Attachment – Environmental action projects of interest

Hennepin County supports organizations to actively educate, engage, and motivate residents to become environmental stewards and make positive behavior changes, such as taking action to prevent waste, recycle, reduce household hazardous waste, combat climate change, care for trees, protect pollinators, and improve our air and water quality.

For additional project ideas, visit hennepin.us/greenpartners to read about projects funded in the previous grant round and hennepin.us/environmentaleducation to access Hennepin County's environmental education resources.

All projects must follow COVID-19 guidance on social distancing, mask wearing, and gatherings: health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus

Taking action on climate change

- **Conserve energy**: Learn about energy use, encourage residents to get an energy audit, and take action to save energy by weatherizing homes, installing programmable thermostats, turning off lights, unplugging electronics, using solar chargers, and more. See the energy conservation, air quality and climate change activity guides and the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency's inside your home website for ideas.
- **Choose sustainable transportation**: Motivate people to get out of cars and on to a bicycle or public transit. Involve residents in discussions about air pollution. Provide transit incentives and help plan routes so participants have a successful first trip. See the encouraging biking and walking activity guide and visit hennepin.us/bike for resources.
- **Reduce air pollution at home**: Engage residents in learning about household sources of air pollution, health impacts, and actions they can take to reduce it, like eliminating burning or replacing gas-powered lawn equipment with cleaner options. See the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency's what you can do about air pollution site for ideas.
- **Use renewable energy options**: Sign people up for green energy options like WindSource®, Renewable*Connect, or community solar. Visit the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency's buying green power and the Clean Energy Resources Teams community solar websites for ideas.

Protecting natural resources

- **Adopt a storm drain:** Keep leaves and trash out of our water, post yard signs and host clean-up events. Sign people up to adopt a storm drain and receive reminders each season. Provide information to participants about storm drains and your local watershed. See the maintain your drain and storm drain detectives activity guides for ideas.
- **Reduce salt use to protect water:** Encourage homeowners to reduce their salt use in the winter. See the smart salting tips and improved winter maintenance video for salt reduction tips and ideas.

- **Care for trees:** Engage homeowners in conducting tree inventories, learn about the benefits of trees, and provide hands-on training opportunities to practice tree planting, trimming, and watering. Work with Hennepin County foresters to select trees to giveaway to participants in your community. See hennepin.us/trees, hennepin.us/ashtrees, and Minnesota DNR residential tree care for resources.
- **Protect pollinators:** Encourage people to make changes in their community and lawn care practices to protect pollinators, including reducing the use of pesticides, providing habitat, and using pollinator-friendly plants. Limited plant giveaways are allowed when participants will be trained and supported to care for native pollinator plants.
- **Support homeowners in making changes to their yard to protect water:** Encourage homeowners to make changes to capture rainfall on their property instead of letting it runoff. See Hennepin County's protecting natural resources and the Blue Thumb websites for ideas.

Preventing waste and recycling

- **Recycling:** Encourage recycling in areas of low participation. Contact your city recycling coordinator to find out which neighborhoods have low recycling rates in your area (see the list of city recycling coordinators at hennepin.us/recycling. See the Hennepin County recycling guide, recycling presentation, and recycling activity guide for ideas.
- **Organics:** Encourage residents to sign up for organics recycling or use a drop-off site, help them participate on a regular basis, and make sure they maximize the amount of materials they divert to organics recycling while minimizing contamination. See hennepin.us/organics, the organics recycling guide, tips for getting started with organics recycling, and organics recycling activity guides for ideas.
- **Reduce food waste:** Encourage participants to improve meal planning, properly store food, and preserve food before it spoils. See the Hennepin County food waste activity guides for ideas. Ask participants to share challenges, creative tips, and advice for others.
- **Reuse and repair:** Encourage participants to repair household items. Recruit fixers from your community and host a fix-it event tailored to your community. See the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency's repair revolution and fix-it clinic websites for ideas.
- **Make buying used cool:** Reduce the stigma of buying used. Engage participants in examining how their household generates waste and identifying items they could purchase used goods. Share information about reuse stores and purchasing strategies. Host a swap event and consider a theme, such as books, music, toys, kitchen items, clothes, shoes, jewelry, or tools. Encourage participants to share their used items on social media to influence social norms more broadly. View the county's reducing waste activity guides and learn more about our Choose to Reuse program.
- **Replace disposables and single use plastics:** Ask participants to assess the disposable, "convenience" items they commonly use and provide tips and tools to replace those items with reusable items. See our top 10 list of disposal items to replace with reusables.

- **Reduce packaging waste:** Encourage participants to purchase items with less packaging. Ask participants to assess their current purchases and take steps to avoid packaging waste for future purchases. See the Hennepin County [reducing waste activity guide](#) for ideas.
- **Recycle or reuse bulky waste:** Encourage participants to recycle, reuse, or donate unwanted items like mattresses, household items, and electronics. See Hennepin County's [recycling website](#), [drop-off facility guide](#), and [green disposal guide](#) for ideas.
- **Identify and choose the least hazardous options:** Provide samples of household cleaning products and read labels, have participants assess products they have at home, explore options for less hazardous products, conduct side-by-side comparisons of products. [Tour a drop-off facility](#) to learn what happens to materials. Purchase supplies to make green cleaners or green cleaning products currently on the market. See the [green cleaning recipes](#) and [hazardous waste activities guide](#) for ideas.

In general, giveaways should be limited to items that are tied directly to an action that people can take and follow up communications to those participants should be part of the project plan.

Projects that are not a good fit include projects to address structural barriers or infrastructure changes. Learn more about additional Hennepin County resources for [recycling at organizations, businesses](#), and [schools](#) and support to install significant projects to [protect water, habitat, and other natural resources](#).