

HENNEPIN COUNTY  
MINNESOTA



Solicitation for grant applications

School recycling grants

Solicitation due date: February 25, 2021, at 4 p.m.



# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Program overview

The County of Hennepin, State of Minnesota ("County") is soliciting applications for the School Recycling Grant (the "Grant"). As used herein, the entity/individual responsible for any awarded Grant may be referred to as the "Applicant" and the Applicant's response to this solicitation (the "Solicitation") may be referred to as the "Application".

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.

In this grant round, as much as \$150,000 will be awarded to schools that meet the funding objectives and eligible expense requirements as described in the following sections.

## 1.2 The grant

To be eligible for the Grant, the applicant must be one of the following: a charter school, a non-public school, or a school district.

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. **This round, \$50,000 of the grant funds will be reserved for projects that prevent or reduce waste.**

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 developed by the Minnesota Department of Education and Minnesota Department of Health at [education.mn.gov/MDE/dse/FNS/SNP/gen/safe](https://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. Schools need to demonstrate that they have a well-established recycling program before receiving funding to start an organics program.

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 areas of school buildings (such as restrooms or staff lounges)
- Replacing single-use disposable items with compostable alternatives

### **Objective 3: Improve or expand recycling**

Projects in this category would improve recycling programs or provide new opportunities to recycle at schools. Projects should contribute to a 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 areas 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

## 1.3 Eligible expenses

### **Eligible for funding**

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
  - Grant only funds trash bins for cafeteria sorting stations
- Compostable bags for lining organics collection containers
  - One-year supply, eligible only for new programs or expansion of existing programs
- Hauling of organics
  - Eligible only for new programs, first year of program
- Compostable food ware to replace disposable food ware
  - One-year supply, eligible only for new programs or expansion of existing programs
- On-site compost bins to give students hands-on experience with composting
- Waste grabbers to remove contamination, especially from cafeteria bins
- Construction upgrades to loading docks and enclosures in order to facilitate collection of organics
  - \$5,000 max per location
- 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

### Eligible for waste reduction funding

- Bulk milk and condiment dispensers to replace individually packaged products
- Reusable food ware to replace disposable food ware
  - Durable baskets or reusable bags for breakfast to-go are allowed
- Dishwasher
  - \$10,000 limit per school/district (each funding round)
  - 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.
  - Replacement of an existing dishwasher is not allowed.
- 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
  - Must be EnergyStar-certified
- Food donation supplies (such as aluminum pans, insulated bags)
- Software to track food waste in order to minimize wasted food
- Hand dryers
  - \$200 max per dryer, with a \$5,000 limit per school/district (each funding round)
- Water bottle filler retrofits
  - \$500 max per fountain
  - School must stop selling and/or supplying bottled water

## 1.4 Grant application

When submitting an Application, Applicants must follow the specific format and content requirements in the grant application. Failure to do so will likely prolong the evaluation process and/or may be grounds for rejection of the Application.

Applicant shall describe, in detail, the proposed uses of the Grant funds for the Project. Any other use of Grant funds is strictly prohibited. Applicant shall be solely responsible for securing all additional funds necessary for completion of the Project.

Applicant agrees to only use the Grant funds for the uses indicated above. Use of Grant funds for any other purpose is strictly prohibited. If Applicant uses Grant funds for any other purpose, Applicant shall, upon County's written demand, repay all Grant funds awarded.

## 1.5 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:

- If your project will take **one year** to complete, submit your final report by **May 10, 2022**.
- For projects that will require **two years** to complete, an interim progress report must be submitted by **March 31, 2022**. A final project report must be submitted at least two months prior to expiration of the grant agreement, no later than **May 1, 2023**.
- Reporting deadlines for grantees that apply after February 25, 2021, will be decided on a case-by-case basis. Generally, final reports will be due two years after a contract is executed.

## 1.6 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 10, 2023.
- 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.

## 2 Evaluation and selection

### 2.1 Applicant evaluation and recommendation for selection

County will consider the Application to determine whether it meets County's requirements and is otherwise eligible for a Grant award. Submission of an Application shall neither obligate nor entitle an Applicant to enter into a contract with the County or to receive a Grant.

### 2.2 Evaluation of responsiveness

The County will consider all the material submitted by the Applicant to determine whether the Applicant's offer is in compliance with the terms and conditions set forth in this Solicitation. Applications that do not comply with the provisions in this Solicitation may be considered nonresponsive and may be rejected. Notwithstanding the foregoing, County expressly reserves the right to reject any or all Applications with or without cause.

Applications will be reviewed and recommended for funding based on the following criteria: project description, project plan, data gathering, education for students and staff, timeline, budget, and plan for sustaining the project.

The County reserves the right to determine whether any aspect of the Application satisfactorily meets the criteria, the right to seek clarification or additional information from any Applicant(s), and the right to waive any irregularities or informalities that the County deems is in its best interest.

### 2.3 Execution of grant agreement

County may condition the Grant award upon Applicant's execution of a Grant agreement provided by County. As applicable, the Grant agreement shall define the legal relationship between County and Applicant.

## 3 General rules

### 3.1 Solicitation for Grant Applications and Grant overview

This Solicitation for Grant Applications is an invitation for Applicants to submit a Grant Application to the County. It is a means by which the County may facilitate the acquisition of information related to awarding the Grant and is **NOT A COMMITMENT OR OBLIGATION TO AWARD ANY AMOUNT.**

Nothing in this Application shall obligate County to (i) award any amount; (ii) award any subsequent grants; or (iii) pay or otherwise make any additional distributions.

## 3.2 Application submission

Project proposals must be submitted to Hennepin County Environment and Energy using the forms provided by the county at [hennepin.us/schoolrecycling](https://hennepin.us/schoolrecycling) by 4 p.m. on Thursday, February 25, 2021.

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 application, email the following items to Kira Berglund at [kira.berglund@hennepin.us](mailto:kira.berglund@hennepin.us):

1. The application as a Word document (not a PDF)
2. The Excel budget spreadsheet
3. A signed copy of the first page of the application; a scanned copy or electronic signature is accepted.

## 3.3 Questions and pre-application 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 grant program manager, Kira Berglund, at [kira.berglund@hennepin.us](mailto:kira.berglund@hennepin.us) or 612-596-1498 for assistance with developing a project proposal.

## 3.4 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:

- Wednesday, January 27 from 3:30 to 4:30 p.m. - webinar
- Thursday, January 28, from noon - 1 p.m. – webinar
  - To sign up for a webinar, please fill out this [registration form](#).



### 3.5 Addenda

The County reserves the right to modify this Solicitation at any time prior to the Application due date. The County will modify the Solicitation only by formal written addenda. Applications should be based on this Solicitation document and any formal written addenda.

### 3.6 County's right to withdraw, cancel, suspend and/or modify the Solicitation

The County reserves the right to withdraw, cancel, suspend, and/or modify this Solicitation for any reason and at any time with no liability to any prospective Applicant for any costs or expenses incurred in connection with the Solicitation or otherwise.

### 3.7 Applicant's right to edit or cancel an Application

An Application may be edited or cancelled in the prior to the Application due date.

### 3.8 Applications will not be returned

Upon submission, Applications will not be returned.

### 3.9 Public disclosure of Application documents

This Solicitation and any data or information submitted to County in response are subject to applicable law, including but not limited to the provisions of the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act Minnesota Statutes, chapter 13 ("MGDPA").

If the Applicant believes private/non-public data is included in its Application, Applicant shall clearly identify the data and provide the specific rationale in support of the asserted classification. Applicant must type in bold red letters the term "CONFIDENTIAL" on that specific part or page of the Application which Applicant believes to be confidential. Classification of data as trade secret data will be determined pursuant to applicable law, and, accordingly, merely labeling data as "trade secret", "confidential" or the like does not necessarily make the data protected under any applicable law.

The Applicant agrees, as a condition of submitting its Application, that the County will not be liable or accountable for any loss or damage which may result from a breach of confidentiality related to the Application.

### 3.10 Applicant's costs

The County shall not be responsible for any costs incurred by Applicant in relation to this Solicitation. Applicant shall bear all costs of Application preparation, submission, and attendance at interviews, or any other activity associated with this Solicitation or otherwise.



### 3.11 Conflict of interest

The Applicant affirms that to the best of its knowledge the submission of its Application, or any resulting Grant award, does not present an actual or perceived conflict of interest. Strictly for illustration purposes, a personal relationship with a County employee directly or indirectly involved in the Grant process may be a conflict of interest.

The Applicant agrees that should any actual or perceived conflict of interest become known, it will immediately notify the County and will advise whether it will or will not avoid, mitigate, or neutralize the conflict of interest.

The County may make reasonable efforts to avoid, mitigate, or neutralize a conflict of interest by an Applicant. To avoid a conflict of interest by an Applicant, the County may utilize methods including disqualifying an Applicant from eligibility for the Grant or cancelling the Grant if the conflict is discovered after the Grant has been issued. The County may, at its sole and absolute discretion, waive any conflict of interest.