School recycling grants

2019 guidelines

Applications due February 28, 2019
Introduction and overview

Hennepin County provides grants for K-12 schools to start or improve programs to divert recycling and organic materials, which includes food and compostable paper, from the trash. Grant funding can also be used to take steps to prevent waste before it occurs.

Eligible recipients of school recycling grant funding include public and non-public K-12 schools in Hennepin County.

In this grant round, as much as $200,000 will be awarded to schools that meet the funding objectives and eligible expense requirements as described in the following sections.

Application deadlines

- **Applications for grants of up to $50,000 are due by 4 p.m. on Thursday, February 28, 2019.** The county will award funds based upon recommendations from a committee comprised of county staff and school representatives who have experience with waste-reduction programs.

- **Applications for grants of up to $15,000 will be accepted throughout the year as funds remain**

Funding objectives and eligible expenses

In 2017 the county board adopted the 2018 – 2023 Solid Waste Management Master Plan that establishes goals for recycling and composting of municipal solid waste. These goals include recycling 75 percent of the waste stream by 2030. The county’s goals include:

- 15 percent organics recycling
- 60 percent recycling

Strong recycling and organics recycling programs at schools are an important part of achieving these ambitious goals.

Funding objectives

Grant funding can be used toward the following three objectives.

**Objective 1: Reduce waste and reuse**

Projects in this category could involve reducing packaging and food waste in the cafeteria. Strategies include repurposing food in internal programs or donating it. Packaging waste can be reduced by serving food and beverages in bulk. Project proposals that include food waste prevention or donation will be given preference for funding.

The following are project examples that meet this objective:

- Implementing a sharing table in the cafeteria where unwanted foods can be distributed to other students. See guidelines development of the Minnesota Department of Education and Minnesota Department of Health at [education.mn.gov/MDE/dse/FNS/SNP/gen/safe](http://education.mn.gov/MDE/dse/FNS/SNP/gen/safe)
- Donating leftover/surplus food to a hunger-relief program
- Using still-edible food in future meals
- Replacing single-use and disposable food service items with reusable items
- Replacing individually packaged foods (such as condiments or beverages) with bulk options
Objective 2: Start or improve organics recycling

Projects in this category initiate or expand the separation of organic materials, which includes food waste, from the trash for animal feed or composting. Napkins, paper towels, and certified compostable paper products may also be included in composting programs.

The following are project examples that meet this objective:

- Collecting organics to be processed at a composting facility
- Collecting food waste to be processed into animal feed
- Establishing an on-site composting program
- Expanding collection of organics to other parts of school buildings (such as restrooms or staff lounges)
- Replacing single-use disposable items with compostable alternatives

Objective 3: Recycling improvement and innovation

Projects in this category would improve recycling programs or provide new opportunities to recycle at schools. Projects should contribute to more efficient, abundant collection of recyclables and/or a reduction in trash.

The following are project examples that may meet this objective:

- Initiating recycling in cafeterias
- Expanding collection to other parts of the school building (such as hallways and staff lounges), outdoor athletic facilities and school district buildings
- Collecting recyclables at events, such as athletic events and school festivals

Eligible expenses

The following are examples of eligible expenses. Purchases must occur during the grant period.

- Bins, barrels, carts, sorting stations, etc. for collecting recycling or organics ($2,500 max per sorting station)
- Compostable bags for lining organics collection containers (one-year supply, eligible only for new programs or expansion of existing programs)
- Reusable food ware to replace disposable food ware
- Compostable food ware to replace disposable food ware (one-year supply, eligible only for new programs or expansion of existing programs)
- Bulk milk and condiment dispensers to replace individually packaged products
- Hauling of organics (eligible only for new programs, first year of program)
- Supplies for a sharing table such as a table, stainless steel cart, and steel or plastic food-safe bins
- NSF-certified refrigerator to store milk or other perishable items on the sharing table or to store food and beverages prior to donation ($500 max per school/cafeteria)
- Software to track food waste in order to minimize wasted food
- Waste grabbers to remove contamination, especially from cafeteria bins
- Reimbursement for monitors who oversee separation of organics, recycling, and trash in school cafeterias during the initial launch of project
- Stipends for teachers to start and lead school environmental clubs (for the portion of their work related to supporting waste-diversion activities at their schools)
- Water bottle filler retrofits ($400 max per fountain, schools must stop selling and/or supplying bottled water, reusable bottles are not an eligible expense)
Assistance and information meetings

Staff assistance

Hennepin County Environment and Energy staff are available to help throughout the application process, project implementation, and report writing.

Hennepin County provides the following assistance and resources:

- Site visits by county staff to provide suggestions on set-up of collection systems.
- Scales for weighing waste and advice on gathering baseline, interim and final data.
- Free container signs and labels to help educate students and staff about which materials can be recycled or composted.
- Training for your staff.

You are encouraged to contact the school recycling grant program manager for assistance with developing a project or reviewing draft project ideas. Contact Kira Berglund at kira.berglund@hennepin.us or 612-596-1498 with any questions.

Information meetings

Bring your project ideas, get questions about the program answered, and discuss other ways county staff can help make your project a success.

Information sessions will be held:

- Tuesday, February 5, from 8 to 9 a.m. at the Lunds & Byerlys Community Room, 3945 West 50th Street in Edina
- Thursday, February 7, from 3:30 to 4:30 p.m. at the Rockford Road Library, 6401 42nd Avenue North in Crystal

Classroom presentations

Hennepin County offers K-12 classroom presentations to all schools in the county. Presentations are correlated to state standards and introduce students to the broader impacts of their school’s recycling and organics recycling efforts. Students will learn about the environmental benefits of recycling, the path their recyclable and compostable materials take after they leave the school, and how to reduce waste. Contact Kira Berglund at kira.berglund@hennepin.us or 612-596-1498 for more information or to schedule a presentation.

School recycling meetings

Hennepin County organizes bi-monthly school recycling meetings for school staff and volunteers involved in recycling programs. The meetings are an opportunity to share successes, troubleshoot and learn more about waste reduction and other environmental topics. Contact Kira Berglund at kira.berglund@hennepin.us to be added to the contact list.
Reporting requirements

Grant reports must detail progress made to achieve goals, project results – including quantitative data when available – and expenditures. Project reports include a written report, a budget spreadsheet, and invoices/receipts.

Reports must be submitted by the following deadlines:

- For projects that take one year to complete, final reports are due by May 15, 2020.
- For projects that require two years to complete, an interim progress report must be submitted by March 15, 2020. A final project report must be submitted at least two months prior to expiration of the grant agreement, and no later than April 30, 2021.
- Reporting deadlines for grantees that apply after February 28, 2019, will be decided on a case-by-case basis. Generally, final reports will be due two years after a contract is executed.

Guidelines

The following guidelines apply to all project proposals:

A. No matching funds are required for grant proposals of $25,000 or less. Matching funds of 25 percent of the total project costs are required for proposals of more than $25,000. In-kind staff time and other expenses are eligible for use as matching funds.
B. The first 50 percent of grant funds will be disbursed upon execution of the grant agreement, 20 percent of grant funds will be released only upon approval of the interim project report, and the remaining funds will be released upon approval of the final project report.
C. A school or district may receive a maximum of $50,000 per calendar year.
D. As a general guide, the intent of this grant fund is to support modest capital expenditures, and any equipment purchased must be used for waste-reduction activities beyond the term of the grant project. Restrictions apply to the kinds and amount of equipment and installation expenses that are allowed. Staff time is an eligible expense only for additional assignments, specifically cafeteria monitors and green team advisors. Staff time already accounted for in your annual budget is not an eligible expense, but it can be used as in-kind matching funds.
E. Priority will be given to projects in which the applicant can demonstrate a strong plan to sustain the proposed activities after grant funds have been exhausted.
F. Upon notification of award, county staff will contact you to set up an initial grant meeting with the people involved with the project. The purpose of this initial meeting is to discuss project implementation and to review the reporting guidelines.
G. If a proposal is submitted as a collaborative effort involving more than one public school or organization, the school district must act as the primary applicant and submit an application on behalf of the schools involved.
H. Projects must be completed by July 15, 2021.
I. The county reserves the right to recommend no award or award of partial funding for project proposals.
J. Upon grant award, the applicant must submit a resolution from its governing board authorizing execution of a grant agreement with the county and execute an agreement.
K. Grant recipients are strongly encouraged to attend Hennepin County school recycling meetings, held on a bi-monthly basis during the school year.
Application and timeline

Project proposals must be submitted to Hennepin County Environment and Energy using the forms provided by the county at hennepin.us/schoolrecycling by 4 p.m. on Thursday, February 28, 2019.

Grant award recommendations will be communicated in March. Applications for grants of up to $15,000 will continue to be accepted throughout the year as funds remain.

To complete your applications, submit the following items via email to Kira Berglund at kira.berglund@hennepin.us:

1. The application as a Word document (not a PDF)
2. The Excel budget spreadsheet
3. W9 form (a blank form is available from the county by request)
4. A signed copy of the first page of the application; this can be submitted as a scanned copy via email or mailed as a hard copy

If you are mailing the signature page, please send it to:

Hennepin County Environment and Energy
Attn: Kira Berglund
701 4th Avenue S, Suite 700
Minneapolis, MN 55415