BALTIMORE CITY | RESIDENT EXPLAINER

Why Is It Taking So Long to Get My Trash or Recycling Bin?

November 10, 2026 | Public Works & City Services

Getting a trash or recycling bin in Baltimore City should be straightforward: contact 311, request a bin, and have it delivered. But some residents have faced missing paperwork, supply shortages, and long waits.

A September 10, 2026 investigation by *The Baltimore Banner* documented extensive delays and requests held up by paperwork. [1]

2,400+
Requests that took more than three months in 2025

16,000+
Requests stalled over missing required forms since early 2025

700+
Requests that remained open longer than six months in 2025

10 days
City's reported business-day delivery goal, not a guarantee

These figures refer to different reporting periods and should not be added together or treated as a current count of outstanding requests. Source: [1].

1. Why are bins taking so long?

The September investigation identified three major barriers:

- **Paperwork:** Some residents did not receive verification forms or had their requests closed when completed documents were not received.
- **Supply shortages:** The city faced shortages of trash and recycling carts, with more than 2,300 requests reportedly placed on a waiting list beginning in 2025.
- **Delivery limitations:** Earlier delivery trucks could carry only about eight to ten carts at a time.

The city reported purchasing more carts, adopting larger delivery vehicles, and improving its online 311 process. [1]

2. Why might I need my deed?

The city uses documentation to verify that a person requesting a municipal cart is connected to the address receiving it. Carts are city property assigned to specific properties. [2] The city has said this helps reduce duplicate requests and misuse of publicly funded carts. [1]

Not everyone necessarily needs to provide a deed. New homeowners may be asked for the first page of a recorded deed showing their purchase or closing date. Renters may be able to submit a current lease to verify occupancy. Ask 311 which document is needed for your particular request. [1]

> **Important:** A deed-verification request is an administrative step in the cart-request process. It does not mean Maryland law requires every resident to own a home in order to receive trash collection.

3. What has the city done to address delays?

Reported improvement	What it means
Additional containers	A reported $325,000 emergency contract for 6,000 carts
Delivery capacity	Larger trucks can deliver more carts per trip
Online submissions	Supporting documents can be attached to a 311 request

Reported improvement	What it means
Inventory goal	Keep at least 1,500 carts available
Delivery goal	10 business days, not a guaranteed deadline

These improvements were reported in September 2026. The reporting does not establish that every request submitted today will meet the goal. [1]

4. How do I request a trash or recycling bin?

1. Visit Baltimore 311, use the BALT311 app, or call **311**.
2. Look for a trash or recycling cart issue/request service, or ask an agent to open the appropriate request.
3. Explain whether you need a green trash cart, a blue recycling cart, or both.
4. Say whether you recently moved in or are replacing a missing, damaged, or stolen cart.
5. Submit the requested verification document, if required. Ask how to confirm the document was received.
6. Save your 311 service request number and check the request status.

Open Baltimore 311

5. How can I get a copy of my deed?

Maryland's online land records system lets residents access recorded deeds. [3]

1. Open Maryland Land Records and sign in or register.
2. Select **Baltimore City**.
3. Search using the available name or deed book-and-page options.
4. Open and save the appropriate recorded deed page for your property.

If you do not know the deed book and page, try the Maryland Real Property Data Search. [4]

In person: Baltimore City Circuit Court, Land Records Division, 100 N. Calvert Street, Room 610, Baltimore, MD 21202. Phone: 410-333-3760. The court lists a regular-copy fee of $0.50 per page; check current fees before visiting. [5]

Find Your Deed

6. What if my request has been pending for weeks?

1. **Check the 311 status.** Ask if the city is waiting for a form or has approved the request for delivery.
2. **Verify your paperwork.** Ask whether the city received and accepted it.
3. **Ask why a case closed.** A closed request does not necessarily mean a cart was delivered.
4. **Request follow-up.** Ask 311 to contact the appropriate Department of Public Works staff or supervisor.
5. **Contact your councilmember.** Share your request number, submission date, and the city's responses.

> **Question to ask 311:** “Has my cart request been approved for delivery, or is there still something preventing it from moving forward?”

7. What does this cost taxpayers?

The reported **$325,000 emergency purchase of 6,000 carts** works out to approximately **$54 per cart** for that contract. This is a simple division of the reported total and cart quantity; it is not a verified all-in cost of storage, staff time, administration, or delivery. [1]

Repeated 311 follow-ups, replacing missing carts, and delayed waste storage may also create administrative or neighborhood impacts, but no reliable citywide dollar total for those effects was established in the cited reporting.

The bottom line

Baltimore has acknowledged delivery and paperwork problems and reported steps to improve the system. Homeowners may need to show deed information, while renters may be able to use a lease. If your request is delayed, find out whether it is **approved for delivery, waiting**

on documentation, or closed before submitting another request.

Sources & official references

1. The Baltimore Banner — Investigation into trash and recycling cart delays (September 10, 2026)
2. Baltimore City Department of Public Works — Clean Guide and municipal cart rules
3. Maryland Courts — Land Records
4. Maryland State Department of Assessments and Taxation — Real Property Data Search
5. Baltimore City Circuit Court — Land Records Division
6. Baltimore City Department of Public Works — Recycling Cart FAQs
7. Baltimore 311 — Service request portal

Prepared November 10, 2026. Figures and improvements reflect the cited September 2026 reporting and should not be interpreted as a live count or delivery guarantee. This explainer provides general public information; documentation requirements and procedures may depend on individual circumstances.