

Waste Reduction and Innovation Grant Guidelines

BizRecycling – a program of Ramsey/Washington Recycling & Energy

Ramsey/Washington Recycling & Energy (R&E) is the organization through which Ramsey and Washington counties collaborate to responsibly manage waste. Through R&E, the counties strive to protect health and the environment. R&E offers programs to help residents and businesses reduce waste and recycle better.

The Waste Reduction and Innovation Grant is available to businesses, institutions, schools and nonprofit organizations (businesses) located in Ramsey and Washington counties to innovate and implement projects that will significantly reduce or prevent the creation of solid waste. Waste reduction projects eliminate the use of materials from production and sales processes that end up being discarded. Waste reduction is the most environmentally preferred strategy for waste management. For businesses, it can take many different forms, including reusing source materials, bulk purchasing, packaging changes, technology enhancements or production redesign.

Visit BizRecycling.com to learn about additional grant options.

Available Funding

Funding for Waste Reduction and Innovation Grants is as follows:

- One-time grant of no less than \$10,000 and up to \$50,000 per business entity or business group.
- A 10% cash match to the project is required. Applicants may request a waiver of this requirement at the time of application if the match is a financial barrier to project implementation. Waivers are awarded at the discretion of BizRecycling staff.
- Applicants may be eligible for more than one BizRecycling grant (i.e., Bin-Only, Recycling, Food Waste Prevention and Recovery and Pollution Prevention).

Multiple Grant Award Limitations: To ensure funds are used responsibly, any participant with more than three open BizRecycling grants must implement all required activities as agreed before applying for additional grant funding. New grants may be considered after at least one existing grant is successfully implemented. For this purpose, “participant” is defined as any business, business partnership, property management company, institution or nonprofit organization engaging in work under this program, regardless of the number of properties, businesses or ownership entities involved.

How to Submit a Grant Application

Applicants must work with one of BizRecycling’s Recycling Experts to submit a grant application. The Recycling Expert will conduct an initial site assessment of the business, provide recommendations for improvements and help develop the project plan. They will help assemble the necessary documentation and price quotes for the grant application and will help submit the grant application through an online application system. **Applications from businesses who have not had a site assessment will not be reviewed.**

To be connected to a Recycling Expert, email info@BizRecycling.com or call 651-768-6670.

Applications are accepted on a rolling basis until funds are fully disbursed. Applications take approximately eight weeks to process, from the grant submission deadline to the grantee receiving funds. Applications will be reviewed and evaluated by staff from R&E, Ramsey County and Washington County. During the review process, BizRecycling staff may contact the applicant for additional information or clarification.

Eligibility and Requirements

Businesses that meet the following criteria are eligible for a Waste Reduction and Innovation Grant.

Eligibility

- For-profit and nonprofit entities; all public, private and charter K-12 schools in Washington County; all K-12 charter schools with less than 250 students and all K-12 private schools in Ramsey County; private colleges and universities.
- Must have a permanent physical location in Ramsey or Washington County.
- Must be in “active/good standing” status with the [Minnesota Secretary of State](#) at the time of application.
- Previous recipients of BizRecycling grants may apply. Applicants must be in compliance with their previous grant contract.
- Ineligible entities include home-based businesses; all public K-12 schools in Ramsey County; public entities; public colleges and universities; tenants in publicly owner spaces; and residential apartment and condo buildings.

Requirements

- Complete a site assessment with a Recycling Expert.
- Complete a Waste Reduction and Innovation Grant application.
- Enter into a contract agreement with R&E for a period of 18 months. The approved application will serve as the work scope for the agreement.
- Provide a complete W-9.
- Agree to host up to three site visits with a BizRecycling Recycling Expert. The site visits are to (1) review current on-site operations and equipment, discuss objectives and approach and prepare the grant application; (2) if needed, implement the grant; and (3) complete a final walk-through at the end of the grant period.
- Agree to carry out grant activities for 18 months.
- Provide a three-sentence testimonial with pictures or video at the end of the grant period and, if asked, allow BizRecycling to promote the project as an example of a successful waste reduction project.

Types of Waste

The primary reduced material must be **municipal solid waste (MSW)**. Municipal solid waste includes garbage, refuse and other solid waste from residential, commercial, industrial and community activities that the generators of the waste aggregate for collection. For this grant, solid waste includes garbage and refuse in solid, semisolid or liquid form. Waste is typically disposed of in garbage, recycling or organics collection systems. Visit the [2025 Minnesota Statutes webpage](#) for the state’s definition of MSW.

Ineligible waste types include:

- Yard waste.
- Hazardous waste.
- Construction and demolition waste.
- Tree and agricultural waste such as plant and animal by-products.

Appropriate Use of Funds and Restrictions

The following are eligible expenses to receive funding. If the business has an idea outside of the items listed below, please consult a Recycling Expert.

Equipment & Materials

- Industry-specific equipment and supplies that eliminate significant amounts of solid waste from the production process or capture materials for reuse.
- Equipment and supplies that move businesses from disposable items to reusable items.
- Up to three months or \$2,500 of subscription costs, whichever is less, to manage inventory/usage/donations of food and disposable items to reduce waste.

Construction & Infrastructure

- Waste, recycling and organics management infrastructure improvements among cooperative businesses located within the same building or business park.
- Infrastructure improvements to enhance industry-specific waste reduction and recycling capabilities.

Research & Development

- Industry-specific consultation costs to reduce the creation of solid waste at its source, when it is beyond the expertise of BizRecycling's Recycling Experts.
- Costs related to supporting research and development activities of products or services that would significantly reduce solid waste in Ramsey and/or Washington counties. The company must be located within Ramsey or Washington County.
- Partial funding for staff or consultation time to develop environmentally preferable purchasing plans.
- Partial funding for staff or consultation time to develop cooperative purchasing groups to leverage access to bulk materials that align with the business's environmental purchasing plan.

Education & Engagement

- Staff time to develop an onsite "Green Team".
- Production and printing of custom signage, labels and educational materials.

Other

- Other needs related to the overarching goals of BizRecycling, as approved by BizRecycling staff.

Ineligible Expenses

- Trash, recycling and organics hauling costs.
- Staff time to manage waste.
- Compostable food service ware.
- Dishwashers and reusable food service ware.
- Water bottle filling stations.

All requested items must be reasonable in price point. BizRecycling staff reserve the right to deny any item or request that a more-cost effective substitute for the requested item be included in the grant application.

Evaluation Criteria

Proposed projects must demonstrate one or more of the following:

- Significantly reduce the amount of solid waste created by the business.
- Support an innovation that has the potential for replication across the business's industry.
- Support an effort to manage waste higher on [Minnesota's Waste Management Hierarchy](#).

All submitted applications are evaluated according to the following criteria:

Priority Areas

- Impact: estimated weight in pounds of waste, recycling or organic material that will be reduced or eliminated.
- Innovation: implementation of a new idea or technology with clear waste reduction outcomes.

Additional Criteria

- Activities: project activities, including current and proposed operations, equipment and processes are explained, and there is a clear link between project activities and how waste materials will be reduced.
- Engagement: how well employees, customers and/or the general community are engaged in project activities.
- Sustainability: project can be sustained beyond the grant period.
- Feasibility: activities, timeline and budget are realistic and fit within the project description and outcomes.
- Budget: budget supports project activities and impacts. Items are eligible for funding.

Reporting Requirements

All applicants will fill out a baseline report as part of the grant application. If awarded a grant, the grantee is required to complete a mid-grant and final report. The reports will provide BizRecycling staff with information about project progress, successes and challenges; and quantities of recyclables, food waste/organics and trash reduction. Any developed plans, policies or procedures must be shared with BizRecycling.

The final report is due 18 months from the grant start date. R&E withholds \$250 from the original grant award. The \$250 will be paid to the grantee at the end of the 18-month grant term when the final conditions are met: (1) submittal of the mid-grant and final report and (2) completion of a final on-site walk-through with a Recycling Expert to verify the implementation of and learnings from grant activities.

Fund Dispersal

Awardees will receive 50% of the grant funds upon execution of the grant agreement. The remaining 50%, less \$250 for the final report, will be disbursed via a reimbursement process. To receive reimbursement, the business must submit a report on implementation progress and receipts verifying how the funds were spent.

The remaining \$250 will be distributed after all final reporting requirements are complete.

Businesses have 18 months to complete all activities.

Rights of R&E

R&E may require confirmation of information furnished by applicants. R&E reserves the right to:

- Reject any or all applications if such action is in the public interest.
- Cancel the entire grant program.
- Appoint evaluation committees to review grant applications.
- Negotiate with any, all or none of the grant respondents.

A business completing a Waste Reduction and Innovation Grant application does not commit R&E to enter into a contract, nor does it obligate R&E to pay for any costs incurred in the preparation and submission of applications or in anticipation of a grant.

R&E reserves the right to revise these guidelines as needed.