

# ZERO WASTE TOOLKIT FOR MULTI-FAMILY PROPERTY MANAGERS & OWNERS



Published by

City of  
**Gainesville**

Public Works Department  
Solid Waste Division



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# Introduction

The City of Gainesville has a goal to go **Zero Waste by 2040**. To reach this goal, we will need to work together to encourage citizens to rethink their waste habits and reduce material going to landfills.

Whether you are just getting started or want to refresh your property's recycling program, this toolkit is designed to help property managers and property staff:




- **Evaluate current waste streams and improve collection programs**
- **Identify the necessary steps to reach compliance with city ordinances**
- **Increase resident participation and understanding of collection programs**
- **Establish a system to ensure long-term participation and success**

## City of Gainesville Ordinances

Please note that whenever you see ⓘ or **red text** this indicates a City of Gainesville Solid Waste Ordinance.

For a directory of Gainesville Zero Waste ordinances, visit [gainesvillefl.gov/ZeroWaste](https://gainesvillefl.gov/ZeroWaste).

### Benefits of Going Zero Waste:

-  **Save money.** Effective recycling and reuse programs reduce garbage disposal costs.
-  **Help your community and the environment.** Recycling conserves energy, reduces greenhouse gas emissions, and promotes domestic resource utilization.
-  **Make your property more attractive to tenants.** Tenants want to “do the right thing” and will seek out apartments that reflect those values.

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# Step 1: Managing Your Garbage Services

Well-managed garbage collection at multi-family properties ultimately means less work for property staff and a more pleasant experience for tenants. Understanding and evaluating your current garbage services is an essential step in managing the overall services at your property.

## Garbage Collection At Least 2 x Week

- ① Garbage at multi-family properties must be collected no less than twice per week. Larger, densely populated properties may need more frequent collections. Properties serviced with compactors are exempt from this requirement.

## Types of Garbage Collection Services



DUMPSTERS



CARTS



COMPACTORS



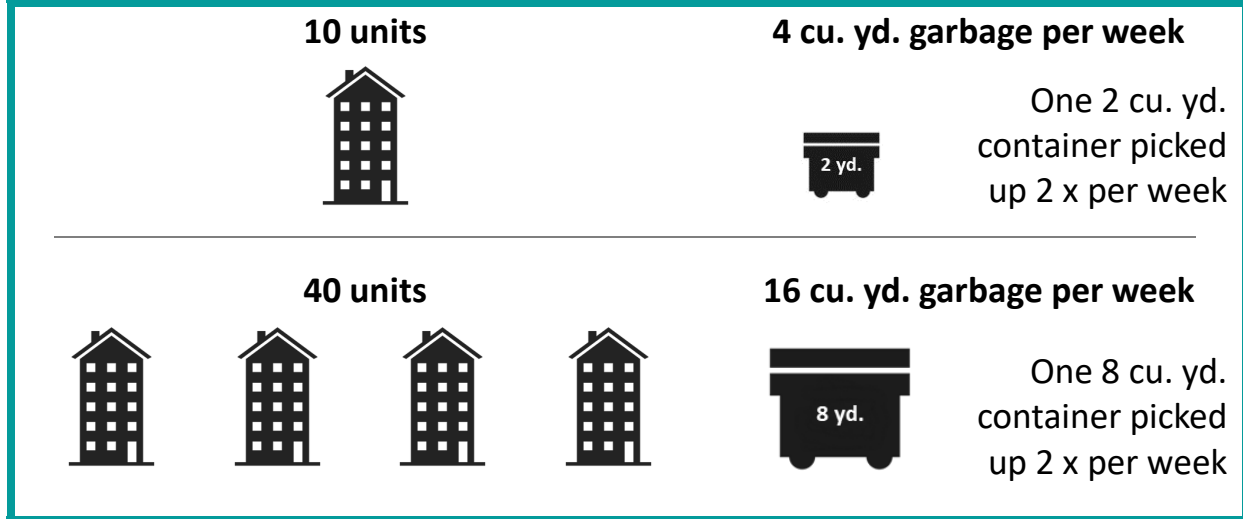
VALET SERVICES

## Estimating Your Garbage Service Level Needs

Determining your property's garbage service level needs will depend on several factors, including the frequency of collection, size of the garbage containers, number of units, and total number of tenants. If garbage containers are frequently overflowing, then you'll likely need to increase your service level.



**There should be enough capacity to prevent garbage containers from overflowing.**  
A rule of thumb for estimating your garbage service level needs is to have at least 4 cubic yards (cu. yd.) of garbage per week for every 10 units.\*



\*based on no more than 2 tenants per unit.

## Bulky Items Must Be Removed Within 7 Days

- ① Properties must arrange for the collection of bulky items from residents, **such as furniture, appliances, and other large debris**, and these items must be removed within seven (7) days after set out.

Bulky items can be removed by the property management team or a contracted service provider (waste hauler).



**PRO TIP:** Be sure to notify residents where to place bulky items out for collection.

## Keep Collection Areas Clean & Lids Closed



- ① Property management is responsible for keeping collection areas in a clean, sanitary and sightly manner.
- ① Dumpster and cart lids should be kept closed when containers are not in use. Odors from open containers can attract unwanted pests, such as birds, rodents, and bugs. Containers with open lids can accumulate rainwater, attract mosquitos, and lead to unpleasant garbage odors.



# Step 2: Maximizing Recycling Participation

A well-designed recycling program saves money by lowering garbage disposal costs, helps prevent overflowing garbage dumpsters, and provides an added amenity to tenants. Understanding and evaluating your current recycling services is an important step in establishing a successful recycling program, along with proper educational information to teach residents how to recycle at your property.



## Mandatory Recycling Collection

- ① Property management must provide recycling collection services of all designated recyclable materials.

### Designated Recyclable Materials

#### CONTAINERS



Glass Bottles & Jars  
Metal Cans (Aluminum & Steel)  
Plastic Bottles, Jugs & Jars

#### PAPERS



Corrugated Cardboard  
Paperboard  
Mixed Paper

## Different Recycling Collection Systems

There are two types of recycling collection systems available, single stream or dual stream. The number and type of recycle containers needed will in part depend on which contracted provider and service type you've selected.

### Single Stream

Papers, bottles & cans are mixed together in one container.



### Dual Stream

Papers are collected in separate containers from bottles & cans.



Single stream or Dual stream recycling systems are both acceptable, but **whichever system you select must include collection all of the designated recyclable materials.**

## Types Of Recycle Collection Services



**SINGLE STREAM RECYCLE DUMPSTER**



**SINGLE STREAM RECYCLE CARTS**



**DUAL STREAM RECYCLE CARTS**



**VALET TRASH & RECYCLE SERVICES**

## Setting Up Recycling Locations

- ① Recycling services must be as convenient and as accessible to residents as garbage collection.

When recycling containers are located farther away than garbage containers, residents are more likely to toss all their waste materials in the closest container, leading to lower recycling rates.

**PRO TIP:** Whenever possible place garbage and recycling containers side-by-side for easy access.

**✗ inadequate**



**✓ adequate**



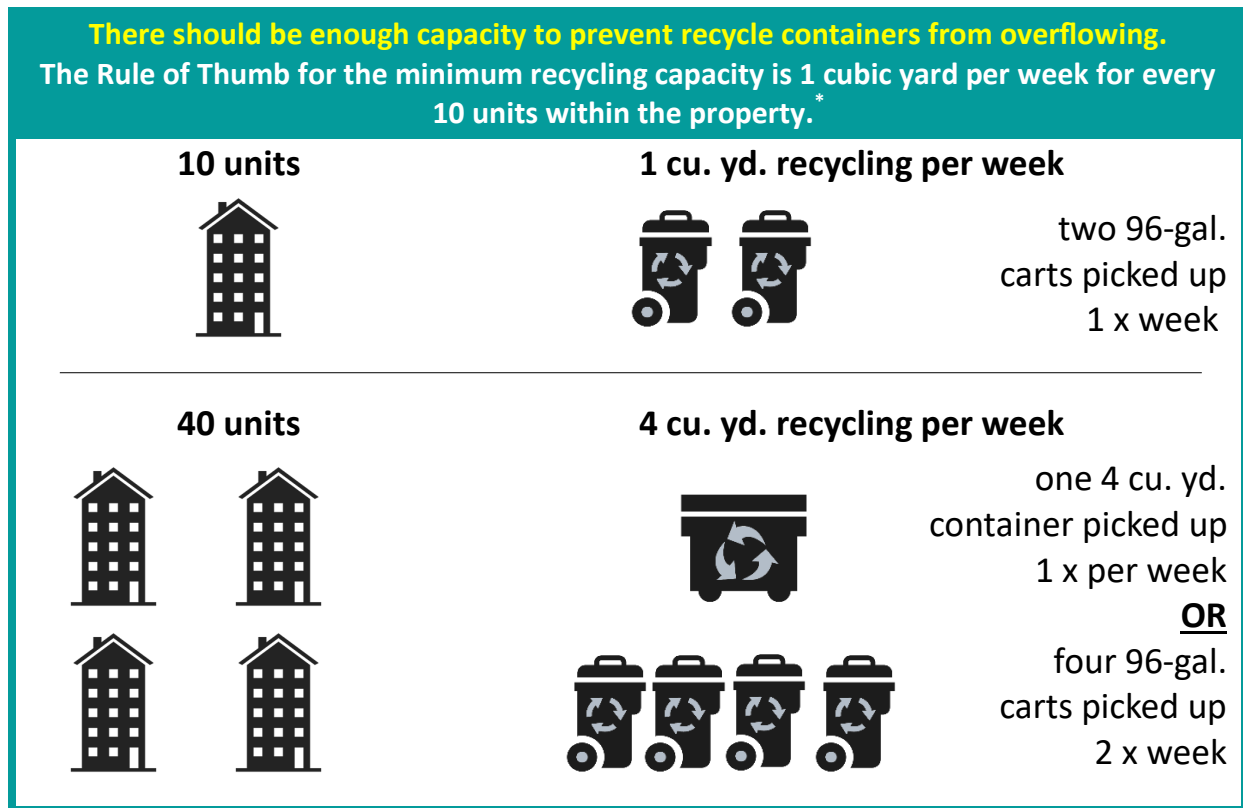
**✓ optimal**



The Solid Waste Division staff are available for site evaluations for properties with limited space availability to find alternative set out locations or recycling service options.

## Recycling Service Levels

- ① Property management must have an adequate level of recycling service and capacity available to collect recyclables. *What is an adequate level of service and capacity?*



\*based on no more than 2 tenants per unit.

- Properties with more than 2 tenants per unit will accordingly need to increase recycling service collection frequency or container capacity above the 1 cubic yard estimate for every 10 units.
- Property management will also need to factor in recycle container placement at multiple locations.

## Educating Your Residents To Recycle

- ① Recycling educational signs must be located in common areas where recyclables are collected. This includes trash chute areas used by tenants. The type of education signs used will depend on whether recyclables are collected single stream or dual stream. Property managers can work with their contracted service provider to produce educational signs, use the free signs available from the Solid Waste Division (see page 13). Sign graphics are also available for download from the City's website.





- ① Recycling information must be distributed to all residents at least once annually and to new residents on move-in. Be sure to include information on proper garbage disposal and bulky item protocols.

Don't forget to celebrate your recycling successes with tenants. Regularly acknowledging residents for doing a good job recycling will go a long way toward keeping residents engaged in the property's recycling program.

**PRO TIP:** Share your recycling success with tenants for greater buy in.



- ① At least one indoor recycle storage container must be provided for each unit. The indoor storage containers make it easy for tenants to store recyclable items in their residences and then carry them to the property's primary collection containers. The Solid Waste Division has a list of pre-approved reusable indoor containers available online at [gainesvillefl.gov/Apartment-Recycling](https://gainesvillefl.gov/Apartment-Recycling).

Indoor recycle storage containers can be distributed to tenants during move-in orientation, door-to-door, at residential social events, or left inside units before residents move in.

## Checklist For A Successful Recycling Program

### Checklist For A Successful Recycling Program

- ✓ Recycling for all designated recyclables made available
- ✓ Recycling is as convenient & accessible as garbage disposal
- ✓ Each unit is provided with an indoor recycle storage container
- ✓ Educational signs placed at each recycling collection area
- ✓ Garbage & recycle collection containers are properly labeled
- ✓ New residents received recycling information on move-in
- ✓ Residents receive recycling info at least once per year
- ✓ Adequate recycling container capacity and service (no overflow or spillage)

## Step 3. Working With Your Waste Service Provider

Maintaining a good working relationship with your waste service provider is crucial for ensuring and upholding sanitary conditions on your property. This will contribute to a better quality of life for your residents and a cleaner, safer, and more sustainable environment for everyone.

### Properly Labeled Waste & Recycle Containers

Clear and visible labels on containers help residents easily identify where different materials belong. Check each of the containers on your property to see if they are correctly identified with garbage and recycling decals.

- ① Your service provider is responsible for making sure waste containers are clearly labeled according to the city's guidelines. Recycling, Yard Waste and Food Waste containers should also have **"NO GARBAGE"** decals and a list of materials accepted in that container on the container itself. If container labels are missing or faded, contact your contracted service provider.
- ① Your service provider is also responsible for placing the City's new standardized labels on all commercially collected waste & recycle containers. The standardized labels are as follows:



- On all "Garbage & Trash" containers



- On all single stream recycle containers and/or
- On all "bottles & cans only" recycle containers



- On all "cardboard only" recycle containers and/or
- On all "paper only" recycle containers



- On all "yard waste only" containers

For mid-rise and high-rise properties primarily using chute collection systems, **proper signage must be placed on or next to the chutes to clearly identify which materials should be placed in which chutes.** Clear signage helps tenants choose the correct container or chute preventing accidental contamination of recycling.

### Keeping Service Containers In Good Working Order

- ① Your service provider is responsible for ensuring waste containers are free of rust holes, broken hinges, or broken door fasteners. Containers must also have solid substantial bottoms, and properly fitting lids or doors. Be sure to contact your contracted service provider to replace or repair any damaged containers.

## Preventing Container Overflow

- ① Property management is responsible for monitoring waste containers to prevent containers from being filled to a height exceeding the level of the highest portion of the container body or rim. If the garbage or recycle containers on your property are regularly or periodically overflowing, contact your contracted service provider to increase the container size or frequency of collection.

**Property management must complete and submit a Lease Transition Plan to the Solid Waste Division (see Step 4).**



## Clearly Label Trash & Recycle Chutes

- Place trash and recycling labels directly on chutes to let tenants know which material goes in which chute.
- Help prevent large boxes from clogging up chutes by offering tenants a secondary location to recycle boxes. Be sure to post this information by each chute.

## Cardboard Recycling

- ① Property management is responsible for diverting recyclable cardboard year-round and during high volume move-in and move-out periods.

**Cardboard recycling containers that are locked & slotted are an effective way to manage and increase cardboard recycling.** These containers maximize container space by forcing residents to break down boxes flat. Locked & slotted containers are also great at preventing garbage from getting mixed in with recyclables.



## Step 4. Putting Together Your Lease Transition Plan

Developing a Lease Transition Plan for your property is essential in reducing materials sent to the landfill and avoiding overflowing waste containers during high volume move-in and move-out periods. Waste quantities can double or triple during these times, and proactively establishing a plan will significantly aid in effectively managing these increased volumes.

### Mandatory Lease Transition Plan

- ① Property management must submit and carry out a **Lease Transition Plan** to divert usable and functioning household goods, furnishings, electronics, and recyclable cardboard resulting from the high volume move-in and move-out periods. Typical high volume periods would be at the beginning and end of the semester and at the end of the summer lease period.



- ① **Lease Transition Plans must contain the following information for each property:**
- A notification plan informing residents on how usable items can be donated, must be sent out at least one month before move-out periods.
  - The location of donation stations (onsite or offsite).
  - A weather protection plan for the onsite donation stations (if applicable).
  - The name of the reuse organizations that the property has arranged to accept the donated goods.
  - A timetable for executing the plan.

Diverting used furniture from going to the landfill offers tangible benefits for apartment properties and our community. Properties save on disposal costs and may attract new tenants looking for environmentally conscious practices.

**PRO TIP:** Encouraging residents to sell or donate their usable bulky items can lead to significantly reduced hauling fees.

### Submitting Your Lease Transition Plan

- ① **Lease Transition Plans are to be submitted each year to the City of Gainesville Solid Waste Division by properties with at least:**
- 200 leased units (effective 7/1/2023); and
  - 50 leased units (effective 1/1/2025).

Email your completed Lease Transition Plan to the Solid Waste Division at [waste@gainesvillefl.gov](mailto:waste@gainesvillefl.gov).

## Step 5. Food Waste Collection

The EPA estimates that 24% of our waste stream is food waste, which is more than any other single material. When food waste ends up in landfills, it decomposes and releases methane, a greenhouse gas 21 times more potent than carbon dioxide. Diverting food waste for composting instead of disposal is a significant part of the City's Zero Waste Initiative.



### Food Waste Collection

- ① **Multi-family Properties must have a food waste collection program, effective June 1, 2024.** Food waste collection and composting is still a growing industry locally; thus, the number of available service providers or facilities accepting food waste may be limited at times. If property management is unable to comply with establishing a food waste collection program due to a lack of available service providers, they should contact the City's Solid Waste Division for any updates to this ordinance or to request an exemption.

### Food Waste Collection Guidelines

- ① **Food waste collection programs must:**
- (a) Provide industry-standard food waste containers in common areas on the property that are as convenient and accessible to the residents as garbage and recycling collection containers
  - (b) Provide adequate service and capacity for food waste collection containers based on the number of residents, units, or generation at the property
  - (c) Prominently post and maintain one or more signs in common areas where food waste is collected that specify the materials accepted as food waste
  - (d) Distribute food waste collection information to all residents at least once annually and to all new residents on move-in
  - (e) Provide at least one indoor food waste storage container per unit



**PRO TIP:** For a list of available registered food waste collection companies, visit [gainesvillefl.gov/HaulerList](https://gainesvillefl.gov/HaulerList).



## Step 6. Overcoming Obstacles

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With any change, challenges arise. Here are some helpful solutions to some common obstacles multi-family property managers might encounter.

### Frequently Asked Questions

#### *What happens if a property is found in non-compliance with an ordinance?*

If, on inspection, a property is determined to be out of compliance with an ordinance, the property may be issued a notice of violation and given a time frame to reach compliance. Additional non-compliance may result in a civil citation being issued and financial penalties.

#### *What if there isn't space available on the property to add additional recycling containers?*

All waste and recycling containers don't have to be stored within an enclosure. If well maintained, collection containers can be placed adjacent to enclosures. Work with your service provider to find locations where containers can be placed. Containers with wheels can be a solution for properties with limited space availability. In extremely limited spaces, it is not uncommon for the need to sacrifice a parking space to accommodate collection services.

#### *How can we prevent larger boxes from getting stuck in trash chutes?*

Offer a secondary recycling location for larger boxes and post instructions by the trash chutes asking tenants to take cardboard boxes for recycling to that location. Consider using graphics in the posting and adding text in Spanish or other languages as needed.

#### *How do we prevent dumpsters or carts from overfilling over a weekend?*

If it seems that your containers are overfilled every Monday morning, then it is likely that you don't have an adequate level of service. Consider increasing the size of containers or adding collection services on Fridays or even Saturdays.

#### *Who do I hire for food waste collection services?*

First, contact your current waste service provider to see if this is a service they provide. The City of Gainesville also maintains a list of registered food waste collection companies licensed to provide service within Gainesville at [gainesvillefl.gov/HaulerList](https://gainesvillefl.gov/HaulerList).

#### *What if there are no available contracts to provide food waste collection services?*

Properties should notify the Solid Waste Division of their attempts to arrange food waste collection services in their Lease Transition Plan.

#### *Can we request an exemption from part or all of an ordinance?*

Yes, for some ordinances, but not all. Visit the online directory of Gainesville Zero Waste ordinances at [gainesvillefl.gov/ZeroWaste](https://gainesvillefl.gov/ZeroWaste).

## What can be done to reduce the contamination level in the recycling?

To help prevent recycling contamination:

- (1) Make sure there are prominent and **clear labels** on all recycle and garbage containers
- (2) Ensure that recycle containers are **as convenient and accessible** as garbage containers
- (3) **Post educational signs** at each recycling collection area
- (4) **Educate tenants regularly** through postings, newsletters, and digital communications
- (5) **Keep all collection areas clean** and litter-free
- (6) Regularly **train your property staff** on waste practices so they can effectively relay that information to tenants
- (7) Consider having collection containers with restricted openings, such as **locked & slotted cardboard dumpsters**, installed at your property

### Free Recycling Education Signs Available (while supplies last).

The Solid Waste Division currently has **free 22" by 14" universal recycling station signs available**. These signs help educate tenants on materials accepted and not accepted for recycling at recycling collection stations and meet the ordinance requirement for recycling educational signs in common areas where recyclables are collected.

To request signs for your property, contact the Solid Waste Division's zero waste staff at **352-334-2330** or **waste@gainesvillefl.gov**.



## Online Resources

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List of approved indoor recycle storage containers	<a href="https://gainesvillefl.gov/Apartment-Recycling">gainesvillefl.gov/Apartment-Recycling</a>
Multi-Family Property Lease Transition Plan Form	<a href="https://gainesvillefl.gov/Apartment-Recycling">gainesvillefl.gov/Apartment-Recycling</a>
Multi-family Property Recycling Signs	<a href="https://gainesvillefl.gov/Apartment-Recycling">gainesvillefl.gov/Apartment-Recycling</a>
List of franchised commercial service providers	<a href="https://gainesvillefl.gov/HaulerList">gainesvillefl.gov/HaulerList</a>
Gainesville's Zero Waste Wizard	<a href="https://gainesvillefl.gov/WasteWizard">gainesvillefl.gov/WasteWizard</a>
Ready, Set, Sort! – Recycle Game	<a href="https://cityofgainesvillefl.recycle.game">cityofgainesvillefl.recycle.game</a>

