

BUILDING SUPPORT: ORGANIZE YOUR COMMUNITY

There's no reason to go it alone. When you work with existing groups or recruit other community members, you can form a strong, diverse group to fight plastic pollution. Always set clear goals for engaging community members: Do you want to get petition signatures? Distribute educational materials? Recruit volunteers for upcoming events? Or use your public speaking skills to move people to action? Answering these questions will inform your efforts.

You can also consider becoming an Alliance for the Great Lakes Ambassador. Our Ambassadors are volunteers who represent the Alliance at events across the region. We give Ambassadors regular trainings in how to advocate for the Great Lakes and opportunities to learn from experts about topics like plastic pollution. We also help Ambassadors build skills like public speaking and tabling. [You can learn more and sign up on our website.](#)



*Adopt-a-Beach
volunteer picking up
a plastic water bottle.*

*Photo Credit:
Lloyd DeGrane*

Here are a few ideas for engaging people around plastic pollution:

- **Table at an Event:** Many festivals, community events, and even some stores allow organizations to set up informational tables. Just ask the event organizers or managers if you can set up a table. This is an excellent opportunity to connect with people in an informal setting around their interests and yours.
- **Make an Announcement:** Other community events, like community meetings, service group meetings, and church services, can also be great opportunities to spread the word. Ask event organizers for permission to make an announcement about your efforts.
- **Post Information or Flyers Where People Will See Them:** Even if you can't talk to everybody you want to about stopping plastic pollution, your message can still reach members of your community. Ask to hang informational posters or flyers in public spaces or on community bulletin boards. Shop windows, community centers, and libraries are great places to start.
- **Host Your Own Event:** You can host an event to bring together other community members that support your cause. A screening of a film about plastic pollution or organizing an Adopt-a-Beach cleanup event are fun and informative ways to educate and organize your community.

Below is a list of materials that can be useful when talking to people about plastic pollution:

- **Make yourself a cheat sheet:** Create a list of important points about the Great Lakes and plastic pollution. Preparing your talking points will help you get your message across in a short and effective way.
- **Bring handouts:** Pass out fact sheets or information about upcoming [Adopt-a-Beach cleanups](#), public hearings, or other events people might be interested in joining.
- **Bring sign-in sheets or petition forms:** Collect contact information so you can follow up with people who are interested in getting involved. If you're collecting petitions, have copies on hand and consider providing a way for people to sign electronically. Bring pens and clipboards as needed.
- **Bring giveaways:** People love free sustainable or informational giveaways. Stickers, reusable shopping bags, or reusable water bottles can help draw visitors to your table.
- **Use attention-grabbing visuals:** Plastic pollution can be very eye-catching. Bring photos or even actual plastic pollution from your neighborhood. Make a sculpture out of debris collected or the plastic you have used. Be creative!



Pieces of plastic found on the shoreline of the Great Lakes at an Adopt-a-Beach cleanup.

PC: Lloyd DeGrane.