



PRIDE TORONTO

REUSE CASE STUDY

Overview

Pride Toronto, the largest Pride festival in North America, attracts an estimated three million visitors each summer for parades, stage performances and a street festival to celebrate 2SLGBTQI+ communities.

Pride invested in custom reusable cups in 2023 with the help of local reuse service provider, Muuse.

The cups are used for poured drinks at the outdoor Main & Wellesley performance stages.

Learning from each year's experience, Pride worked closely with Muuse and dedicated site staff to cut cup losses and achieve an estimated 93% return rate in 2025. The event avoided over 27,250 single-use cups over three days.

The high return rate has also reduced cup replacement costs - no new cups were bought in 2025 or for upcoming 2026 festival.

About the cups

Pride Toronto purchased a stock of polypropylene plastic cups in 2023 that have been used for the past three years. There are no deposits or fees charged to customers. Customers consume their drinks in a restricted alcohol service area.

During Pride events, the cup collection, washing and restocking are performed by Muuse. Pride staff manage site cleaning and post-event waste sorting. Though not tracked directly, Pride's cleaning teams reported they spent less time and found less waste and litter in the areas with reusable cups.

The cups feature custom designs by a local artist, celebrating key themes of Pride and giving an opportunity to connect with the audience on shared values. The cups were a talking point, popular among attendees, with many asking about buying cups as souvenirs.



Cleaning teams reported less waste to manage and less time needed to manage litter in the areas with reusable cups.

Key learnings

Reusable cups can work in major outdoor events and festivals.

Pride Toronto	
Venue	Outdoor festival attendance of 3,000,000 Two outdoor stages with 10,000 capacity
Reuse Service	Muuse Canada
Return rate	93% in 2025, up from 85% in 2024 and 70% in 2023
Prevented waste	27,250 single-use items 400 kg of waste in 2025

1. Custom cup designs enhanced the customer experience...

The attractive cups are popular, and the designs express shared values, enhancing the experience of participants. The custom cups also provided sponsorship opportunities to offset the costs of cups and collection bins.

2. ...however custom designs can limit the environmental benefits and limit cost savings.

The custom cups create a souvenir effect, and losses in the first year were higher than hoped. In addition, the custom branding limits the potential uses of each cup. Organizers noted that a pool of generic cups that could be shared with other festivals throughout the year would lower costs in the long term.



3. Despite the challenges of an attractive cup and large outdoor event, Pride has achieved steady improvement and a return rate of 93% in 2025.

In 2023, the cup return rate was approximately 70%, and a series of efforts saw the returns increase to an estimated 85% in 2024, and 93% in 2025. The higher return rate has reduced cup losses, so that no additional cups were purchased in 2025, or will be purchased in 2026.

Key to the success was:

- **Increased Collection points:** Additional bins were purchased in 2024 to place beside every waste, recycling bin and near the bar. These bins can be moved to where they're needed.
- **Increased promotion of reuse for attendees:** Messages about the reusables were shared on social media, written into host announcement scripts, and additional signs were posted on site.
- **Engaged all staff in the reuse program efforts:** Site staff were given additional training to explain the cup system to customers as needed. For example, security staff reminded attendees not to take their cups when they left the restricted area.
- **Dedicated site staff focused on reuse:** Muuse or Pride site staff were on hand to monitor the bins, collect reusable cups throughout the site and check for mis-sorted reusables in recycling.
- **Pride conducts a post-event hand-sorting of waste:** This additional sorting reduces contamination, increases recycling and lowers the event's high waste costs. This sorting also helps recover mis-sorted reusable cups, reducing the cost of replacing cups.

Sources:

- Pride Toronto website: <https://www.pridetoronto.com/>
- Interview with Pride Toronto staff: Kojo Modeste, Bobby MacPherson, Senior Director of Operations and Marvin Regalado, Operations & Logistics Manager
- Interview and information from Muuse Canada: Scott Morrison, General Manager and Sofiya Chorniy, Partnerships Manager
- Site visits and field documentation by TEA staff
- Photos courtesy of Muuse Canada, TEA staff

