

East Hartford Recycling Program Annual Report FY 22-23

The information contained in this report describes the successful results of the recycling initiatives implemented by Public Works since February 2022 under the new East Hartford Recycling Program.





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01 Initial Learning

The Department of Public Works launched a new program to boost local recycling efforts. Between April and May 2022, as a Solid Waste Official, I carried out a pilot Inspection plan for curbside recycling blue carts. I conducted a visual inspection of the contents of recycling carts on Beech (7 families), Columbus (29 families), Wadsworth (9 families) and Outlook (18 families) Streets, with 63 families in total.

I found contaminated and unacceptable materials in the blue carts. Based on these initial findings, we defined the list of more common contaminants we coined as "Top Offenders."



During the inspection period, each household received three inspections and two letters explaining in detail the unacceptable materials I found in their blue carts. DPW sent 126 letters attached with full-color photos of the blue bins.

NEXT STEPS

It was crucial to define a baseline to measure the progress of the recycling program. The Pilot Inspection Plan and the monthly Murphy Road Recycling (MRR) reports played an essential role.



02 Processing Data: Analyzing the results of the Pilot Inspection Plan and the MRR reports

BARRIERS TO RECYCLING Results of the Pilot Inspection Plan

Behavior

- Residents have not established recycling as a household priority.
- Difficulties in establishing routines for sorting recyclables.
- Set-out rates inconsistent.

Lack of Knowledge

- Confusion about What's IN / What's OUT.
- Wish-cycling.
- No understanding of the impact of contamination on commodity.
- No understanding of financial impacts to Town.

Attitudes and Perceptions

- Not accepting, there is an impact on taxes.
- The environmental impact or other benefit.
- Not getting a personal motivational reward from recycling.



The Pilot Inspection Plan and the MRR reports made it possible to identify the barriers to recycling, evaluate the types of recyclers to define a measurement parameter and assess the Town's communication strategy to design an effective Communication Plan.

COMMUNICATION ASSESSMENT

- Town had stopped direct communication with recyclers (pandemic).
- Limited communication vehicles.
- Inconsistent informational materials (Branding/Message/Visual identity-Uniformity).
- Flyers are not enough! Missing a diverse strategy with multiple approaches.
- Enforcement & Rewards Lacking.



RESIDENT ASSESSMENT

Underperformers

- Recycling unaware or aware but inactive. Not engaged.
- Contamination rate above 20%.

Learners

- Trying their best.
- Contamination rate between 10% and 20%.

High Performers

- Broadly competent.
- Contamination rate below 10%.

The monthly MRR reports allowed us to determine three types of recyclers (underperformers, learners, and high-performers). We figured out what percentage of the loads collected by the recycling hauler are contaminated. Additionally, with the information on the truck license plate and the dumping hours, it was possible to identify the truck's route and know the neighborhoods with the highest contamination rates in blue carts.

It is important to note that the recycling facility charges a fee of \$115 per contaminated ton. They grade a load as contaminated when the contamination rate is 20% or more, and they cannot separate acceptable from unacceptable items.

In this case, they grade the entire load as unacceptable. Below 20%, the recycling facility processes the materials in the sorting equipment, and the cost for clean recyclables is zero dollars. A sample of what we described above is in the following table (MRR report for June 2023). On June 1, 2023, ticket 4587654 indicates that the hauler dumped the first load at 9:17 am. 45% (3.18 tons) of the collected materials were contaminated, and 55% (3.89 tons) were clean. However, the recycling facility could not separate the unacceptable load from the clean recyclables. As a result, the Town had to pay \$365.7 to dispose of contaminated items and \$447.35 to dispose of clean recyclables.



Date	TICKET	SITEID	WASTE	QUANTITY	Rate	AMOUNT	TRUCK	TIME_IN	TIME_OUT	PCT
06/01/23	4587654	BERLIN	CONI	3.18	\$115.00	\$365.70	TA-A22	09:17:57	09:20:56	45
06/01/23	4587654	BERLIN	SSRI	3.89	\$115.00	\$447.35	TA-A22	09:17:57	09:20:56	55
06/01/23	4588437	BERLIN	CONI	1.24	\$115.00	\$142.60	TA-A22	12:42:29	12:46:26	25
06/01/23	4588437	BERLIN	SSRI	3.73	\$115.00	\$428.95	TA-A22	12:42:29	12:46:26	75
06/02/23	4589779	BERLIN	CONI	1.03	\$115.00	\$118.45	TA-A22	09:31:46	09:35:57	20
06/02/23	4589779	BERLIN	SSRI	4.10	\$115.00	\$471.50	TA-A22	09:31:46	09:35:57	80
06/08/23	4598015	BERLIN	CONI	0.98	\$115.00	\$112.70	TA-A22	09:36:34	09:39:23	20
06/08/23	4598015	BERLIN	SSRI	3.90	\$115.00	\$448.50	TA-A22	09:36:34	09:39:23	80
06/09/23	4599583	BERLIN	CONI	2.79	\$115.00	\$320.85	TA-A22	08:11:17	08:14:01	50
06/09/23	4599583	BERLIN	SSRI	2.79	\$115.00	\$320.85	TA-A22	08:11:17	08:14:01	50
06/12/23	4601936	BERLIN	CONI	1.12	\$115.00	\$128.80	TA-A22	10:04:19	10:07:20	20
06/12/23	4601936	BERLIN	SSRI	4.50	\$115.00	\$517.50	TA-A22	10:04:19	10:07:20	80
06/15/23	4607580	BERLIN	CONI	0.99	\$115.00	\$113.85	TA-A22	08:13:13	08:18:18	20
06/15/23	4607580	BERLIN	SSRI	3.98	\$115.00	\$457.70	TA-A22	08:13:13	08:18:18	80
				38.22		\$4,395.30				

NEXT STEPS

We established a baseline. The contamination rate in blue carts before the launch of the new recycling program was 53%. Outreaching the findings starting July 2022 was a key component. We prepared a Communication Plan to define the most appropriate communication vehicles to approach the community.

03 Communication Plan: How did we get our communication right?

RESIDENT CONCERNS AROUND THE RECYCLING PROGRAM

Why? What is the value?

The most common resident concerns regarding recycling inspections are 1). The cost to taxpayers of inspecting recycling, and 2). Is there any value to recycling? These two key concerns indicate most residents do not know how the solid waste management system works and how much it costs the taxpayers.

To address these issues and raise residents' awareness and identity towards the recycling program, DPW redesigned the brand and motto of the recycling program. In addition, new educational flyers were prepared on how solid waste management works and what are the costs involved in this process.

VISUAL IDENTITY

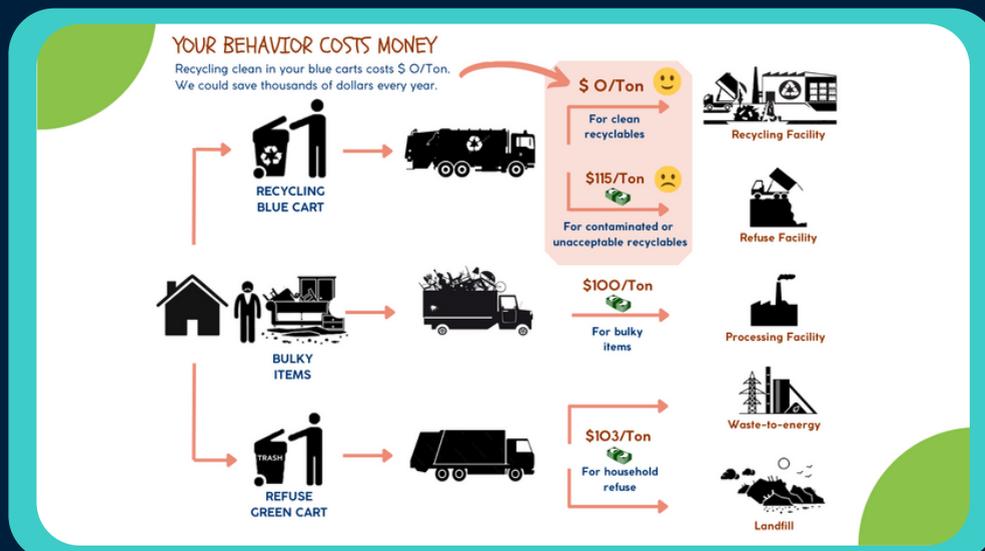
Branding and Messages

New Motto

- East Hartford Recycles Clean!

Messages

- Top Offenders!
- Your Behavior Costs Money!
- Recycling Clean to Save Tax Dollars!!
- When in Doubt, Throw It Out!



COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

Identifying where we are was the first step. I gathered information to assess our current position and conduct a situational analysis. It was crucial to collect demographic data about East Hartford and the people who live there.

The Town of East Hartford has a population of approximately 50,000. People under 18 make up 22%, the population from 18 to 64 is 65%, and people aged 65 and over represents 13%. As for educational attainment, one-third went to high school.

East Hartford is a diverse community where the population of Hispanic origin represents the first majority (37%), followed by the white people (32%) and the black community (24%). The most spoken languages are English and Spanish. For this reason, we translated into the two main languages all our educational materials.

Moving the East Hartford Recycles Clean Program forward has four guidelines:

- Get our messaging straight
- Create consistency
- Educate the right people and
- Targeted persistent education

Below is a table with the methods of approaching the community and the specific communication activities to reach our target population:

Approach Methods	Communication Activities
Direct marketing and education	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Door-to-door canvassing focused on Low Performers Recyclers
Mayor's monthly newsletter	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Monthly information about the East Hartford Recycling Program
Town Website & Social Media Mayor's Office	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Monthly information about the East Hartford Recycling Program
Printed materials (Decals)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Retagging blue carts: Labels on covers (What's IN - What's OUT)
Newspaper Advertising	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Gazette & La Vision.
Workshops/Roadshows Public speaking/presentations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Senior Center, Religious and cultural groups or local societies e.g. Women's organizations, youth groups, student groups, public schools, religious networks and communities such as churches, etc.

04 Recycling Clean Gets Going! Education Saturation

The main components of the communication strategy are the inspection of blue carts and door-to-door tagging. So far, we inspected more than 5,000 blue bins and have sent out more than 1,500 letters educating the population. The innovation in this strategy is that each letter is attached with pictures of the unacceptable materials found in the blue carts of the inspected neighborhood. In other words, we have personalized the content of the letters to raise awareness about inappropriate recycling practices individually.

See below a summary of the approach methods to reaching out to the community and the communication activities carried out in the fiscal year 2022.

NOTICE TAG
ETIQUETA DE AVISO

East Hartford
**RECICLA
CLEAN!**

Scan me and
watch the video



This tag means / Esta etiqueta significa

- You are putting unacceptable items in your blue cart.
- Está colocando artículos inaceptables en su carrito azul.
- Please remove items! Place them in your refuse cart.
- Por favor retirelos. Colóquelos en el carrito verde.
- Please call me, Solid Waste Official, Cesar Zapata

(860) 291-7332 / czapata@easthartfordct.gov



NO plastic bags (full or empty)
NO bolsas plásticas (llenas o vacías)



NO plastic wrap
NO envoltorios de plástico



NO yard waste
NO desechos de jardín



NO styrofoam
NO poliestireno



NO plastic buckets over 3 gallons
NO baldes plásticos sobre 3 galones



NO toys
NO juguetes de ningún tipo

East Hartford
**RECICLA
LIMPIO!**

Escaneame y
mira el video



NO laundry baskets
NO cestas de lavandería

NO bulky rigid plastics
NO plásticos rígidos voluminosos

NO tangler items
NO objetos enredantes

NO wooden items
NO objetos de madera

NO home appliances
NO electrodomésticos

NO scrap metal
NO chatarra o desechos de metal

The blue cart is not a trash bin
El carrito azul no es un basurero

NO clothes / NO textiles
NO ropa / NO textiles

DIRECT MARKETING AND EDUCATION



Door-to-door canvassing focused on low-performers recyclers. It is the most effective approach method to the community. We designed door tags in English and Spanish. Residents reacted positively to this initiative.

MAYOR'S MONTHLY NEWSLETTER



We created a new section in the mayor's monthly newsletter called: **The Solid Waste Official Reports**

The Pulse of East Hartford

- [7/3/2023 - Electronic Devices & Lithium Batteries](#)
- [6/1/2023 - World Environment Day](#)
- [5/1/2023 - Are You Recycling or Wish-cycling?](#)
- [4/3/2023 - Earth Day - Spring Cleaning](#)
- [3/1/2023 - Global Recycling Day - No Plastic Bags!](#)
- [2/1/2023 - Bulky Free Pick-Up Reminder](#)
- [1/3/2023 - Door Notice Tags](#)
- [12/1/2022 - Holiday Recycling Tips](#)
- [11/1/2022 - America Recycles Day](#)
- [10/3/2022 - Transfer Station New Updates](#)
- [09/1/2022 - Transfer Stations New Updates](#)
- [08/1/2022 - Recycling Cart Inspections](#)

TOWN WEBSITE & SOCIAL MEDIA MAYOR'S OFFICE

At least one post each month in the last year.

East Hartford RECYCLES CLEAN!

DO NOT PUT RECYCLABLES IN PLASTIC BAGS

DOUBTS ABOUT RECYCLING?
Get more information here

www.easthartfordct.gov/waste-services

JULY 27, 2022 DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

East Hartford RECYCLES CLEAN! **RECYCLING BLUE CARTS**
UNACCEPTABLE ITEMS COST MONEY!

DEAR RESIDENTS: STREETS OFF OF BURNSIDE AVE

Public Works has been relabeling blue cart lids with stickers that list acceptable and unacceptable items. During DAY 2, the relabeling campaign, we found too many unacceptable items in the neighborhood off of Burnside Ave. One of the Top Offenders is plastic bags! Please, refrain from putting any type of plastic bags or wrap in your recycling blue cart.

READ THE RULES

WHEN IN DOUBT, THROW IT OUT

NO PAINT BUCKETS
NO PLASTIC BAGS

NO PAINT BUCKETS
NO PLASTIC BAGS

NO YARD WASTE

DO NOT USE THE BLUE CART AS A TRASH BIN

RETAGGING BLUE CARTS - LABELS ON COVERS (WHAT'S IN/WHAT'S OUT)

So far we have relabeled more than 40% of blue carts town-wide. The cart tagging program involves a high level of inspection and communication with residents about contamination in the residential recycling stream.

NEWSPAPER ADVERTISING

East Hartford contrata un gerente para la supervisión del reciclaje

Town of East Hartford. Department of Public Works

INSPECCIÓN DE CARROS AZULES. LECCIONES APRENDIDAS

PRINCIPALES CONTAMINANTES

La atención especializada que se mueve por ti

Bristol Health Medical Group

ORTHOPEDIC & SPORTS HEALTH

833.4BHD0CS3 | bristolhealth.org/ortho
Bristol | New Britain | Southington

La Vision: Spanish-language newspaper

The Gazette

VOLUME 137, NO. 40 Thursday, September 8, 2022

Public Works hires first Solid Waste Official

The town of East Hartford recently announced the hiring of Mr. Cesar Zapata as East Hartford's first Solid Waste Official to oversee the town's recycling program.

Cesar Zapata is an economist and a specialist in quality management and environmental auditing, with a Master's Degree in Strategic Business Administration.

Mr. Zapata has extensive experience in local governments in Peru where he served in a variety of managerial, administrative, financial, planning and budgeting roles.

His professional experience also includes solid waste management planning as well as implementation and research on human behavior associated with recycling practices.

Mr. Zapata served as Project Lead for Santiago de Surco, Lima, Peru, a city of 300,000.

CESAR ZAPATA
where he successfully implemented the first recycling facility. In his new role as a Solid Waste Official for the Town of East Hartford, Mr. Zapata will focus on inspection, education, and enforcement of the town's recycling program in an effort to eliminate unacceptable materials that increase costs to taxpayers and reduce Town's recycling success. He will encourage improved curbside recycling behavior through public education, outreach campaigns and enforcement.

"I am so proud of all the work I have done on behalf of the protection of the environment," said Mr. Zapata. "I am so grateful to the Town of East Hartford for giving me the opportunity to do what I love most - serving people. Furthermore, I want to express my commitment to sharing my knowledge and experience to make East Hartford a city with a sustainable future for all its residents."

The Gazette: English-language newspaper

WORKSHOPS/PUBLIC SPEAKING PRESENTATIONS/ONLINE MEETINGS



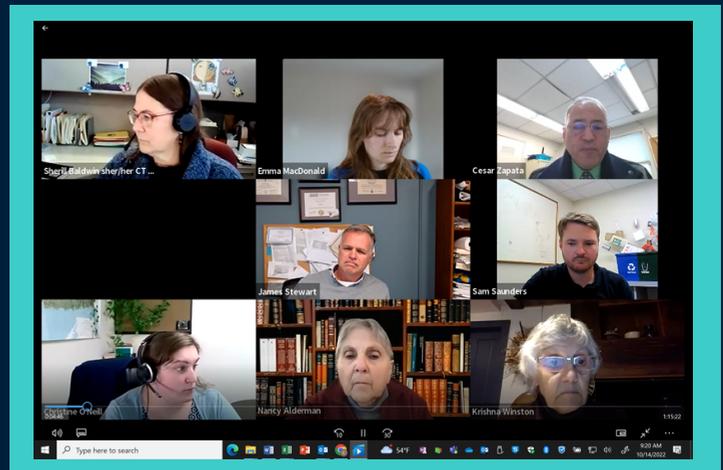
Senior Center

(October 25, 2022)

DEEP

(October 4, 2022)

CCSM COALITION MEETING: EAST HARTFORD RECYCLING PROGRAM



05 Outcomes: Waste Management Metrics Review

BEFORE THE LAUNCH OF THE PROGRAM (FEB 2022)

⊗ DIVERSION RATE (FEB 2022)

20%

9% Recyclables
11% Bulky Items

⊗ CONTAMINATION RATE IN BLUE CARTS

53%

⊗ ACCEPTABLE RATE IN BLUE CARTS

47%

⊗ EXPENSES FOR DISPOSAL OF RECYCLABLES RENDERED MSW

\$203,738

AFTER THE LAUNCH OF THE PROGRAM (JUN 2023)

✓ DIVERSION RATE (JUN 2023)

25%

13% Recyclables
12% Bulky Items

✓ CONTAMINATION RATE IN BLUE CARTS

33%

✓ ACCEPTABLE RATE IN BLUE CARTS

67%

✓ EXPENSES FOR DISPOSAL OF RECYCLABLES RENDERED MSW

\$123,911

SAVINGS FOR LESS DISPOSAL OF RECYCLABLES RENDERED MSW **\$ 79,827**
(39.2% COMPARED WITH THE PREVIOUS YEAR)

Waste Management Metrics

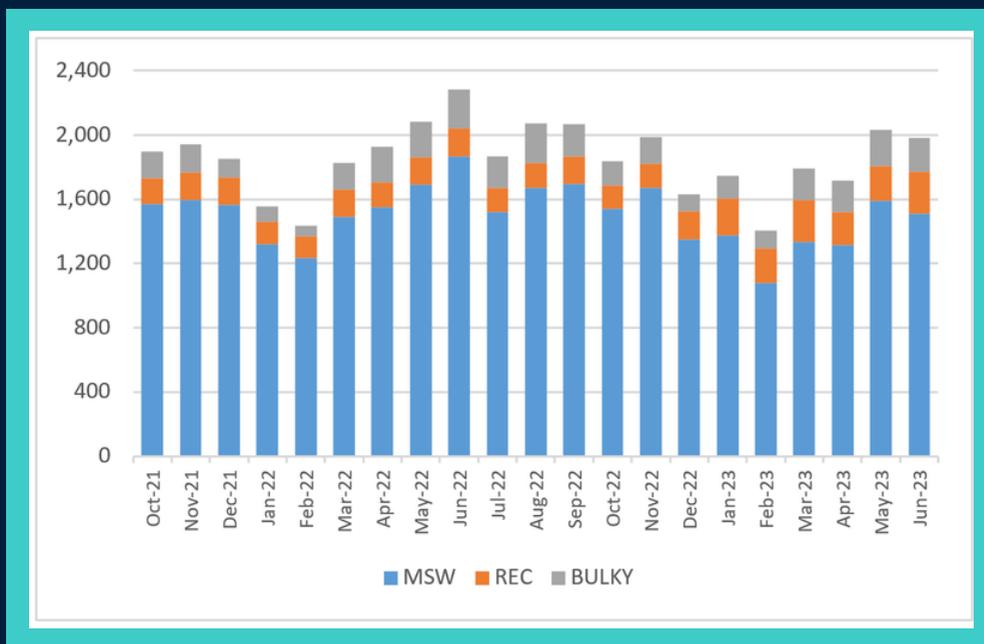
Key Performance Indicators - June 2023

FY 22-23

A new Solid Waste Official position was created on February 2022, to focus on solid waste management improvements to help the community achieve waste minimization and diversion goals. The goals of the new Solid Waste Official were to:

- 1) Increase the diversion rate (Base Line 20% - Feb 2022)
- 2) Reduce the high contamination rate in blue carts (Base Line: Annual Average 53% - Feb 2022)
- 3) Increase the percentage of acceptable items in the single stream (Base Line: 47% - Feb 2022)
- 4) Reduce expenses for disposal of recyclables rendered municipal solid waste (Base Line 203.7K/FY 2022)

Municipal Solid Waste (MSW), Recycling & Bulky Recyclable Items



20% ↑ 25%
Feb 2022

Diversion Rate

The diversion rate is the portion of waste not sent to the landfill.

Recycling & Bulky Recyclable Items represent 25% of MSW.

13% Recyclables

12% Bulky Recyclable Items

Contamination Rate in Blue Carts (Acceptable vs Unacceptable)

53% ↓ 33%
Feb 2022

Average Contamination Rate in Blue Carts

Represent the percentage of unacceptable items in blue carts. The rate dropped 18% compared to the previous year.

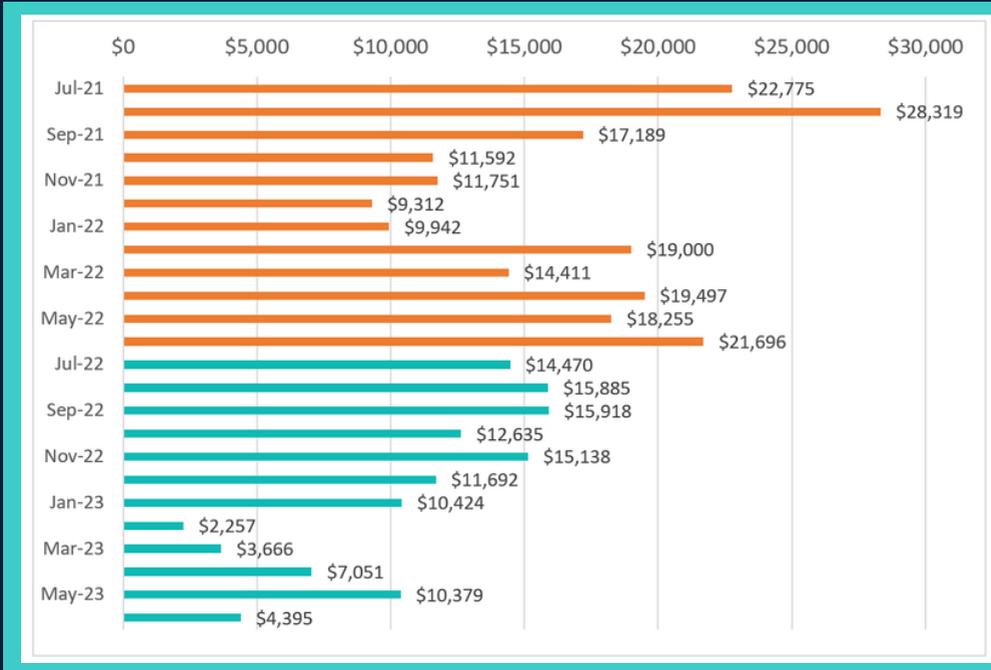
47% ↑ 67%
Feb 2022

Average Acceptable Rate in Blue Carts.

Represent the percentage of acceptable items in blue carts. The rate has increased 18% compared to the previous year.



Expenses and Savings for Less Disposal of Recyclables Rendered MSW FY 22-23



\$79,827

Savings FY 2023

The savings represent 39.2% compared to the previous year and exceed the annual investment in the Solid Waste Official position created in the fiscal year 2022.

\$ 203,738

Expenses FY 2022 (*)

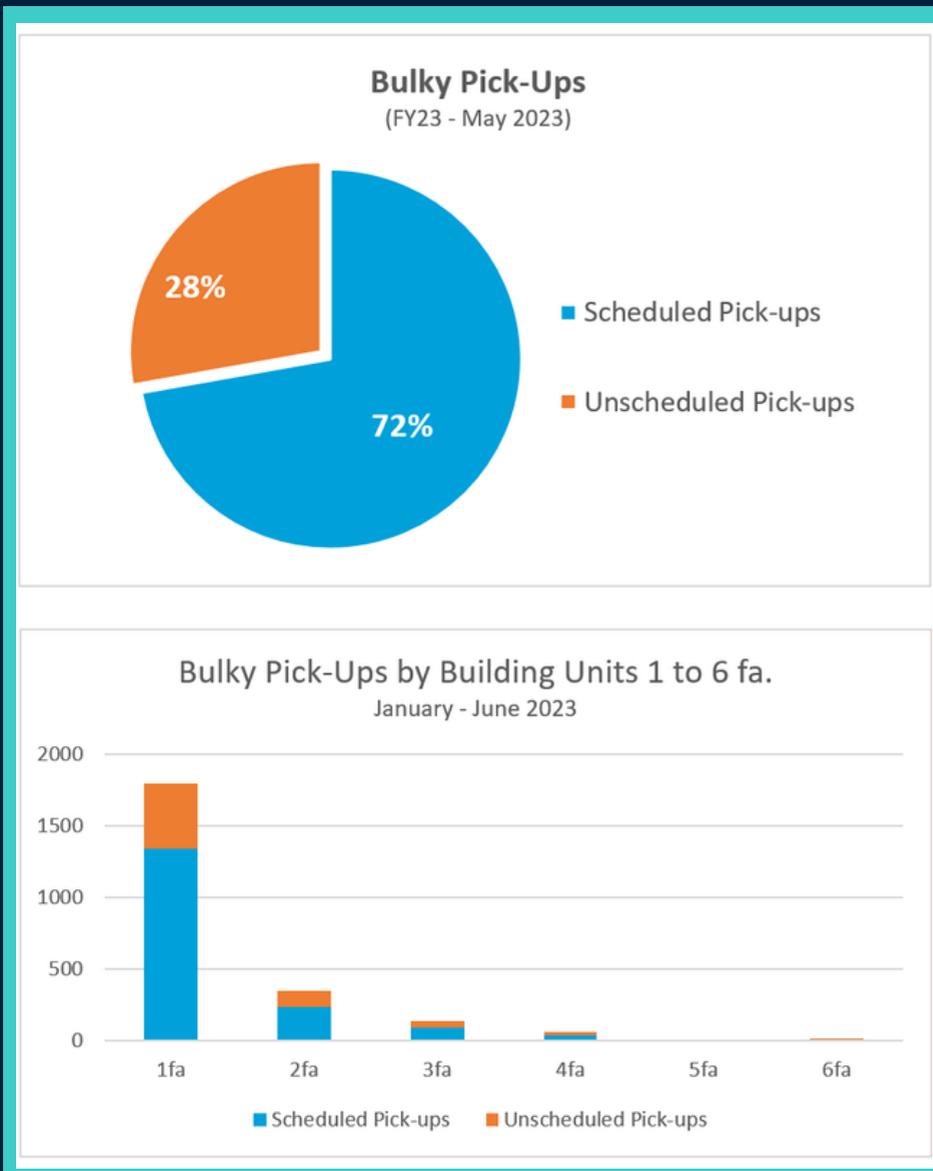
(*) July 2021 - June 2022

\$ 123,911

Expenses FY 2023 (*)

(*) July 2022 - June 2023

Bulky Pick-Ups (New Service) & Transfer Station Metrics - FY 23



10,652

Transfer Station Visits

3,867

Bulky Waste Curbside Scheduled (New service - All American Waste)

1,490

Bulky Waste Curbside Unscheduled (Town of East Hartford)

Curbside bulky pick-up is now FREE. Residents can call All American Waste (860) 289-7850 for their appointment.

- Properties 1-2 families are allowed two (2) visits per unit FREE per Fiscal Year (July 1, 2022 – June 30, 2023). \$25 for each additional appointment scheduled beyond the FREE pickups.
- Properties 3-6 families are allowed four (4) visits per unit FREE per Fiscal Year (July 1, 2022 – June 30, 2023). \$25 for each additional appointment scheduled beyond the FREE pickups.

PREPARED BY CESAR ZAPATA

Visit our website for more
information about
East Hartford Recycles Clean

EASTHARTFORDCT.GOV

