



# 2024 ANNUAL REPORT ON RECYCLABLES RECOVERED & UPDATED COMPREHENSIVE RECYCLING ANALYSIS

This report is submitted pursuant to:

- NYSDEC Permit Number 7-3142-00028/00011  
**Solid Waste Permit: Onondaga County Resource Recovery Facility**
- NYSDEC Permit Number 7 3156 00047/00001  
**Solid Waste Permit: OCRRA Landfill**
- NYSDEC Permit Number 7-3148-00048/00003  
**Solid Waste Permit: Ley Creek Transfer Station**

**Period reported:** January 1, 2024 through December 31, 2024  
**Date:** February 28, 2025  
**Planning Unit:** County of Onondaga including the City of Syracuse, excluding the Town and Village of Skaneateles  
**Contact Person:** Mr. Kevin Spillane, Executive Director, OCRRA  
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## 2024 Recycling Data

The Onondaga County Resource Recovery Agency (OCRRA) is a non-profit public benefit corporation created by the New York State Legislature, which delivers a comprehensive solid waste management and resource recovery system to Onondaga County residents. Since beginning operations in 1990, OCRRA has overseen the recycling of more than 12 million tons of material.

OCRRA inventories and records tonnages of all material recycled through the Agency's curbside program. **In 2024, 20,567 tons of materials were collected and recycled from households through the curbside recycling program.** The OCRRA service area has a population of approximately 461,170 people, with roughly 212,072 households. It should be noted that this tonnage assumes that all curbside recycling is managed through OCRRA's system, although curbside recycling is not flow controlled in Onondaga County.

In 2024, 411,543 tons of materials were recycled through mandatory and voluntary residential and commercial recycling programs in Onondaga County. Recycled material made up 52.23% of the total recycling and solid waste. (Table 1).

<b>Table 1 - 2024 Recycling and Solid Waste Totals</b>		
	<b>Tons</b>	<b>% of Total Waste</b>
<b>Recycling</b>		
Curbside Recycling (Primarily Residential)	20,567	5.00%
Commercial Recycling (Primarily Business) <sup>1</sup>	390,976	95.00%
<b>Total Recycling</b>	<b>411,543</b>	<b>52.23%</b>
<b>Solid Waste</b>		
OCRRA Municipal Solid Waste (MSW)	287,108	
MSW Ferrous & Nonferrous Recycling <sup>2</sup>	-11,463	
OCRRA Construction & Demolition Debris (C&D) <sup>2</sup>	68,554	
Metal removed from Construction & Demolition Debris (C&D)	-1,450	
Other Waste <sup>3</sup>	33,597	
<b>Total Solid Waste</b>	<b>376,346</b>	<b>47.77%</b>
<b>Total Recycling and Solid Waste</b>		<b>787,889</b>

<sup>1</sup> Data is voluntarily reported to OCRRA by recycling companies, governmental organizations, retail, and commercial firms. Reported data has been adjusted to eliminate known double counting. Data reporting is voluntary and is not audited by OCRRA. In cases when data is not reported voluntarily, OCRRA has gathered data from historical NYS Department of Environmental Conservation reporting.

<sup>2</sup>Ferrous, nonferrous, and other metals that are recovered from MSW at the Onondaga County Resource Recovery Facility and recycled are subtracted to avoid double counting.

<sup>3</sup>Includes biosolids currently being sent to a landfill.

Table 1 shows the total recycling and trash generation for 2024 in OCRRA’s service area including the total solid waste percentages and the actual percentages / tonnages of recyclables removed from the waste stream. In addition to the mandatory recycling materials (see Table 4), this total also includes voluntary recycling materials such as batteries, food waste, electronic waste, hazardous waste, yard waste, and construction debris.

NYSDEC Permit Number 7-3142-00028/00011 issued to OCRRA to operate the Onondaga County Resource Recovery Facility includes a recycling goal of at least 40% processible waste annually. The processible recycling rate, as defined by NYSDEC, considers only those materials recycled that could have otherwise been disposed of at the Onondaga County Resource Recovery Facility. For example, it does not include yard waste, which is unacceptable waste at the Onondaga County Resource Recovery Facility.

**The processible recycling rate in 2024 was 51.74%.** As such, OCRRA maintained the recycling goal of at least 40% processible waste, consistent with the NYSDEC Comprehensive Recycling Analysis (CRA) requirements.

OCRRA projected that in 2024, the tonnage of projected mandatory recycling material would be 202,500 tons in the NYSDEC approved 2016 Comprehensive Solid Waste Management Plan Update. In 2024, 295,556 actual tons of material were processible recycling.

As compared to the projected recovery rates contained in the NYSDEC approved Comprehensive Solid Waste Management Plan, the original projected recovery rates have been met. The schedule progress for implementation status and targets were defined in OCRRA’s Comprehensive Solid Waste Management Plan Update for 2023.

The Onondaga County Comprehensive Solid Waste Management Plan Update Addendum, submitted on January 16, 2025, provided 2025-2026 MSW Generation Projections. This document was approved by NYSDEC on January 29, 2025, and it extended the Local Solid Waste Management Plan through December 31, 2026. Table 2 shows 2024 totals for processible recycling and municipal solid waste.

<b>Table 2 - 2024 Processible Recycling and Municipal Solid Waste</b>			
		<b>Tons</b>	<b>% of Total Waste</b>
<b>Processible<sup>1</sup> Recycling</b>			
Curbside Recycling (Primarily Residential)		20,567	
Processible Commercial (Primarily Business) <sup>2</sup>		274,989	
	<b>Total Processible Recycling</b>	<b>295,556</b>	<b>51.74%</b>
<b>Municipal Solid Waste (MSW)</b>			
Incoming Municipal Solid Waste		287,108	
MSW Ferrous & Nonferrous Recycling <sup>3</sup>		-11,463	
	<b>Total MSW</b>	<b>275,645</b>	<b>48.26%</b>
<b>Total Processible Recycling and Solid Waste</b>		<b>571,201</b>	

<sup>1</sup>Processible materials are those which could have been disposed of at the Waste-to-Energy Facility, including Non-Ferrous Metals, Ferrous Metals, Glass, Wood, Office Paper, Newspapers, Magazines, Corrugated Cardboard and Paperboard, Textiles, and Plastics.

<sup>2</sup> Data is voluntarily reported to OCRRA by recycling companies, governmental organizations, retail, and commercial firms. Reported data have been adjusted to eliminate known double counting. Data reporting is voluntary and is not audited by OCRRA. In cases when data is not reported voluntarily, OCRRA has gathered data from historical NYS Department of Environmental Conservation reporting.

<sup>3</sup>When calculating recycling rates, ferrous and nonferrous metals recovered from MSW at the Onondaga County Resource Recovery Facility are subtracted to avoid double counting.

Table 3 shows 2024 recycling totals by material type.

<b>Table 3 - 2024 Recycling by Material<sup>1</sup></b>		
<b>Material Type</b>	<b>Tons</b>	<b>Percent of Total</b>
<i>Organic Wastes (excluding Paper)</i>		
Food	92,526	22%
Yard Waste	7,386	2%
Wood	8,781	2%
Textiles	4,014	1%
<b>Total Organic Wastes</b>	<b>112,708</b>	<b>27%</b>
<i>Plastics</i>		
<b>Total Plastics</b>	<b>7,056</b>	<b>2%</b>
<i>Metal</i>		
Non-Ferrous Metals	15,511	4%
Ferrous Metals	123,089	30%
Other Metals	1,450	0%
<b>Total Metal</b>	<b>140,050</b>	<b>34%</b>
<i>Paper</i>		
Corrugated Cardboard & Paperboard	113,453	28%
Office Paper, Newspapers and Magazines	13,303	3%
Books	626	0%
<b>Total Paper</b>	<b>127,382</b>	<b>31%</b>
<i>Other</i>		
Glass	3,333	1%
Hazardous Wastes	0	0%
Electronics/Computers	1,068	0%
Batteries	2,574	1%
Sludge/Wastewater	0	0%
Miscellaneous	17,373	4%
<b>Total Other</b>	<b>24,347</b>	<b>6%</b>
<b>Total Material Recycled<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>411,543</b>	<b>100%</b>

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<sup>2</sup>Total Material Recycled does not include curbside recycling residue resulting from processing at the material recovery facility from residential curbside collection.

## Required Recycling

The original Onondaga County Source Separation Law, which mandated recycling of certain materials by all waste generators, was passed by the County Legislature in 1989. The law was updated in 2011.

Table 4 lists mandatory recyclables.

<b>Table 4 - OCRRA Mandated Recyclables</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Office Paper and Discarded Mail</li><li>• Newspapers and Magazines</li><li>• Corrugated Cardboard, Brown Paper Bags, Paperboard, Pizza Boxes</li><li>• Milk and Juice Cartons, Gable-Top Cartons, Aseptic Cartons</li><li>• Glass Food and Beverage Containers</li><li>• Metal Food and Beverage Containers</li><li>• Aluminum Foil</li><li>• Aerosol Cans</li><li>• #1 and #2 Plastic Bottles</li><li>• #5 Plastic Dairy Containers</li><li>• Soft Cover Books</li></ul>

## Markets and Material Recovery

### *MRF Contract*

For nearly 30 years, OCRRA has contracted with a local material recovery facility (MRF) that is owned and operated by WM-Recycle America (WM-RA). WM-RA is responsible for sorting, baling, and marketing the curbside residential recycling material collected by private haulers, municipal haulers, and municipalities with private hauling contracts. There is no contract arrangement between OCRRA and WM-RA for commercial materials generated in Onondaga County, only for residential materials.

The contract states that OCRRA pays a fee to WM-RA (currently \$88.87 in 2025) to perform the sorting, baling, marketing and transport of the recycled materials and shares in revenues from sold materials (if any). Depending on market conditions, the contract results in either a cost or revenue to OCRRA. Haulers may bring commercial recycling materials to WM-RA, but they must make arrangements through WM-RA separately.

## 2024 Recycling Markets

### **PAPER:**

#### Mixed Paper:

Commodity values of mixed paper started out at \$50 / ton, increased for the first half of the year, plateaued at \$ 70 / ton from May – September, and then dropped to \$40 / ton by the end of the year.

#### Old Corrugated Cardboard (OCC):

Started out at \$95 / ton and increased to \$115 / ton from March to August, before decreasing steadily to \$80 / ton by the end of the year.

### **CONTAINERS:**

#### Aluminum and Natural High-Density Polyethylene (HDPE):

Both commodities increased steadily throughout 2024.

#### Colored High-Density Polyethylene (HDPE), Polyethylene Terephthalate (PET), and Polypropylene (PP):

All three commodities were variable throughout the year. Colored HDPE started off at \$480 / ton and ended at \$180 / ton. PET started at \$280 / ton and ended at \$350 / ton. PP started off at \$120 / ton and ended the year at \$240 / ton.

#### Steel and Rigid Plastics:

Both commodities held steady at the same price all year; \$15 / ton and \$20 / ton, respectively.

In 2024, 4,565 tons of food and beverage glass were collected from curbside recycling for processing at WM-RA facility. This glass is broken during collection, transport, and processing. During processing it is also mixed with small pieces of residue, which renders it too dirty to be turned into new glass bottles. In 2024, OCRRA paid \$27.62 per ton to manage glass, more than \$126,000 for the year in total. For decades, this glass was utilized as Alternative Operating Cover (AOC) at area landfills.

Increasing frequency of this material being considered unsuitable for use as Alternative Operating Cover (AOC) by the on-site DEC monitor at High Acres Landfill has caused OCRRA to remove curbside glass residue from its calculation of recycled materials.

This management of glass is at odds with our public messaging and the goals of the NYSDEC's 2023 State Solid Waste Management Plan, as items that we instruct residents to place in their recycling bins, for purposes of recycling, are being landfilled as trash.

### **AVERAGE BLENDED VALUE:**

The rise and fall of the market price of recyclable material affects the average blended value (ABV) of curbside recycling commodities. The ABV is based on the value of each commodity

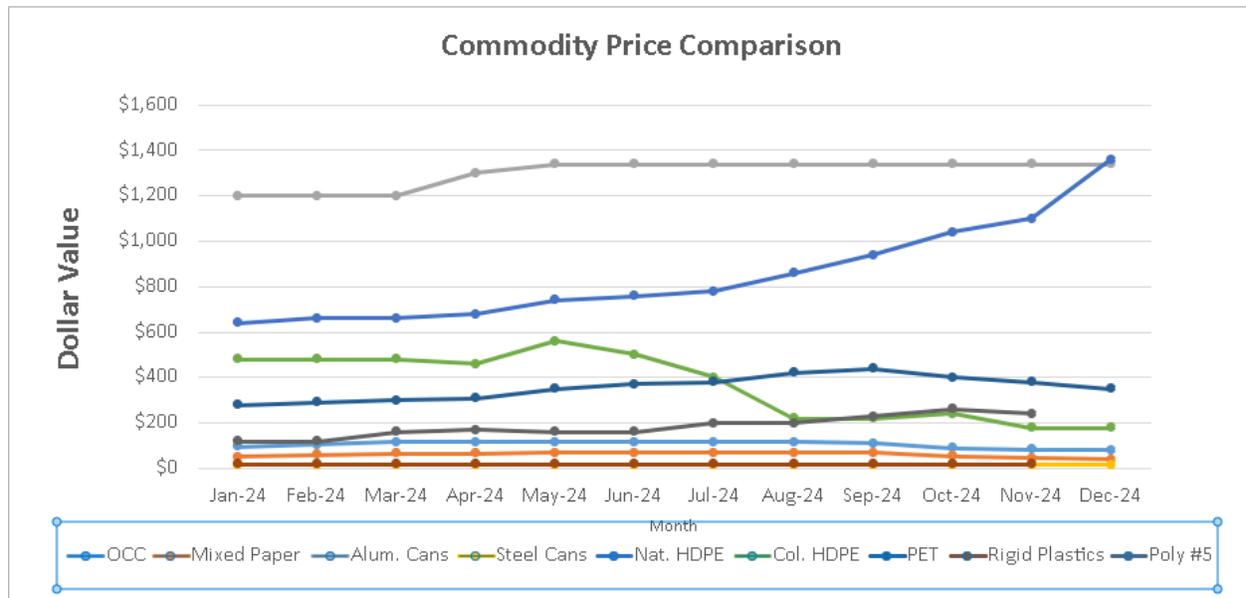
material type at a percentage that is representative of the material's weight. During 2024, the monthly ABV did not exceed \$86.70, meaning OCRRA paid the WM-RA to process recyclables per the OCRRA / WM-RA Contract. In 2024, OCRRA paid a net total of \$590,320 to WM-RA to support curbside residential recycling.

Figure 1 shows monthly commodity prices for materials processed at WM-RA in 2024.

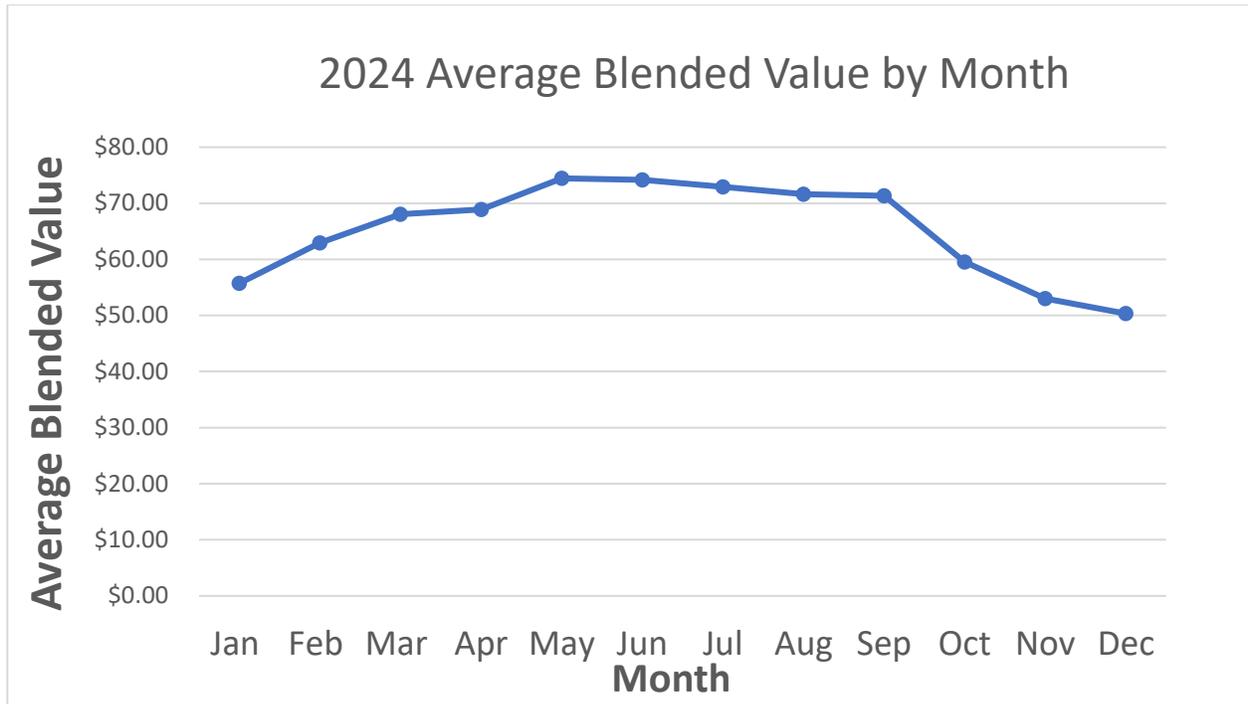
Figure 2 shows the monthly ABV of curbside recyclables processed at WM-RA in 2024.

Figure 3 shows the yearly ABV of curbside recyclables processed at WM-RA from 2014 to 2024.

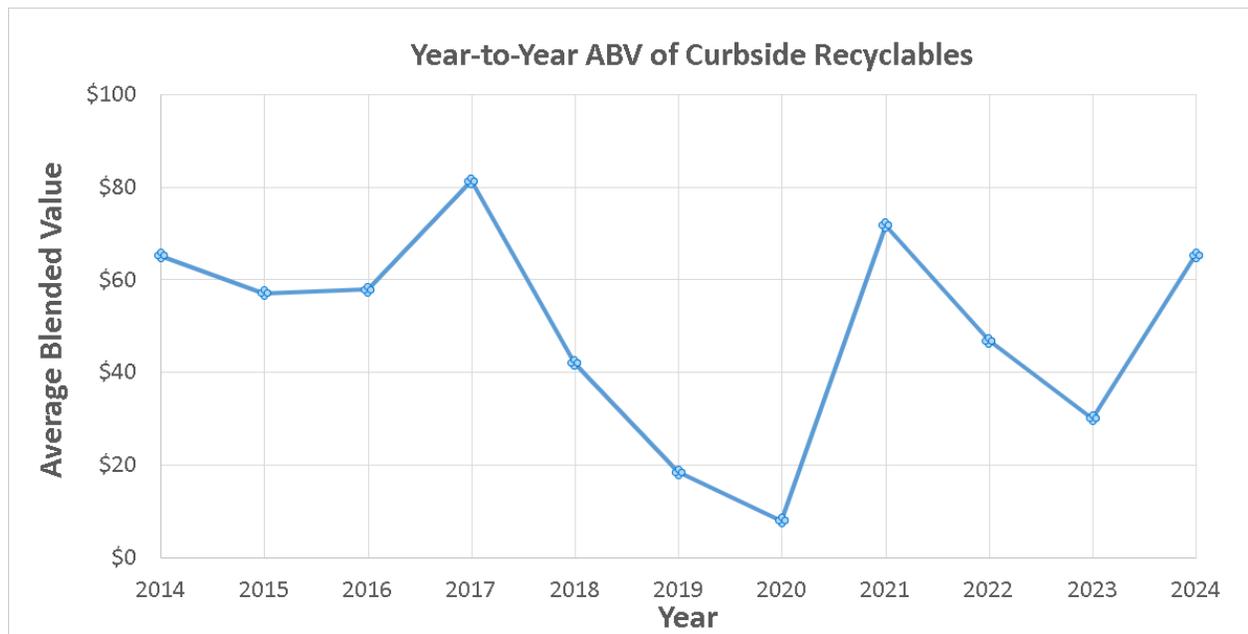
**Figure 1. 2024 Commodity Prices Month-to-Month**



**Figure 2. 2024 Average Blended Value of Curbside Recyclables by Month**



**Figure 3. Year- to-Year Blended Value of Curbside Recyclables**



## 2024 Recycling Program

OCRRA provides residents of Onondaga County a strong recycling and composting program; a foundation for waste disposal at the local Onondaga County Resource Recovery Facility; a robust public outreach and education service; and award-winning programs for disposing of hard to manage materials. OCRRA’s work is not funded by taxes. Tipping fees charged to haulers for disposing of solid waste at our transfer station and Onondaga County Resource Recovery Facility, tipping fees for haulers to deliver residential recycling to the MRF, and revenue from electricity generated by the Onondaga County Resource Recovery Facility provide the funds to operate OCRRA’s Recycling Program.

OCRRA’s recycling department is responsible for educating the public about mandatory recycling rules and providing technical assistance to residents, schools, and businesses in Onondaga County. In 2024, OCRRA demonstrated that aggressive steps are being taken to maximize the recycling of all waste streams, including continued reduction through maximum feasible recycling. In 2024, OCRRA engaged over 70 classrooms, community organizations and tabling events, educating over 3,100 community members on recycling, reduction, and reuse.

OCRRA’s enforcement officer augments the educational efforts of the team’s recycling specialists. The enforcement officer visits businesses and apartment complexes to confirm compliance with local recycling laws. They also inspect loads of solid waste at the Onondaga County Resource Recovery Facility and OCRRA’s transfer station and issue warnings and/or notices of violations for loads that contain recycling. The enforcement officer and recycling specialists work together to assist waste generators in designing a recycling program that will capture the mandated recyclables. Table 5 shows program costs for 2024 recycling services.

<b>Table 5 - 2024 Recycling Program Costs</b>	
<b>Program</b>	<b>Expenses</b>
Recycling Personnel <sup>1</sup>	\$487,685
Material Recovery Facility (MRF) Fees	\$590,320
Public Education	\$393,586
Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) Collection	\$193,205
Blue Bin Expense	\$51,707
Other Recycling Programs <sup>1</sup>	\$228,587
<b>Total Cost</b>	<b>\$1,945,090</b>

<sup>1</sup>Includes all equipment maintenance, hauling and disposal expenses, charity credits, postage, memberships, and miscellaneous expenses.

## *2024 Efforts to Improve Recycling Rate*

In 2024, OCRRA's award-winning recycling programs delivered environmental solutions, excellent public education, and quality disposal and recycling services to the residents of Onondaga County. Examples of measures taken to improve recycling include:

- More than 4,850 tons of food scraps and food process waste were composted at OCRRA's state-of-the-art compost site. Food scraps were combined with yard waste to generate finished compost. Resident and commercial customers purchased more than 10,848 cubic yards of compost at OCRRA's Amboy Compost Site and 8,264 cubic yards at Jamesville Compost Site, adding the valuable soil amendment back into the community's soils.
- More than 172 tons of recycling were collected at OCRRA's Transfer Stations from residents without curbside recycling collection.
- 1,686 tons of metal were separated and recycled at OCRRA's locations. In addition, 11,462 tons of metal were separated and recycled at OCRRA's Onondaga County Resource Recovery Facility.
- 5,740 pounds of rechargeable batteries, 140,000 pounds of alkaline batteries, and 2,900 pounds of button and coin batteries were recycled in 2024 through partnerships with Call2Recycle and National Lamp Recycling. OCRRA's battery recycling program provides residents with 13 convenient drop-off locations to dispose of rechargeable, alkaline, and button batteries free of cost.
- More than 12,680 fluorescent bulbs were sent to American Lamp Recycling through OCRRA's bulb recycling program, keeping over 44,477 milligrams of mercury out of the environment and waste stream. OCRRA partners with local hardware stores to provide residents convenient locations to drop off old fluorescent bulbs for free recycling.
- More than 10,800 bags of OCRRA's premium 1/4-inch compost were sold through a network of 30+ lawn and garden retail outlets, helping to return valuable nutrients to local soils.
- More than 1,790 residents took advantage of OCRRA's free Household Hazardous Waste program in concert with Miller Environmental Group.
- 90 residents of Onondaga County attended the OCRRA and Reworld (formerly Covanta) Mercury Collection Event in September. 119 mercury thermometers and 43 mercury thermostats were collected, diverting 291,000 milligrams of mercury from the waste stream.

- 4,253 volunteers from 308 groups participated in OCRRA's annual Earth Day Litter Cleanup. 157,635 pounds of litter were collected from neighborhoods across Onondaga County.
- OCRRA advocated for expansion of the New York State Bottle Bill and supported Extended Producer Responsibility for various products, by serving on committees of the New York Product Stewardship Council and New York State Association for Reduction, Reuse and Recycling.
- OCRRA employees shared their expertise by presenting at various industry conferences in 2024, including the annual Federation of New York Solid Waste Conference, New York State Organics Summit, the annual New York State Association for Reduction, Reuse, and Recycling Conference, and the Air and Waste Management Association Conference.