

2026 Municipal Recycling Grant Program Guidelines



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Program Overview

Municipalities in Washington County are responsible for establishing and maintaining municipal recycling programs. The County provides educational, financial and technical assistance to local governments to aid these programs. The County's municipal recycling grant program assists municipalities with recycling program expenses.

Grant funding levels are dependent on municipality household counts and recycling program activities. Municipalities are encouraged to apply for the maximum level of funding. Four levels of grant funding are available:

- **Base Funding:** funding to cover administrative and program expenses to sustain existing programs and covers the BASIC category of the recycling continuum. Base funding is dependent on the number of households in a community.
- **Project Funding:** funding to target specific grant projects that are related to achieving recycling goals and covers projects contained in the Improved Project and Advanced Funding categories of the recycling continuum.
- **Incentive Funding:** funding for one-time special projects or purchases that cannot be covered with project funding. Improved Project funding shall be used for before incentive funding is applied for.
- **Shared Resources Funding:** funding for collaboration among multiple municipalities.

Eligibility Requirements

To receive funding through the Washington County municipal recycling grant program, municipalities must meet the following eligibility requirements:

1. A municipality's curbside recycling program shall be established by; 1) ordinance, 2) contracted with a hauler, or 3) a hauler be licensed to operate within the municipality.
2. Municipality must support State efforts in obtaining hauler reports by ensuring compliance through ordinance, contract or license requirements and the ability to exercise punitive actions, as needed.
3. All multi-unit dwellings (4 or more units) must have recycling service available.
4. The municipality must maintain the components under the Base Funding category of the recycling continuum (Appendix A).
 - a. Minimum website requirements include the following:
 - i. Link to the Washington County Disposal Directory
 - ii. Link to the Ramsey/Washington Food Scraps Pick-up Program webpage
 - iii. Link to the Washington County Environmental Center webpage
 - iv. Link to the R&E BizRecycling webpage
 - v. Link to the Washington County container loan webpage
5. Municipal staff must participate in two recycling coordinator meetings and/or meetings with PHE staff per year to develop the grant project work plan(s).
6. Supply Verification of Compliance with Minnesota Statute 115.471 and 115A.46 Public Entities Law (if applicable).
7. Submit completed previous grant cycle expenditures and project final reports.
8. Submit complete application and project(s) form, as applicable.
 - a. Complete projects and performance measures outlined on the application or return funds for incomplete projects.

- b. Continue to make progress along the municipal recycling performance continuum.

Washington County, on behalf of State requirements, reserves the right to withhold any and all funding from municipalities for; 1) failure to report on previous grant activities of a municipality (not in good effort), 2) failure to complete application and project work plans and 3) failure to not actively engaging with PHE staff in grant funding activities and the execution of projects.

Funding Application

Municipalities must complete a funding application by February 27th, 2026, to receive grant funding. Applications and yearly work plan(s) must be submitted using Re-TRAC Connect.

Grant Funding Allocation

Funding is separated into four (4) categories:

- **Base funding:** funding for activities that sustain the municipalities existing recycling program. This includes funding for administration of a recycling ordinance, resident questions, completing the municipal grant application, work plan(s) and annual report, residential recycling information, website maintenance and meeting the Base Funding category of the continuum, which can be found on Appendix A. The table below shows how base funding is determined for each community.

# of Households	Eligible Amount for Base Funding
≤450	\$1,500.00
451-1000	\$2,500.00
1001-2000	\$5,000.00
2001-5000	\$10,000.00
5001-10000	\$20,000.00
≥10000	\$30,000.00

Note: household data comes from the Metropolitan Council’s population estimates. Estimates are the official estimates for state government purposes to determine government aid (LGA) and street aid allocations. Previous year estimates are prepared the following year and certified by July 15.

- **Project funding:** funding to develop and implement new or expanded recycling projects that encourage movement along the recycling continuum in the Improved Project and Advanced Project categories, found on Appendix A. A municipality is eligible to receive \$0.50/household/project. A municipality may qualify for up to four projects per year.
- **Incentive funding:** one-time special project funding for large purchases that cannot be covered with project funding. Incentive funding can be applied for after the February 26th grant application deadline so long as the municipality meets to discuss with PHE staff. Funding can be requested and utilized at any time during the 2026 grant cycle.
- **Shared Resource funding:** this is targeted to fund collaborations among municipalities. Municipalities participating in shared resource funding must designate one municipality to act as representative and fiscal agent to be liaison with the County.

Eligible Expenses

Grant funds are used for the following expenses and are subject to approval by PHE staff:

- Administrative (maximum of 75% of total grant funds)
 - Salary and legal costs of personnel only while directly working on, part time or full time, the planning, implementation and promotion of eligible activities.
 - Salaries, benefits and mileage for consultant services or temporary help with prior written approval from PHE and must be related to eligible activities.
 - County-approved educators, performers, and municipal staff who help implement required education activities using County toolkits and standardized messaging.
 - Attendance or training opportunities for municipal staff
- Capital Expenses
 - Event recycling containers
 - Public space recycling containers
 - Recycling containers and education for municipally owned/operated buildings and internal spaces
 - Resident-only municipal food scraps drop-off site
- Public Education and Promotion*
 - Design, production and distribution of flyers, brochures, newsletter articles, posters, advertisements, videos, billboards, audio (radio, video, television, theater), electronic (website and e-news) and other communication promotional items reaching at least 50% of a community's population
 - Disseminating County flyers, brochures, newsletters, posters, advertisements, videos, billboards, audio (radio, video, television, theatre) electronic (website and e-news) and other communication promotional items
 - Development of promotional materials for a community event such as a clean-up day or road clean up event
 - The percentage of cost for a municipality's newsletter devoted to recycling
 - Environmental commissions and related expenses directly related to recycling and waste education (maximum of 25% of total grant funds)
 - Materials necessary for in-person or other events
- Singular Item Collection
 - ⊖ Design, production and distribution of flyers, brochures, newsletter articles, posters, advertisements, videos, billboards, audio (radio, video, television, theater), electronic (website and e-news) and other communication specific to the collection of a specific item or material.*
 - Disposal costs of items collected for recycling or reuse at special collection events by an approved County vendor
- Other
 - Yard waste, recycling or composting project
 - Reuse projects and promotion
 - Other expenses with prior written approval from the PHE

*Municipalities should reference [MN State Statute 16C.073](#) for purchasing of paper for print materials.

Ineligible Expenses

Ineligible expenses are considered the following and subject to review by PHE:

1. Permanent, single sort, year-round recycling drop-off locations
2. Print materials already supplied by PHE as outlined on the [print materials request form](#). Print materials that are customized with municipal logos are exempt
3. Disposal expenses for community clean up events or road cleanup activities where specific items are not directed to recycling or reuse
4. Expenses for non-waste abatement, such as energy or ground water
5. Ongoing recycling or garbage service fees (collection, processing, transportation)
6. Costs for office equipment and supplies
7. Street sweeping expenses
8. Beautification projects or rain gardens
9. Lobbying and legal expenses
10. Food or refreshments
11. Funding currently budgeted or being provided by applicant

Standard List of Residential Curbside Recyclables

PHE created the list of standard recyclable materials to be collected curbside after researching current materials collected curbside by haulers as well as the availability of viable end markets for those materials. This list covers only the **minimum** materials recommended for residential curbside collection. A municipality may require the collection of additional recyclable materials. A municipality may choose how to enforce such as through ordinance or hauler licensing. The Standard List of Residential Curbside recyclables can be found at the link below.

[Washington County Standard List of Residential Curbside Recyclables](#)

This standard list of recyclables for single sort recycling collection will be periodically reviewed and updated by PHE as additional materials and end markets become available. PHE may add materials to this list and require municipalities to begin collection of the new materials within one year of receiving notification from the PHE.

Verification of Compliance with Minnesota Statute 115.471 and 115A.46 Public Entities Law

As a condition of eligibility for the Washington County Municipal Recycling Grant funds, pursuant to Minnesota Statutes 115A.46, subd. 5 and 115A.471, all waste generated by municipal government activities, including, but not limited to city/town halls, public works buildings, parks, etc., and waste arranged or waste contract for on behalf of its residents (such as organized garbage collection), must be managed in accordance with the County's Solid Waste Management Plan and delivered to the

Ramsey/Washington County Resource Recovery Facility in Newport for disposal. Failure to comply with this provision shall constitute a breach of the Municipal Recycling Grant Agreement.

Reporting

Hauler Reporting

The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (the State) will collect tonnage reports directly from haulers on behalf of counties and municipalities. Reports will be collected on a quarterly basis and will have tonnage amounts for MSW/garbage, recycling and source separated organics listed for each county. To ensure data is provided to the State quarterly, municipalities are expected to continue their role in enforcing hauler compliance through existing ordinances, contracts or licenses with haulers. Municipalities are expected to exercise punitive actions, if needed. The final, compiled hauler reports will be available on the County's Re-TRAC Connect system for municipality's to view after the reporting period has closed.

Annual Work Plan Project Status Reports

Municipalities receiving funding through the Washington County municipal recycling grant program must complete annual work plan project status reports. The annual report is a measure of a municipality's progress towards meeting components on the recycling continuum and on program expenditures. Annual reports must be completed by the municipality receiving the grant by January 31st of each year using the County's Re-TRAC Connect system.

Work plan project status report:

- project completion (yes/no)
- performance measurements (minimum of 3 forms of measurement, as identified in work plan, should be reported)
- description of information helpful to other municipalities desiring to replicate projects

Final Program Expenditures Report

Municipalities receiving funding through the Washington County municipal recycling grant program must complete final program expenditures report at the end of the grant term. Reports must be completed to receive funding in future grant cycles. Components to be included in the final report includes the following:

- **Program expenditures:** *Total program expenditures must equal total program revenue.*
 - Administrative costs including
 - Direct salaries
 - Direct membership, training, subscriptions
 - Consultant services and or temporary help
 - Promotion
 - Design, printing and postage
 - Advertisements/Videos/Promotional items
 - Special events
 - Other (list and describe)
 - **Capital Costs**
 - **Collection Costs** (grant funds cannot be used for collection costs)
 - **Other**

- For each line item on the report's expenditures sheet, indicate:
 - Total County grant funds used
 - City/Township funds contributed
 - % of County grant used for line item
 - Total expenditures

Recycling Performance

A municipality's performance will be evaluated on information from the annual work plan project status reports, and reasonable effort towards reaching outcomes from work plan activities implemented and progression along the recycling continuum. PHE reserves the right to request documentation for information submitted.

Failure by a municipality to demonstrate measurable progress towards one or more of the work plan goals will result in a Recycling Improvement Plan be submitted 90 days of being notified by PHE. The Plan must be negotiated with PHE and specify the efforts that will be undertaken by the municipality to improve its recycling program to achieve the identified goal in the work plan by implement strategies agreed upon by municipal staff and PHE. The plan should focus on components of the recycling continuum. Funding will be withheld until the municipality's Plan is completed and approved by PHE.

County Responsibilities

The County will be responsible for the following:

1. Grant documents
 - a. PHE will provide the grant application and work plan by January 1st for each municipality to use to request grant funding and to develop project work plans. PHE will also provide report forms for their recycling program(s). Annual reports are available year-round.
2. Meetings
 - a. PHE staff will host quarterly recycling coordinator meetings and will make meeting materials available on the [City Recycling Resources](#) webpage on the County's website. PHE staff will also coordinate individual work plan meetings (as needed) with each municipality to identify grant projects.
3. Technical assistance
 - a. PHE staff will help identify if and how additional technical assistance is needed. PHE staff strongly encourage municipal staff to use technical assistance as provided.
4. Payments
 - a. Grant payment will be made in one installment, which is to be used for recycling program expenses in 2026. The payment will be made within 60 days of execution of the Recycling Grant Agreement. Incentive funding will disbursed upon the verification of project completion – until such verification, the municipality is responsible for any payments necessary for the completion of the project.
5. Recycling tonnages
 - a. Recycling tonnages for each municipality will be collected by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (the State) from the community's recycling hauler(s) on a bi-annual basis. Reports are available by request.
6. Residential recycling survey
 - a. If requested, PHE will develop a survey on residents' recycling knowledge and behavior for municipalities to promote and distribute regularly.

7. Online recycling information and best practices
 - a. PHE will maintain the [City Recycling Resources](#) webpage on the County's website for use by municipal staff to obtain information on recycling best practices, track recycling coordinator meetings and access templates and other educational information designed specifically for use by municipalities.
8. Commercial Recycling
 - a. PHE has a separate funding mechanism to promote and support recycling in the commercial sector. This program is called BizRecycling and more information can be found at www.bizrecycling.com.
9. Recycling in multi-unit dwelling (4+ units)
 - a. PHE has a separate funding mechanism to promote and support recycling in multi-unit dwellings. More information and ways to access this program can be found on www.bizrecycling.com.

Supplemental Documents

- Updated waste and recycling ordinance(s) (if applicable)
- Updated waste and recycling contract(s) (if applicable)
- City/Township council meeting minutes discussing/approving updated ordinances/contracts (if applicable)
- Verification of public entities law (MN Statute 115.471 and 115A.46) (if applicable)
- A certificate of insurance indicating the municipalities' general liability limits as indicated in Section 4 of the Agreement. *Please include certificate with the application.*

Appendix A – Municipal Recycling Grant Continuum