

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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ORANGE GROVE CENTER AND CITY OF CHATTANOOGA CONTRACT SLATED TO END AFTER 30-YEAR PARTNERSHIP

Chattanooga, TN - January 1st will mark the end of a more than 30-year public-private partnership between the City of Chattanooga (City) and The Orange Grove Center, Inc. (OGC). The City contracted with OGC to provide residential recycling services, while employing countless numbers of citizens with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD). Over the life of the contract, OGC duties were many and varied, ranging from writing (and winning) grants to purchase the original split-bed curbside trucks for the City's use, to marketing collected material and revenue sharing with the City. With the expertise gained over 30 years, OGC ably and deftly met the community's evolving recycling needs. Throughout six City administrations, government recycling initiatives and priorities have varied but OGC's commitment to fill any requested niche remained steadfast.

OGC was founded in Chattanooga in 1953 by families who had children with IDD. These families were committed to the idea that their children would grow up and thrive in community settings and not live in institutions. OGC has furthered their vision for more than 72 years through education, employment, residential services, and medical and therapeutic support. The recycling employment program began with the City in 1988 when OGC began processing curbside recycling.

While the partnership between OGC and the City has transitioned throughout the years, recycling has been the biggest employer of people with IDD in the Tri-State area, and most likely well-beyond this community's borders. Through December 31st, OGC will continue to provide the labor, employing approximately 30 people with IDD, seven days a week at the City's 5 Recycling Drop-off Centers (RDOs) and the City's 3 Refuse Collection Centers (RCCs).

Beginning on January 1st the City plans to manage the RDOs and RCCs until they reopen a public solicitation and receive community bids to manage the sites. The City opened a solicitation on October 5, 2025, and canceled it on November 17, 2025. A new solicitation is pending release.

OGC welcomes the opportunity to bid on a new solicitation, to work collaboratively with City government, and to support more robust recycling endeavors again, such as educational outreach and marketing of collected materials to benefit all citizens. The overall goal of OGC remains unchanged: to work with all partners to ensure people with IDD are included and thrive in their community. OGC desires to forge a path forward with a City partnership that continues to provide workforce development and vocational opportunities for people with IDD, while improving recycling services in Chattanooga.

About Orange Grove Center

Founded in 1953, Orange Grove Center is a private, non-profit organization that serves 1,000+ adults and children with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) in the Chattanooga and North Georgia areas. For more information about programs and services, visit <https://www.orangegrovecenter.org/>. For weekly updates, follow @orangegrovectr on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and LinkedIn.

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