

HENNEPIN COUNTY  
MINNESOTA



Business recycling:  
Apply for waste  
prevention grants

2021 guidelines

**Hennepin County** Environment and Energy  
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[hennepin.us/businessrecycling](https://hennepin.us/businessrecycling)

# Introduction

Hennepin County has created a new grant program to fund innovative projects that prevent waste in the business sector. Areas of focus can include prevention of food waste, reuse and recovery of goods and materials, and development and use of recovered products. This year \$300,000 is available for business waste prevention grants.

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

For the purposes of this grant program, waste prevention projects are defined as projects designed to not produce waste of any kind – including generating recyclables and compostables. In other words, recycling and organics recycling are not waste prevention.

## **Eligible applicants:**

For-profit businesses and non-profit organizations located in Hennepin County that are registered with the Minnesota Secretary of State. Any individuals who wish to apply should contact county staff to discuss their project idea and eligibility requirements for individuals.

## **Eligible projects:**

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
- Dishwashing equipment, including installation
  - \$10,000 maximum
  - Must be NSF (National Sanitation Foundation) certified, and a plan review must be submitted to a regulating health authority when applicable
  - Must be Energy Star-certified
  - No replacement dishwashers
- Reusable boat and other storage wrap

### 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: Leanpaph, Phood, Winnow
- Freezers and refrigerators
  - eligibility limited to non-profit food-rescue organizations that assist food-insecure individuals such as a food shelf, food pantry, or meal programs
  - Must be ENERGY STAR certified
  - No freezers or refrigerators to replace 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
- Pilot projects that use other businesses' waste as raw material

## Guidelines

1. Minimum grant award of \$5,000. Maximum grant award of \$50,000. Matching funds of 25% of the total project are required for grants awarded over \$10,000. No in-kind matching funds are allowed; the match must be cash for expenses listed in the table of eligible expenses incurred as a direct result of this project.
2. Allocation of grant award payments are:
  - 20% of funds will be released upon execution of a grant agreement
  - Up to 60% will be released upon documentation of actual expenses incurred and submission of a midterm report
  - The remaining 20% of funds will be released upon documentation of actual expenses incurred and an approved final report.
3. 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. That baseline should be based on 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 may be included to track project success.
  - Grant recipients must submit a final project report at least 30 days prior to 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; 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 shall indicate 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 the award. Awarded projects must be initiated within two (2) months of execution of the contract, or funds may be withdrawn, unless specific approval is granted for delays due to extenuating circumstances.

# Applying and evaluation criteria

## Applying for grant funding

Applications will be accepted on an ongoing basis until Friday, November 12, 2021, or until the annual program budget is exhausted, whichever occurs first. The grant application will be provided by county staff after a consultation about your project idea. Begin the consultation process by submitting the [business recycling request form](#).

Each applicant may apply for up to \$50,000 toward a project, with a minimum of \$5,000. Grants over \$10,000 require a 25% match.

## 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 it relates to the project. Specific issues that the project seeks to address are identified.
- **Outcomes:** Expected results are stated, specific, realistic and measurable. Baseline waste service 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 durable, energy-efficient, made from recycled content, recyclable, etc.
- Additional factors for funding preference may include such criteria as geographic location in the county, demographic diversity (such as workforce or customer base), projects with a behavior change component or breadth of a project's reach in the community.

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

612-543-9298

[businessrecycling@hennepin.us](mailto:businessrecycling@hennepin.us)

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