

HENNEPIN COUNTY MINNESOTA



Waste prevention grants for businesses

2023 guidelines

Introduction

This grant program from Hennepin County was created to fund projects that start or improve solid waste prevention in the business sector, including nonprofits. Areas of focus can include prevention of food waste, reuse and recovery of goods and materials, and development and use of recovered products. Solid waste is defined as non-hazardous, municipal solid waste, which includes trash, mixed recyclables (including paper, glass, plastics, metals, cartons) and organics. Any project that prevents waste (trash, recycling and organics) from being generated may be eligible. In 2023, \$300,000 is available to fund these grants.

Hennepin County is required by state law to recycle 75% of its waste and reduce total waste by 6% by 2030. Businesses and organizations produce more than half of the county's waste. Reducing waste conserves natural resources and reduces greenhouse gas emissions. It can also help a business' bottom line and demonstrates commitment to the community.

Eligible applicants

For-profit businesses and nonprofit organizations located in Hennepin County that are registered with the Minnesota Secretary of State are eligible to apply. Out-of-state businesses can apply but must register with the MN Secretary to be considered, and all projects must occur in Hennepin County.

Hennepin County reserves the right to determine an applicant's level of compliance with [Hennepin County's solid waste Ordinance 13 recycling requirements \(PDF\)](#) to decide if an applicant should receive waste prevention grant funding.

Eligible projects

Anyone who wishes to apply should contact county staff to discuss their project idea and eligibility requirements. Awarded projects must occur in Hennepin County. Examples of projects and eligible expenses for consideration include but are not limited to:

Conversion to reusables to replace disposables

- Reusable food packaging, dishes, utensils and cups
- Reusable shipping & packaging containers, such as food crates and shipping boxes
- Reusable boat and other reusable wrap used for storage.

Food waste prevention

- Food-waste tracking software
 - Equipment to support the software and training on how to use it
 - Software contract costs for up to one year
 - Examples of software: Leanpath, Phood, Winnow
- Freezers and refrigerators for food rescue organizations
 - Must meet MN Food Code requirements and have approval from regulating health department.
 - Must be Energy Star certified
 - No freezers or refrigerators to replace currently functioning equipment
- Upgrades to expand capacity of current equipment

- Equipment to put food byproducts to greater use

Innovation in waste prevention

- Research and development with objectives in waste prevention
- Design or manufacturing changes to packaging or products that reduce material use
- Projects that use other businesses' waste products as raw material

Guidelines

1. Grant requests must be between \$5,000 and \$50,000. Any grant amount over \$10,000 must include matching funds of 25% of the total project. No in-kind matching funds are allowed; the match must be cash for expenses listed in the table of eligible expenses and must be a direct result of this project.
2. Grant awards will be distributed in two payments:
 - 75% of funds will be released upon execution of a grant agreement
 - The remaining 25% of funds will be released after approval of the final report, including documentation of actual expenses. Grant recipients must establish a baseline of waste being discarded or recycled/composted prior to the start of the grant project and include it in their grant application. Baseline should be generated by the size of current waste, recycling and organics containers (from hauling services) and the frequency with which they are emptied, or actual weight data if that information is available. Additional data other than waste hauling, such as weight or count of materials avoided, may be included to track project success.
3. Grant recipients must submit a final project report at least 30 days before the expiration of the grant agreement. The report must detail efforts made to achieve project goals and the results of those efforts, including quantitative data, referencing the baseline data and project expenditures. A reporting template will be provided.
4. Applications for a group of businesses and organizations as a collaborative effort can be submitted, but one organization must act as the primary applicant and submit the application on behalf of the others.
5. All grant recipients will be required to enter into a grant agreement with the county for 18 months. Expenses may not be incurred prior to an authorized grant agreement with Hennepin County. Projects may be completed early. The grant agreement process requires additional documentation after the application is submitted, including proof of authority for the person signing the contract and minimum insurance coverage outlined in the grant agreement. The certificate must list Hennepin County as an additional insured.
 - Hennepin County reserves the right to revoke any funding award for which an agreement is not executed, due to delays on the part of the applicant, within two (2) months of having received the grant agreement to sign.

Applying and evaluation criteria

Applying for grant funding

Applications will be accepted on an ongoing basis until Monday, November 13, 2023, or until the annual program budget is exhausted, whichever occurs first. The grant application will be provided by county staff after a consultation about the project idea. Begin the consultation process by submitting the [business recycling request form](#).

Evaluation criteria

Grant proposals will be awarded to ensure funds are used in a way that supports Hennepin County's goals to reduce waste. The following criteria will be considered:

- **Project description:** Project demonstrates significant potential for reuse or prevention and is realistic and innovative. The project has strong support from staff and leadership. Key personnel are listed in the application, along with their roles as they relate to the project. Specific issues that the project seeks to address are identified.
- **Outcomes:** Expected results are stated, specific, realistic and measurable. Baseline data is included and accurate.
- **Timeline:** Project is prepared to start after grant agreement is authorized and must be completed within 18 months.
- **Budget:** Expenses are laid out in detail. If applicable, a 25% match is described and eligible.
- **Sustainable:** Most or all components of the project will continue after grant funding is no longer available. Equipment purchased should be sustainable when possible, such as used, durable, energy-efficient, made from recycled content, recyclable, etc.

The county reserves the right to refuse funding or to partially fund an application.

After your application is reviewed, county staff will contact you to discuss next steps.

Contact information

Hennepin County

Environment and Energy

Business recycling grants

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hennepin.us/businesswasteprevention