



Tennessee's Litter Problem

As Tennesseans, we have a lot to be proud of: our music, our barbecue, our beautiful state parks, the distinguished universities, the icons that call it home, and so much more. However, there is one thing we're not proud of – our litter problem.

From the Great Smoky Mountains to the Mississippi River, and every stretch of roadway in between, litter on Tennessee's 96,167 miles of public roads – 4,022 of which are classified as scenic – takes away from the state's natural beauty and is an enormous burden to the state both economically and environmentally.

In addition to being an eyesore, litter on Tennessee's roadways impacts public safety, the economy, and the environment. It costs the state more than \$19 million a year on pickup and prevention education.

Overall, the state of littering in Tennessee has improved significantly since 2006, dropping by 43 percent. However, there are still 100 million pieces of litter on the state's roadways at any given time. How do we know? Because we counted via a pioneering 2016 Visible Litter Study.



\$19 MILLION
Amount TDOT spends annually on litter pickup and prevention education



100 MILLION
Pieces of litter on Tennessee roadways at any given time



43%
Reduction of statewide roadside litter since 2016

Nobody Trashes Tennessee

Tennessee Department of Transportation (TDOT) is on a mission to reduce littering, and in 2016, launched the Nobody Trashes Tennessee (NTT) litter prevention campaign. Nobody Trashes Tennessee is a comprehensive statewide communications campaign that seeks to tell the story of litter on our state's roadways and the impact it has on the ecosystem. By juxtaposing the beauty of Tennessee with the ugliness of littering, the campaign makes it clear that Nobody Trashes Tennessee.

Rooted in research conducted in 2006 and 2016, including the "Visible Litter Study" (nFront Consulting, 2016), "Litter Attitudes and Behaviors" (Baselice & Associates, April 2016), and Focus Groups (Prince Market Research), the campaign is designed to leverage the intense feelings of state pride to drive behavior change and stop littering across the state.

Recent research conducted in May 2021 includes a quantitative survey to determine baseline awareness of the litter problem and the Nobody Trashes Tennessee campaign (Decision Analyst, 2021). Focus groups were also held to help understand attitudes towards litter and to test litter prevention messaging for the next phase of the Nobody Trashes Tennessee campaign (Epiphany, 2021).



**NOBODYSM
TRASHES
TENNESSEE**

TENNESSEE DEPARTMENT
OF TRANSPORTATION

CAMPAIGN GOALS

- Reduce the amount of roadside litter
- Reduce the amount of money spent on litter pickup
- Maintain constant litter prevention education awareness, and NTT messaging
- Drive behavior change along three areas of behavior:
 - ◆ Stop littering (intentionally and unintentionally).
 - ◆ If you see litter, pick it up
 - ◆ Take action in communities

Additionally, the campaign strives to build awareness of litter topics and educate Tennesseans about the importance of litter reduction and its impacts on public safety, the economy, and the environment. Since 1983, revenue from a tax on soft drink and malt beverages has provided the funds for TDOT's litter pickup and prevention education.

Nobody Trashes Tennessee Grantees & Partners

As part of Nobody Trashes Tennessee’s comprehensive approach to reduce littering, grantees, nonprofits, and partner organizations bring the NTT campaign to their communities through TDOT’s Litter Grant Program.

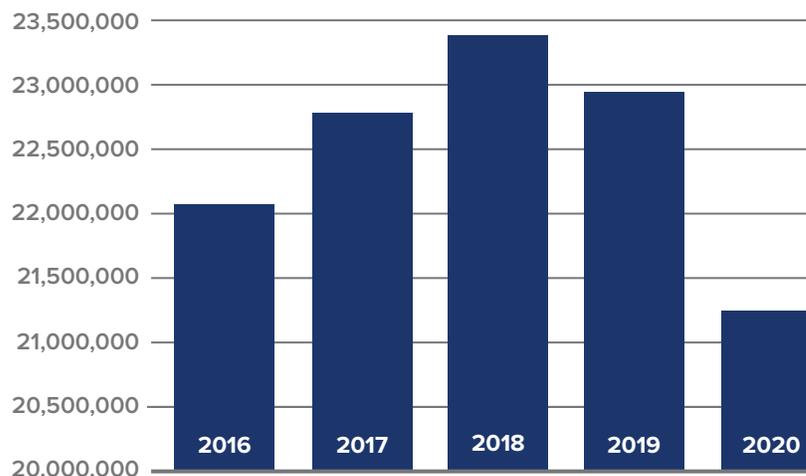
- Nobody Trashes Tennessee gave \$5.5 million in grants in 2020 to all 95 counties throughout the state for local litter programs.
- Last year, Nobody Trashes Tennessee granted \$1.9 million for special community-based projects.
- Keep Tennessee Beautiful is an important partner to our programs. In 2020, we supported them with a \$1.3 million grant.
- The county litter grant program is responsible for removing an average of 11,573 tons of litter each year.
- Over the 37-year history of the program, more than 428,200 tons of litter have been removed from our roadways.
- County governments in Tennessee used litter grant funds to clean up 4,023 illegal dump sites in 2020.



Litter Removal by Fiscal Year

Year	Pounds	US Tons
2016	22,064,623.83	11,032.31
2017	22,724,846.40	11,362.43
2018	23,358,360.09	11,679.18
2019	22,987,734.31	11,493.87
2020	21,232,819.41	10,616.41

Pounds of Litter Removed by Fiscal Year



Nobody Trashes Tennessee Grantees & Partners



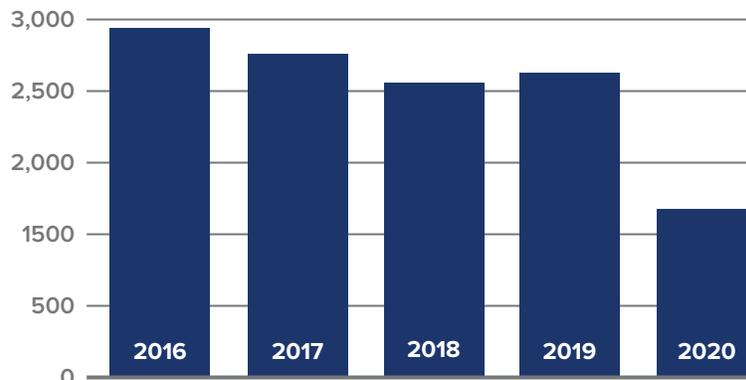
When Tennesseans see someone litter from their car, they are encouraged to report the incident through TDOT's Litter Hotline (1-877-8-LITTER). The Litter Hotline is an educational tool reminding those who engage in littering that their actions are hurtful to the state and their community. A letter reprimanding offenders by discouraging litter behavior and informing them that littering is against the law and punishable by a fine is mailed to the registered owner of the vehicle along with Nobody Trashes Tennessee education information. The entire program is anonymous and records are not kept of individuals who make the report or those that receive a letter. In 2019, there were 2,137 reports to the Litter Hotline.



Litter Hotline Reports by Fiscal Year

Year	Reports
2016	2,460
2017	2,272
2018	2,051
2019	2,137
2020	1,251

Litter Hotline Reports by Fiscal Year



Nobody Trashes Tennessee Grantees & Partners



Adopt-A-Highway is a volunteer program that is completely free for businesses, organizations and individuals who commit to cleaning up a TDOT-approved two mile stretch of roadside each quarter. Volunteers must be at least 12 years old and sign a waiver at which point they are given plastic bags, caution signs and safety vests by the nearest TDOT district office. Participants are recognized for their efforts with a sign placed along their adopted route. The program promotes community engagement and helps reduce the millions of dollars TDOT spends on litter removal each year.

Adopt-A-Highway Fiscal Year 2020

