with you.</li> <li>Pack a reusable container for leftovers.</li> </ul>
Save, freeze, or compost leftovers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Save and/or freeze leftover food.</li> <li>Compost food scraps and food waste instead of landfilling.</li> </ul>

## At School or Work

IDEAS	EXAMPLES
Bring a reusable drink container, dishware, and silverware.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bring your reusable water bottle, coffee mug, or cup.</li> <li>Pack washable silverware for lunches.</li> <li>Keep spare silverware and dishware at work.</li> <li>Pack cloth napkins instead of paper.</li> </ul>
Pack food in reusable containers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Swap plastic bags and foil for reusable containers and silicone bags.</li> <li>Save glass jars and use them for food storage.</li> </ul>
Use electronics over paper, where possible.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Take notes on your computer, tablet, or phone, if you have one, instead of using pen and paper.</li> <li>Adopt online editing tools/software, electronic fax services, digital surveys, and more.</li> </ul>

## Antique Radioactivity

Antiques hold a rich history and value but can also contain radioactive materials that are hazardous to human health. Collectables such as antique glassware, time-keepers and ceramics were produced prior to the discovery that these compounds were dangerous. Some of the substances in these antiques include radium, uranium, and thorium and were added due to their colors and luminescence.



The dials on clocks, watches and other instruments were painted with radium due to its glow-in-the-dark capabilities. The workers painting these instruments often developed serious health issues from exposure to the radium.



Many glass collectables like vases, chalices and bowls were colored with uranium to give the glass a fluorescent hue. These types of tableware, often referred to as Vaseline glass

or Canary glass, are usually yellow or green in color.

Ceramics, specifically Fiesta Ware dishware, were produced in the mid-20th century in bright colors such as red, blue and green. Many of these are coated in glazes that contain uranium, especially those in the red shades.



If you come across any of these items, make sure you are handling and using them properly to avoid harmful health effects. They are usually not a health risk if they are in good condition and not broken or chipped.

**Radioactive artifacts should NEVER be used for food or drink.** Radiation detection kits can be purchased online if you are unsure if an antique you have may contain radioactive material.

**Radioactive materials are NOT accepted at the Orange County Household Hazardous Waste Drop-Off sites.** Contact the North Carolina Radium Protection department for safety information and disposal options.

## Low-Waste Holidays

Holiday gatherings are often spent celebrating, sharing meals, and spending quality time with family and friends. They are also a great opportunity to practice sustainability and reduce waste. Here are some tips for making your next get-together lower waste:

- Get creative and reuse decorations from holidays past. Maintain them to use for years to come.
- Skip the excess packaging and cut your carbon footprint by shopping local for gifts and favors.
- Find new-to-you décor, serving ware and outfits at your local nonprofit thrift store or donation center.
- Wrap gifts in recyclable materials that can be decorated such as brown paper bags or newspaper.
- Buy snack items like chips and candy in bulk rather than in individual packets.
- Opt for reusable cups and glasses and/or aluminum cans and bottles. Don't forget to recycle your cans and bottles!
- Post clear signage so guests know what is recyclable and what is not. Download and print the Recycle Right flyer from the Orange County Solid Waste website.
- Choose reusable dishware instead of disposable and ask guests to bring reusable containers for leftovers. Residents can take advantage of the county's "Fork It Over" program and borrow sets of stainless-steel silverware for free!
- Set up a compost bin to collect food scraps. Food waste can be brought to select Orange County Waste & Recycling Centers and county Farmer's Markets.

# Orange County Food Waste Diversion Program

In 2024, Orange County diverted over 1.18 million pounds of food waste through the drop-off sites and commercial collection programs, which is proportionate to avoiding roughly 123,749 pounds of methane emissions, or over 3 million pounds of carbon dioxide emissions.

Composting food waste and other organic waste prevents the production of methane that is otherwise produced when organic waste breaks down in a landfill. Methane is 28 times more potent than CO<sub>2</sub> at trapping heat in the atmosphere and is the second-most abundant greenhouse gas. In the United States, roughly 24% of landfilled waste is food waste. By collecting and composting your organic waste, you can help prevent methane emissions and contribute to Orange County's Zero Waste goal.

Visit [orangecountync.gov/compost](http://orangecountync.gov/compost) for more information on accepted materials for the food waste drop-off sites.

## Food Waste Drop-Off Sites

Orange County operates six locations\* that offer free food waste drop-off:

- Eubanks Road Waste & Recycling Center  
1518 Eubanks Road, Chapel Hill, NC 27516
- Walnut Grove Church Road Waste & Recycling Center  
1518 Eubanks Road, Hillsborough, NC, 27278



- High Rock Road Waste & Recycling Center  
7001 High Rock Rd, Efland, 27243
- Chapel Hill Farmers Market  
201 S Estes Dr, Chapel Hill, NC 27514, in front of Stoney River restaurant
- Carrboro Farmers Market  
301 W Main St, Carrboro, NC 27510
- Eno River Farmers Market  
114 E Margaret Ln, Hillsborough, NC 27278

\*Locations as of March 2025

# BPI-Certified Compostables No Longer Accepted

BPI-Certified Compostable plastics, including compostable bags, are no longer accepted in Orange County's Food Waste Diversion program. These products cannot be disposed of at the Orange County residential food waste drop-off sites or through the commercial food waste collection program. Plastic products labeled compostable or biodegradable are also not accepted. Moving forward, Orange County's Food Waste Diversion program accepts only food waste, non-coated fiber, paper, and 100% bamboo products, and small houseplant trimmings.

Examples of compostable plastics (including BPI-Certified Compostables) that are not accepted: bags, serving ware (plates, bowls), cups, lids, straws, and cutlery.

Like some other industrial composting facilities in the U.S., the facility that composts Orange County's organic waste is no longer accepting compostable plastics (including BPI-Certified Compostables) because they are not decomposing properly or take exponentially longer to

decompose. The slower decomposition rate of compostable plastics and struggle to fully decompose interferes with industrial composting facility's composting efficiency rates and decreases the quality of finished compost. Oftentimes, these facilities must throw away compostable plastics that are not decomposing.



If you already have compostable plastics, please use them and throw them away in the trash. When it comes to serving ware and cutlery, the best thing to do is use reusables. Through Orange County's Fork-It-Over program, you can borrow up to 200 sets of silverware (forks, knives, and spoons) for free. Visit the Solid Waste website for information on reserving silverware.

## Vermicomposting

Vermicomposting is a type of composting that uses earthworms, specifically red wigglers, and microorganisms to break down organic material into rich, nutrient dense compost.

Worms consume organic material, including food scraps, leftovers, yard trimmings, and paper products. The resulting product, vermicompost, is a valuable soil amendment that can be applied to gardens, landscaping, lawns, golf courses, and more; vermicompost adds moisture to soil, improves soil texture, reduces erosion, and helps yield larger plants while simultaneously combatting plant diseases and pests.

Below are some helpful details for starting your own vermicomposting bin:

- Vermicomposting bins can be purchased from manufacturers or built using wood, plastic storage bins, and other building materials.



- Bins should be covered to protect worms from light and rain.
- Worms need oxygen. Bins must have air holes on the sides for oxygen.
- Moisture should range between 60 – 85%. Drill drainage holes in the bottom of the bin for excess liquid. A simple method for testing moisture is the 'squeeze test'. Grab some of the vermicompost bedding and squeeze; there should only be a few drops of water.
- pH levels should stay around 7.0. To check the pH, use pH test strips.
- Keep bins inside or in the shade outside. Ideal temperatures for worms range from 55-80° F.
- Start with at least 1,000 worms (about 1 lb.) per bin. Worms should only be bought from an earthworm grower to ensure they are the correct species. Do not pick earthworms from the ground, as it is difficult to determine which species it is.
- Red wigglers consume about a quarter of their body weight per day. A bin of 1,000 worms should be fed about a quarter pound of food per day, unless food from the prior day has not been consumed.

# Finished Compost for Sale

Class "A" compost, the highest grade given to compost in the State of North Carolina's regulatory ranking system, can be purchased at the Orange County Landfill (1514 Eubanks Road, Chapel Hill, NC 27516) for \$40 per one cubic yard scoop\* or \$6 per one cubic foot bag\*. Delivery is available for an extra \$50.00 to locations within 10 miles or less and \$75 for locations within 11 – 20 miles of the Orange County Landfill\*. Brooks Contractor, a commercial composting firm located in Goldston, NC, produces compost using organic waste collected by Orange County's food waste drop-off program.

Compost is suitable as a soil amendment to naturally enhance the nutritive value of your soil, improving plant and crop growth, while also helping soils to retain moisture and prevent erosion. It is suitable for unrestricted use on crops, landscape plants, turf or ornamentals.

\*Price as of March 2025. Prices subject to change.

## Try Our Mulch!

The County produces mulch using yard waste drop-off materials. Mulch can be purchased at the Orange County Landfill (1514 Eubanks Road, Chapel Hill, NC 27516) for \$25 per three cubic yard scoop. Delivery is available for an extra \$50.00 to locations within 10 miles or less and \$75 for locations within 11 – 20 miles of the Orange County Landfill\*.

Yard waste is ground through a three by four inch screen and produces pieces three to four inches long and one inch or less in circumference. The mulch is turned, heated, and cured at a minimum temperature of 136° F for three days to reduce the presence of pests, pathogens and fertile weed seeds. Mulch should be applied as a soil amendment and provides nutrients, reduces erosion, retains soil moisture, regulates soil temperature, and aids in weed control.

\*Price as of March 2025. Prices subject to change.

## Compost at Home

Orange County also encourages residents to compost at home, if accessible. Outdoor composting or indoor vermicomposting (with worms) of kitchen scraps, such as fruit and vegetable waste, egg shells, and yard waste, can reduce household garbage by an estimated 27%, according to Orange County's 2024 Solid Waste Audit. Backyard composting of meats, fats, oils, greases, fish, and bones is not recommended. However, these types of organic material can be brought to the food waste drop-off sites.



Orange County sells manufactured 80-gallon Earth Machine compost bins for \$50.00\* and two-gallon kitchen countertop bins for \$5.00\*. Earth Machines are sold by appointment only. Kitchen countertop bins, used to collect food scraps, can be purchased at the Solid Waste Administration Office at 1207 Eubanks Road, Chapel Hill, NC 27516, Monday-Friday from 8 a.m. – 5 p.m. Cash or check only.

\*Price as of March 2025. Prices subject to change.

## Food Waste Diversion Stars

Congratulations to the businesses and organizations that earned a Food Waste Diversion Star in 2024 for participating in Orange County's Food Waste Diversion Program. Participation in the program supports many Orange County goals, including the mission to reduce landfilled waste, as food waste is the largest category of material sent to landfills in the U.S.



To showcase their commitment to the program, Orange County gave out window decals (shown here) to show community members that they are dedicated to improving the local community and environment. Thanks to their contributions, the program has diverted roughly 13 million pounds of compostable materials from landfills since 2016!

# RECYCLE RIGHT

## PLASTIC Bottles, tubs, jugs, jars



Empty & rinse. No pumps, no plastics that contained hazardous waste. Lids and caps OK.

## METAL Cans



Empty & rinse

## GLASS Bottles & jars



Empty & rinse. Lids and caps OK.

## PAPER Paper, cartons & cardboard



Clean & dry. No tissues or towels.

**KEEP ITEMS CLEAN & DRY & MIXED LOOSELY!**



**Carts out by 7am**

Use your blue cart for recycling only. Items outside the cart will not be collected.

## CARDBOARD



Empty and flatten cardboard. Make sure to remove all Styrofoam and plastic wrap from boxes before recycling.

### Urban/Rural Curbside Recycling



Recycle cardboard loose in cart. Clean, dry cardboard must fit loosely in cart.

### Multi-Unit Housing, Commercial, Waste & Recycling Centers & 24-Hr Drop-off Sites

Recycle cardboard separately at apartments, businesses and recycling sites. Empty, flatten and fold clean, dry cardboard. Place inside Cardboard Recycling Dumpster.

For more information see your facility manager.



**DON'T BAG**  **Recyclables**



**NO PLASTIC BAGS IN RECYCLING**

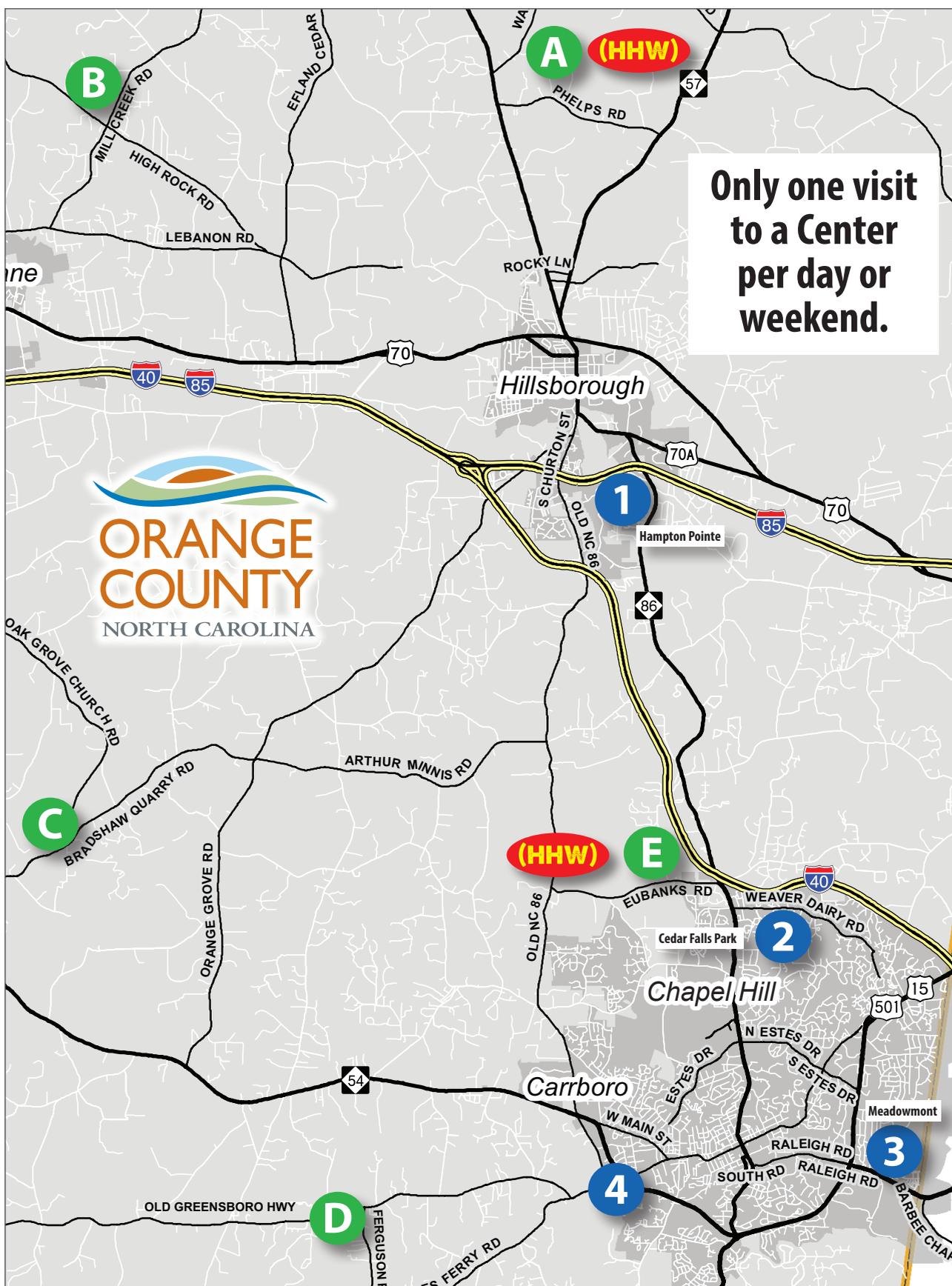
Visit our website for more information on hard-to-recycle items such as smoke detectors, fluorescent lights or clothes hangers (the **A-Z Waste & Recycling Guide**) and sign up to receive the **Orange County Solid Waste E-News**.

[www.orangecountync.gov/recycling](http://www.orangecountync.gov/recycling)

# Waste & Recycling Centers and 24-Hr Drop-Off Sites

Orange County Residents only.

WASTE AND RECYCLING CENTERS	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT	SUN
<b>A</b> <b>Walnut Grove Church Rd.</b> 3605 Walnut Grove Church Rd., Hillsborough	7am-6pm	7am-6pm	<b>CLOSED</b>	7am-6pm	7am-6pm	7am-5pm	1pm-6pm
<b>B</b> <b>High Rock Rd.</b> 7001 High Rock Rd, Efland	<b>CLOSED</b>	7am-6pm	<b>CLOSED</b>	<b>CLOSED</b>	7am-6pm	7am-5pm	1pm-6pm
<b>C</b> <b>Bradshaw Quarry Rd.</b> 6705 Bradshaw Quarry Rd, Mebane	<b>CLOSED</b>	7am-6pm	<b>CLOSED</b>	<b>CLOSED</b>	7am-6pm	7am-5pm	1pm-6pm
<b>D</b> <b>Ferguson Rd.</b> 1616 Ferguson Road, Chapel Hill	<b>CLOSED</b>	7am-6pm	<b>CLOSED</b>	<b>CLOSED</b>	7am-6pm	7am-5pm	1pm-6pm
<b>E</b> <b>Eubanks Rd.</b> 1518 Eubanks Road, Chapel Hill	7am-6pm	7am-6pm	<b>CLOSED</b>	7am-6pm	7am-6pm	7am-5pm	1pm-6pm



## 24-HR RECYCLING DROP-OFF SITES

- 1 Hampton Pointe**  
625 Hampton Pointe Blvd., Hillsborough  
Hwy 86, behind Home Depot
- 2 Cedar Falls Park**  
401 Weaver Dairy Rd., Chapel Hill  
1 mile east of MLK Blvd.
- 3 Meadowmont**  
116 W Barbee Chapel Rd., Chapel Hill  
Behind Harris Teeter
- 4 Jones Ferry Park and Ride Lot**  
603 Berryhill Drive, Chapel Hill, NC

**Open 24 Hours  
7 Days A Week.**

**Single-stream recycling,  
cardboard and separate  
glass recycling.**

**(HHW)** Household Hazardous Waste

## Salvage Sheds



Do you have unused household items that could be salvaged instead of landfilled? Bring them to the Salvage Sheds, located at all Orange County Waste & Recycling Centers except Bradshaw Quarry Rd. Salvage Shed items are available for free pickup for Orange County residents only.

### Accepted Items:

All items must be operational, functional, and clean. All items must be under 100 lbs.

- Small appliances (in working condition)
- Kitchenware (silverware, Tupperware, and non-breakable plates, mugs and cups)
- Books and magazines
- Electronics (in working condition)
- Small, non-upholstered furniture
- Small sports equipment (no large items such as treadmills, and no helmets)
- Toys (no stuffed animals)

### Not Accepted:

- Household construction & demolition waste such as toilets and bathroom sinks
- Glass and ceramic items and other fragile items
- Pillows, bedding and bed-related items
- Mirrors
- Glass
- Pane glass
- Pianos
- Large furniture (no more than 100 pounds)
- Textiles such as rugs and carpets
- Food
- Perishable items
- Clothing and shoes
- Styrofoam, bubble wrap or other packaging waste
- Paint or household hazardous waste
- Items containing profane or inappropriate content

### Additional Rules

- Limit one visit per day, no more than 10 minutes per visit.
- Center operator has the final say on item acceptability.
- Center operator has the discretion to ask those disrupting the Center operations to leave.
- Residents must wait for items to be placed in the Salvage Shed. No approaching others' vehicles.
- No disassembly of items for parts.

## Reuse Art: Recycled Folks



What started as a hobby has become a booming art career for Ann Brownlee Hobgood of Recycling Folks Studio. A Hillsborough resident and UNC alum, Hobgood has been making art out of reclaimed materials for over 16 years.

Her studio lies on a quiet street near downtown Hillsborough, but the impression it makes is anything but modest. Painted in bright colors and decorated with her own pieces, the studio tells the story of the gems that lay inside. When you walk through the shop, you'll see a treasure trove of quirky art and supplies waiting to be made into something unique.

Hobgood uses materials from all around the community, from the Orange County Solid Waste Salvage Sheds to neighbors bringing her boxes of scraps for the picking. She even had materials collected for her from the renovation site at the Colonial Inn that were kept in a box titled "Hobgoodies."

Reuse has always been a part of her life, as she spent decades flipping houses and currently lives in a house made of reclaimed materials. She says reuse is important to her because she can't bear to see things thrown away that could have another use to them. Her pieces are made from an array of different items, from mixing bowls to croquet

balls to old windowpanes. Some of her favorite materials to use are those that have been outside and have a bit more wear to them. She collects a lot of pieces, piling them up and brainstorming what they could become.

From small vintage spice tin people to sunflowers made of cook ware, each piece has a background and a story that is one of a kind. One of her favorites, "Tattooed Elephant," (pictured here) is made of a wastebasket, Jell-O molds, a teapot and cardboard tubes. The subject is a former circus elephant who was separated from her mother and got a "Mum" tattoo in her honor.



The uniqueness of her art has grabbed the attention of people from around the community. She has worked with the Hillsborough Arts Council, the Orange County Historical Museum, and the Orange County Arts Commission. She has participated alongside 60 artists in the local art festival: "Uproar." In 2023, her "Totem Pole" piece, made of coffee percolators from the 1950s, was on display in front of the Chapel Hill Welcome Center on Franklin Street.

She has even caught the eye of an out-of-towner, who saw her work and displayed it in the window of the American Folk Art Museum in New York City!

Sharing her love for reuse art with the community is what she loves best. "Everyone who wants to enjoy art should be able to," she says. One of the messages she likes to leave visitors with is to think twice about what you throw out. "Even if it's something you think is trash, it could have another purpose or go to someone who could use it," she says.

To learn more about reuse art and Hobgood's studio, visit her website at [recycledfolks.com](http://recycledfolks.com)

## Community Climate Action Grant

Orange County has taken numerous strides in addressing climate change, including launching the **Community Climate Action Grant (CCAG)** in 2020. Established by the Orange County Board of County Commissioners, this innovative grant program is designed to fast-track climate actions that promote renewable energy and reduce carbon footprints. Funded by a ¼ cent property tax, CCAG is open to public and nonprofit organizations, as well as small businesses with project ideas that support climate change mitigation and resilience within our community.

Each year a new round of grant funding is made available, with applications carefully reviewed and scored by the Commission for the Environment and the Human Relations Commission. The program places strong emphasis on projects with a social justice and racial equity focus, followed by the potential for greenhouse gas reduction in Orange County. In 2024, \$262,500 in grant funding was allocated for community projects, and demand continues to grow, as does the impact on our community's climate-focused initiatives.

Our CCAG Success Stories webpage (<https://www.orangecountync.gov/3109/CCAGP-Success-Stories>) showcases the outstanding achievements of grant recipients across the community, with regular updates as projects are completed. Recent initiatives include neighborhood tree plantings in Chapel Hill, a solar installation at Binkley Baptist Church, and home weatherization projects led by Rebuilding Together of the Triangle—all contributing to greater resilience and energy efficiency in Orange County.

Additionally, community gardens and green infrastructure projects have made a lasting impact. Past successes include solar panel installations on new Habitat for Humanity homes in Hillsborough, LED



lighting upgrades, and the deployment of a **350 kW solar array** at OWASA's Cane Creek Reservoir.

Looking ahead, this spring will bring another exciting milestone: the installation of solar panels at the **new Drakeford Library Complex in downtown Carrboro**. Stay tuned for more updates as we continue building a more sustainable future!

This year's funding round will open in June 2025. If you know of a public, nonprofit, or local business organization that could benefit from CCAG funding, please share this resource. We're excited to continue supporting and sharing the success of climate action projects that are making a difference in our community through the CCAG.

For more information about application deadlines, please visit our Community Climate Action grant webpage at [orangecountync.gov/Sustainability](http://orangecountync.gov/Sustainability) or feel free to reach out to Orange County Sustainability at [sustainability@orangecountync.gov](mailto:sustainability@orangecountync.gov).

# Know Your "NOs"

These items should **NEVER** be put in your blue recycling cart!



Food/Liquid



Cups



Styrofoam



Tanglers (Cords, Hoses, Wires, Etc)



Diapers



Clothing



Aluminum foil/  
pie pans



Hangers



Black Plastic



Electronics



Aerosol Cans



Shredded Paper



Bubble Wrap



Pumps



Receipts



Plant Pots



Clamshells



Can Carrier Rings



Batteries



Toys



Hazardous Waste



Ice Cream Cartons



Napkins/Tissue



Plastic Bags/Wrap



Takeout Containers



Rigid Plastics



Scrap Metal



Household Glass



Pill Bottles



Medical Waste



Corks



Tires



Filters



Single Use Plastics



Scrap Wood



Air Pillows



Plastic Packaging



Food Wrappers



Plastic Mailers

## Glass on the Side

Did you know that roughly 60% of glass material disposed of in single-stream recycling is recoverable, while the remaining 40% is un salvageable and landfilled? Glass is prone to break during collection and transportation of single-stream recycling, making it difficult to recover in the sorting process at the Materials Recovery Facility. In response to this, Orange County initiated the Glass On The Side (GOTS) program in September 2019, which collects glass bottles and jars separately from other single-stream recycling. The County transports materials to Sibelco, a glass recycling company in Wilson, NC. Glass bottles and jars are recycled as new bottles, reflective paint beads, fiberglass insulation, and other products, some of which are manufactured in North Carolina.

The GOTS program initially focused on providing separate glass recycling for commercial locations, mainly bars and restaurants, the source of most glass recyclables in the County. Over 100 businesses currently participate in the program. Student interns from UNC's Eco Studio program have played a major role in expanding the program. Orange County also receives separate glass recycling from Alamance and Durham counties as a collaborative effort to increase glass recovery rates in the local region.

Residents can conveniently drop off glass bottles and jars in the Glass On The Side containers at all Waste & Recycling Centers and all drop-off sites. Orange County does not recommend making special trips to recycle glass separately. However, if you have accumulated a large quantity of glass bottles and jars or are already heading to a Waste and Recycling Center or drop off site or nearby, please bring your separated glass to maximize glass diversion.

### Terry Kraus

Inspired by the Glass On The Side article in the previous Waste Matters Newsletter, Susannah Hewson decided to take on a separate glass recycling project with her neighbors. Susannah saw the neighborly glass collection as a chance to contribute to a larger countywide effort. In the beginning of 2023, she began the program by placing a bin outside her house a couple days a week, and asked neighbors if they wanted to add their glass bottles and jars. After a few months, she

passed the baton to her neighbor Terry Kraus, a long time Carrboro resident and retiree, who had a vision for a larger collection effort. What started as a small project between five to six households has now grown to encompass over 200 households in Carrboro.

Kraus envisioned four to five collection sites throughout the neighborhood, available 24 hours a day, and seven days a week. After sourcing ideas and interest from the neighborhood, Kraus gathered old 18-gal. recycling bins to use as the collection containers. For aesthetic purposes, he constructed wooden boxes to set the recycling bins in for the collection sites located in people's yards. One of the drop-off sites is under a sheltered mailbox site, so the wooden box was not necessary.

Throughout the week, Kraus runs, walks, bikes, or stops by on his drive home to check if the bins are getting full. Kraus picks up the bins around the neighborhood by foot, using a garden cart to wheel the 35-45 lb. bins back to his house; he "[doesn't] want to use [his pickup] truck to run around just out of principle" of creating this program for environmental benefits. The exercise component is one of the main personal benefits of leading this project, Kraus acknowledges. He replaces the full bin with an empty one so that neighbors can drop off their glass 24 hrs. a day. After he collects a truck bed full of bins, which averages around 500 lbs., he takes the glass over to a drop off site. It has taken on average, three weeks to collect this amount of glass but can vary based on participation fluctuations.

In the two years of this local collection effort, the neighborhood has collected around 18,000 pounds of glass for the GOTS program. In single-stream recycling, roughly 5,000 lbs. of this glass could've been landfilled. Kraus and Hewson have talked about their neighborhood program with other community members, showing them the ropes and the success they have seen. "It has made everybody that is participating feel really good about doing it. You could tell that [the families] felt better knowing that 100% of [the glass] would get recycled. It rallies everyone," Hewson expressed.

If you are interested in starting a neighborhood glass collection project to support Orange County's Glass On The Side program, please contact Orange County Solid Waste for more information and guidance.

## The UNC EcoStudio Internships

The EcoStudio is a course run through the Environment, Ecology and Energy Program and the Institute for the Environment at UNC Chapel Hill. The program partners undergraduate students with advisors for internships and projects in the area based in the environmental field. Orange County Solid Waste has worked with students in the EcoStudio for several years, through internships focused on county projects like "Glass on the Side" and "Recycling Stars." Students in the EcoStudio gain hands-on experience while growing skills and relationships that will benefit them in their future careers.



Director Brian Naess coordinates the program by finding internship opportunities, offering guidance, and making sure the students and mentors are supported throughout the semester-long projects. In addition, he meets with the students each week to provide professional development opportunities like resume building and mock interviews.

Former EcoStudio Co-Director Megan Lane said the program helps students identify their interests and learn what they do or do not want to pursue in their careers. "By the end of the semester, many students feel a connection to their internship organization and are either asked to stay on as a staff member for future semesters, or they end up pursuing a similar position when they graduate from UNC." Caroline Hausler, the former Recycling Education and Outreach Coordinator for OCSW, worked on the "Glass on the Side" program for her EcoStudio internship.

Meredith Stroud (pictured here) was an EcoStudio intern for the Spring 2023 semester who stuck around for the summer. She chose this internship because it combined her interests of environmental science and statistics with the opportunity to serve her community. She said that it helped strengthen skills that she can use in a future career, such as science communication and database management. "I also learned to meet people where they're at when communicating about a continuously evolving (and sometimes frustrating) topic like recycling," she said.

Caroline Maxon was one of two EcoStudio interns in the summer of 2023 who worked on the Recycling Stars program. The internship offered her the opportunity to explore her interests and figure out what type of job she would find most rewarding. She said, "I think that the EcoStudio helped my career by showing me that I like hands-on work. I want a job that directly engages with the problem I am hoping to address."

The EcoStudio program is beneficial for both interns and Orange County Solid Waste and its initiatives. With the help of these students, the education team has been able to provide education to thousands of residents across the county and work on improving programming. In addition, working alongside a younger generation in the community builds lasting enthusiasm for stewardship and sustainability. Orange County is grateful for the opportunity to continue to work with the UNC EcoStudio and its partners.

To learn more about the EcoStudio and past internship projects, visit their website at <https://ecostudio.unc.edu/>

## One Person's Trash, Another Person's Art

From a young age, habits of repurposing, recycling, and reusing were instilled into Krista Ashe's lifestyle. Her family's encouragement to not waste things provided an outlet for Ashe's creative side, from landscaping to art to refurbishing old furniture. "Once I finish using it, what else can I do with it" is a motto Ashe used throughout her life, finding a new and sometimes unexpected use out of items. About eight years ago, Ashe's passion for repurposing and creating art resulted in an unexpected business venture — kHEART design, her own handmade jewelry business.

Ashe was looking for a new art medium to work with and started taking metalsmith classes and creating pieces at a shop in Hillsborough. The teacher allowed people to purchase scraps of metal leftover from classes. Ashe "didn't see it as trash" but rather saw she "could put it together as a piece of art." Starting off, she made brooches by pressing and hammering pieces together. Then, she got the idea of turning brooches into bracelets using scrap leather. Ashe grew her collection to include hand-stamped pieces and commission work. She sold her pieces online and at pop-up shops throughout the community. However, once the pandemic began, it became difficult to continue her business.

Ashe closed her business after about five years, but that did not stop her from creating. "It doesn't have to be perfect. That's the great thing about art," she explained. Ashe's current endeavor is painting glass bottles and jars she's collected and using them as decorations, vases, and containers for household items. At her son's wedding, she used her mason jars as flower vases and afterward gave them away to neighbors to reuse. Among other things, Ashe likes to take furniture and other items left on the side of the road and give them a new life. Her husband knows "if we're walking around [the neighborhood], [she] might want to pick something and make something out of it." For one of her latest creations, Ashe repurposed a table on the side of the road and used a picture from a thrift store as the tabletop. "People have talents that you don't know you have," explained Ashe, encouraging others to explore their creative sides. Instead of throwing away something, think about how you can get another use out of it first.



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