

A close-up photograph of a person's hand holding a large amount of dark, rich soil. The soil is piled high in the palm and fingers, and the background is a soft-focus view of the hand and soil. The overall tone is natural and earthy.

2023 BIG REUSE ANNUAL REPORT



Big Reuse

AN ENVIRONMENTAL NONPROFIT

December 30, 2023

Greetings!

Big Initiatives Inc (dba Big Reuse) is an environmental nonprofit located in Brooklyn in operation since 2015. Big Reuse's mission is to fight climate change through community-based zero waste initiatives, including our reuse center and community engagement programs. Big Reuse partnered with the Department of Sanitation as the provider for the Curbside Composting Outreach program and as a host organization for the NYC Compost Project, a community-scaled composting network spanning NYC. Since 2017, as part of the NYC Compost Project, Big Reuse has operated 2 large-scale community composting sites located in Queens and Brooklyn. Our composting sites transform residential food scraps and NYC Parks yard waste into compost that enriches soil across NYC's green spaces, and can serve as a scalable model for other communities. Today, these sites annually keep two million pounds of food scraps and yard waste out of the landfill.

This year has brought significant opportunities for community engagement and supporting green job training. New for the reuse center, we hosted 32 interns through 10 job training programs. 37 volunteers completed over 670 hours of work. We had a 336% increase in canvassing for Curbside Composting awareness and a 356% increase in free kitchen scrap bins distributed, with almost 75,000 New Yorkers reached. Our Street Tree Care team, funded by nine city council members, finished its year in a big way, caring for 800 trees and connecting with over 3,300 residents. Our composting team returned over 666,000 pounds of compost to the community.

With strong community and city council member support and an active volunteer base, Big Reuse is eager to pursue new sustainability initiatives and continue to grow our established programs.

Sincerely,

Justin Green
Executive Director





OUR FOCUS

Fighting climate change through community-based zero waste initiatives

OUR PROGRAMS INCLUDE:

- ✓ Composting
- ✓ Street tree care events
- ✓ Community outreach & education
- ✓ Reuse center & store
- ✓ Green job training
- ✓ Volunteer Opportunities

A person wearing a high-visibility yellow safety vest is working with compost in a large bin. The background shows a wooden lattice structure and green foliage.

1,838,070 LBS

OF WASTE

**KEPT OUT OF THE
LANDFILL THROUGH
COMPOSTING**

INCLUDING

944,243 LBS

OF YARD WASTE

656,109 LBS

OF FOOD WASTE

IMPACT

PARTNERED
ON

62

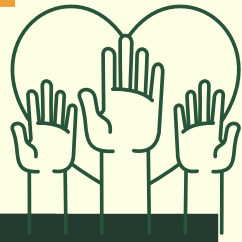


FOOD SCRAP DROP OFFS

WORKED WITH

502

VOLUNTEERS



DISTRIBUTED

1110.5



CUBIC YARDS OF
COMPOST

DISTRIBUTED TO

152



COMMUNITY GROUPS,
GARDENS, AND SCHOOLS

THAT'S

666,300 lbs

OF COMPOST RETURNED TO THE COMMUNITY

Our Compost Education & Application Team

- Is funded by City Council members across Manhattan, Brooklyn, & Queens
- Works with a variety of audiences & community partners
- Uses compost in creative ways to engage our communities



COMMUNITY GROUPS

Free public education & street tree care events aimed at multi-generational audiences, which can be tailored to organizations' needs.

EDUCATION & SCHOOLS

K-12 student engagement, including worm bin setup & vermicomposting education, environmental curriculum integration, street tree care activities, cafeteria composting bin support & more.

GREEN SPACES

Focus on soil aeration & rejuvenation, soil amended with compost, & trash clean up, with hands-on learning & family-friendly activities. Partner with NYC Parks, community gardens, & others.

Providing city trees
with the nutrients
they need to thrive



Cared for **786** street
trees in Brooklyn and
Queens



Covered **61,440** square
feet of NYC soil with a
2" layer of compost

Engaged **3,370** New
Yorkers of all ages





Curbside Composting Outreach

Providing accessible education & tools for NYC residents

in Partnership with DSNY



74,510

New Yorkers engaged

We traversed four boroughs educating people of all ages on our city's current composting options, how they can participate in the curbside composting program, how to talk to their landlords, and why sustainability practices matter.



625

Events conducted

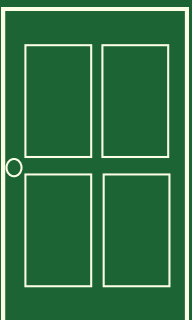
If you've passed by community events in the city, chances are you've seen us out chatting with residents and giving away bags of compost and kitchen scrap containers.



38,566

Addresses canvassed

We come to you! We knock on New Yorkers' doors to demonstrate how to use curbside composting bins correctly, what materials can go inside them, and how they can receive free compost.





6

People hired as part-time seasonal staff

Added Project Coordinator position and promoted an Outreach Associate



to manage new seasonal team

Spent 5 weeks full-time canvassing

to launch DSNY's borough-wide Brooklyn curbside composting service



Canvassed all

1-9

unit buildings in

4

 Brooklyn districts

1,000

Buildings canvassed

daily





EMPOWERING THE COMMUNITY

A critical component of our curbside composting outreach effort is our distribution of free composting materials and resources to the community, ensuring NYC residents feel empowered and knowledgeable about their composting options.



**DISTRIBUTED
FREE OF CHARGE**



REUSE CENTER

Big Reuse Center, located in Gowanus, Brooklyn, is our flagship thrift store. Nowhere else in the city can you find such a broad assortment of items and community ambiance, where every donated item sold means more material kept out of our landfills. Mission-driven and a champion of the circular economy, Big Reuse is proud to be the go-to for NYC thrifters and donators alike.

WHY IT MATTERS

Reduces waste

Waste diversion saves materials from releasing methane and chemicals in landfills and furthers a circular economy.

Creates green jobs

We employ 22 staff members to maintain store operations.

Community building

From staff picks to the new reuse/repair event series, our store's friendly atmosphere invites regulars, volunteers, and new customers to shop and learn.



Contact Us
[718-725-8925](tel:718-725-8925)



More Information
www.bigreuse.org



10 AM - 6 PM



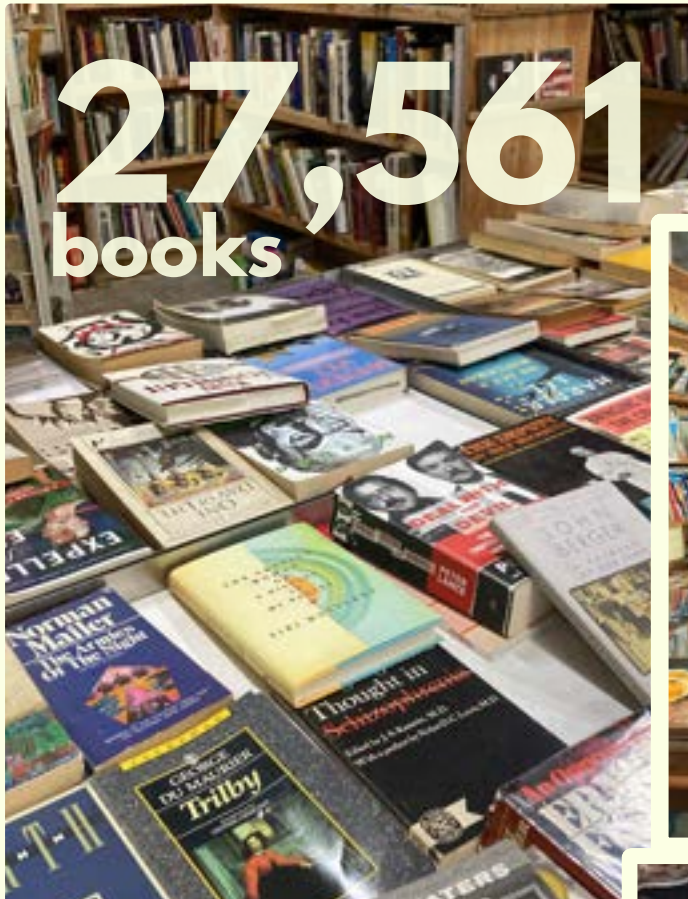
DAYS A WEEK

BIG REUSE CENTER

1 12TH STREET
BROOKLYN, NY 11216

ONE YEAR'S WASTE DIVERSION

SOLD THROUGH THE BIG REUSE CENTER





Environmental Impact Report 2023



Materials Reused*

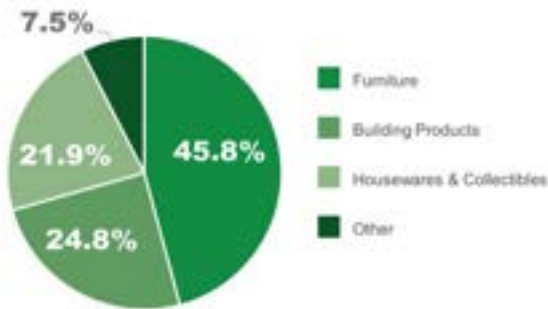
1,574,056

pounds of materials

242,914

total items

Total Weight by Overall Category



Environmental Impact**

The energy saved through recovering these materials is equivalent to:

1,685.35

metric tons of CO

2E

18.34

billion BTUs

This emissions reduction is equivalent to...



Charging
215 million
phones



Switching
to 64,082
LEDs



Taking
364 vehicles
off the road

* Not all materials are currently classified in the Reuse Impact Calculator, so this may not be a complete representation of the total weight reused by the organization.

** Greenhouse gas emissions and energy savings were estimated using US EPA's Waste Reduction Model (WARM) and US EPA's Gas Equivalencies Calculator.



donate **NYC**
give goods. find goods. do good.

FREE REPAIR/REUSE WORKSHOPS



**Workshop 1:
45
attendees!**



Promoting Reuse and Recycling

This year, we hosted two of six free clinics in a new repair and reuse event series initiative: a lamp repair cafe and an antique furniture repair workshop. The Big Reuse Center space transforms into a learning and crafting center, and participants leave with a handmade or repaired item!



Volunteer Spotlight

Julius Lang



“My husband Joe and I bought an old house not far from Big Reuse about 20 years ago, and got to know the store as customers—finding so many great items to recycle to (and from) our house. In 2018, I began volunteering and have continued to do so: what better way for an individual to help save our planet than taking action at the grassroots level?”

COMMUNITY QUOTES

HEAR WHAT OUR COMMUNITY SAYS



Jessica M.

Brooklyn Resident

"I started our building [composting] because of your educational outreach . . . We would not even be doing this program at all, if I had not had the fortune to hear from your educators."



Dacotah Rousseau

Down to Earth Farmers Market

"We see Big Reuse as an essential part of the city's outreach and vital to making sure that residents understand the food scrap recycling program and know how to use it."



M. Southwell

Brooklyn Resident

"Without a doubt this outreach has been a cause for adoption of composting, and for a source of learning and community building for our neighbors. The Brooklyn community cannot afford to lose this valuable service."



Matthew Loyd

**Environmental Education Specialist,
Eastern Queens Alliance, Inc.**

"Big Reuse did an amazing job at Idlewild Environmental Center earlier this year to encourage community folks to compost. We need compost education, to remove extra waste from landfills, and to enrich our communities and our plates."



#SAVEOURCOMPOST

A BRIEF EXPLANATION

In late November, NYC Mayor Adams announced significant budget cuts to community programs meant to offset the city's \$2 billion aid to migrant asylum seekers. Originally only claiming to apply a 5-15% funding cut, Adams eliminated all (read: 100%) of funding for community composting and outreach programs. These proposed cuts would fully remove the funding to the following nonprofits' compost programs: Big Reuse, GrowNYC, Earth Matter, LES Ecology Center, Snug Harbor Cultural Center, and Botanical Gardens of New York, Brooklyn, and Queens. Together these programs offer food scrap collections, organics processing, and composting outreach and community education, all while diverting over 8.3 million pounds of organic waste from the landfill every year. Simply put, the environmental impact of halting all of these programs would be devastating on NYC.

HOW DOES THAT IMPACT BIG REUSE AND NYC?

Big Reuse relies on this funding to run our community composting sites, curbside composting outreach, and food scrap drop offs. If the funding is not restored, then 9 outreach and 10 community composting Big Reuse staff would lose their jobs. A total of 115 green jobs in NYC would be eliminated. Without the funding and staff, we would be forced to shut down operations in our Gowanus and Queensbridge Compost Sites, which provide free compost to over 400 NYC parks, community gardens, and street tree care events. We would also have to end our outreach efforts, which educated almost 75,000 New Yorkers about NYC composting options this past year.



THE #SAVEOURCOMPOST BUDGET CUT TIMELINE

11/16/23: Budget cuts announced

11/16/23: Green nonprofits meet to discuss solutions

GrowNYC hosted petition gathers 20k signatures in first 2 days

Save Community Composting and Outreach!

Demonstrations outside city hall on 11/30, 12/6, 12/11

Speaking to decisionmakers & phone banking

Compost Project orgs & outreach lose funding 12/31/23

Almost 50k total signatures!



SPECIAL THANK YOU

To Council Members funding our work

Rita Joseph
District 40



Julie Menin
District 5



Sandy Nurse
District 37



Crystal Hudson
District 35



Jennifer Gutiérrez
District 34



Tiffany Cabán
District 22



Julie Won
District 26



Shahana Hanif
District 39



Lincoln Restler
District 33

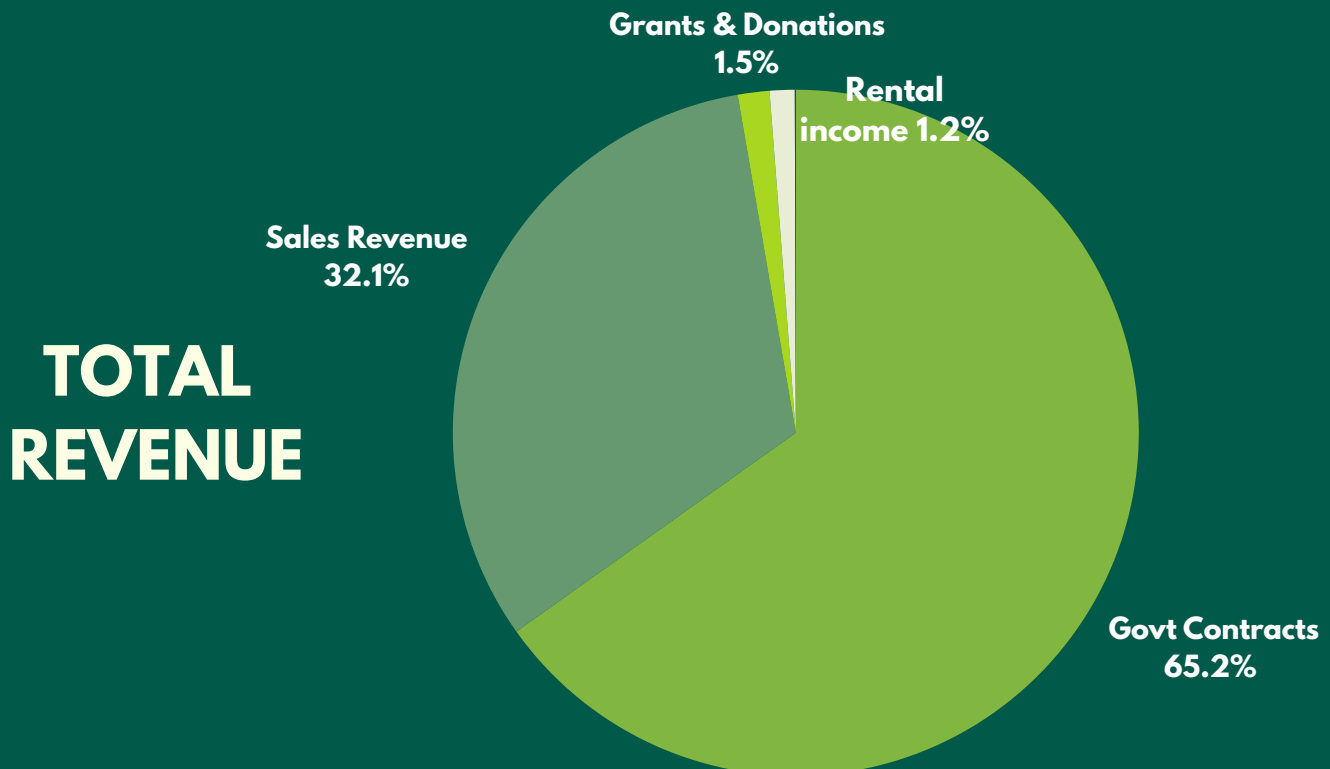
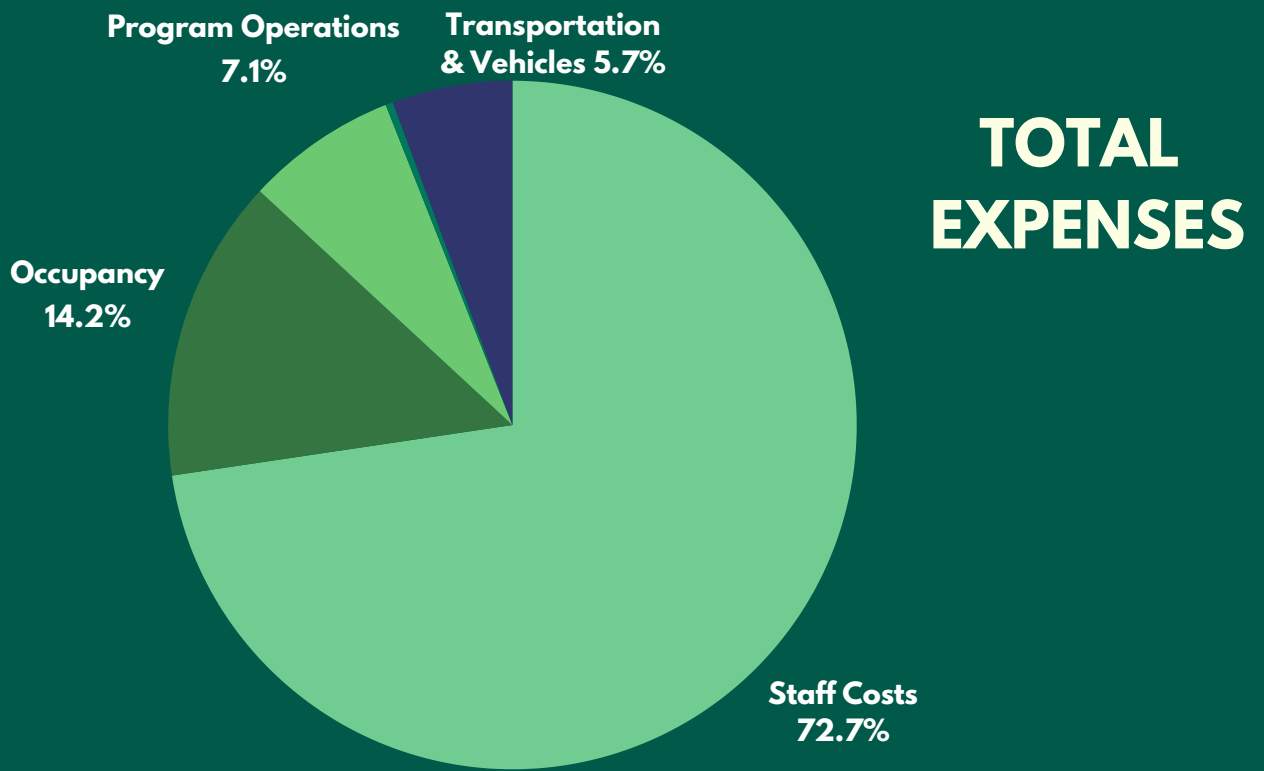


SPECIAL THANK YOU

To our Volunteers!



Organization Financials





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Little Wing Lee

Designer, Little Wing Lee Studio



Josh Treuhaft

Sr Experience Strategist, Apple



Justin Green

Exec Dir, Big Reuse, ex officio

OUR PARTNERS



NYC Parks

Gowanus Canal



CONSERVANCY



United States
Department of
Agriculture





brooklyn@bigreuse.org

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Brooklyn New York
11215 United States

Donation information at:
bigreuse.org/pages/donate



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