



# NEWS FROM **ULSTER COUNTY** County Executive Jen Metzger

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**\*\*\*\*For Immediate Release\*\*\*\***

**Date:** Tuesday, June 3, 2025

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## **Ulster County Launches ‘Green the Scene’ Grant Program to Support Zero-Waste Events**

### **NEW GRANT INITIATIVE HELPS LOCAL FESTIVALS AND EVENTS REDUCE WASTE AND MODEL SUSTAINABILITY**

**KINGSTON, NY** - Ulster County Executive Jen Metzger today announced the launch of **Green the Scene: We Are Zero-Waste Bound!** — a new grant program to encourage and support practices to reduce waste at fairs, festivals, and community events around the County. The Office of Tourism is accepting applications through Monday, June 30 for grants of up to \$2,000 for events scheduled in 2025.

Eligible grant expenses include zero waste supplies (for example, bins, compostable bags, compostable service ware, and cleaning supplies), hauling and composting services, and funding for a dedicated zero-waste coordinator. In addition to financial support, selected grantees will receive County-branded marketing assistance to highlight their sustainability efforts. Event organizers can also request collection bins and bags, supplied by the Ulster County Resource Recovery Agency.

“Green the Scene” program awards will be made on a rolling basis until all funds have been allocated. The grant program is supported by a \$25,000 allocation in the 2025 County Budget. Municipalities and not-for-profit organizations that host fairs, festivals, and events in Ulster County are eligible to apply. Priority will be given to events with strong outreach, public education, and partnerships with composting vendors or haulers, and those adopting Zero Waste policies and procedures for their event. Program guidelines, the Ulster County Zero-Waste Guidance Toolkit, and the grant application can be found on Participate Ulster at <https://participate.ulstercountyny.gov/green-the-scene>.

“We have so many wonderful festivals and fairs around the County every year, and we want to support their efforts to reduce waste and model sustainable practices,” **said Ulster County Executive Jen Metzger.** “These efforts are especially important now, in the face of a statewide landfill crisis. We already have some great models in our County, like the Saugerties Garlic Festival and the New Paltz Earth Day Fair, and other festival organizers have expressed interest in adopting similar practices. This grant program is designed to get them started on the road to zero-waste, as well as to help early leaders take it to the next level.”

"Supporting waste diversion at fairs and festivals is essential to preserving Ulster County's natural beauty and promoting sustainable tourism," **said Director of Ulster County Tourism Lisa Berger.** “By encouraging environmentally responsible practices, we’re helping to ensure that our unique fairs, festivals, and events continue to thrive while protecting what makes our County special."

"Ulster County is a regional leader in zero-waste innovation, taking meaningful steps to divert waste from landfills and recover valuable resources from the waste stream. With a long-standing commitment to sustainable events, from the annual Garlic Festival to local gatherings utilizing zero-waste bins and signage, we are driving forward the Circular Economy movement, encouraging communities to rethink the lifecycle of products,” **said Legislator Chris Hewitt, chair of the County's Energy, Environment and Sustainability committee.** “Through initiatives like Zero Waste at Events, we are creating funding opportunities that inspire towns, businesses, and individuals to build solutions that turn waste streams into revenue streams — ensuring a more sustainable future for Ulster County."

“We have lots of amazing festivals here in Ulster County. They bring people together, but they leave behind a lot of garbage. If we separate food scraps and compostable tableware from trash and transform it into compost, we’re not only shrinking the waste stream — we’re hosting cleaner, greener events, educating the public, and turning waste into a resource,” **said Penny Coleman, Ulster County Environmental Management Council member, and member of the Rosendale Environmental Commission.** “The Zero Waste initiative supports our environment, our economy, and our community.”

For more information on the Green the Scene grant program, and to apply, visit [participate.ulstercountyny.gov/green-the-scene](https://participate.ulstercountyny.gov/green-the-scene).

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