



Waste Reduction & Innovation Grant Guidelines

A Program of Ramsey/Washington Recycling & Energy

Ramsey/Washington Recycling & Energy (R&E) is a joint powers board that works on behalf of Ramsey and Washington counties on solid waste programming and operations. R&E works to improve the recovery and management of solid waste, recyclable materials, and food scraps/ organic waste materials, to help the counties meet the 75% recycling goal set by the state of Minnesota.

R&E offers grants to businesses and non-profits to implement projects that will advance R&E's mission to enhance public health and the environment by creating value from waste through partnerships.

The Waste Reduction & Innovation Grant (WRIG) is available to businesses, institutions, schools, and non-profit 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 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 how other businesses in Ramsey and Washington counties have successfully implemented waste reduction efforts that have saved their businesses money and/or improved operating efficiency.

Available Funding

Funding for Waste Reduction & Innovation Grants are 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 based on the discretion of R&E.
- Applicants may be eligible for more than one BizRecycling grant (i.e., Bin-Only, Recycling, Food Recovery, and/or Waste Reduction & Innovation grants).

Applications are accepted bi-annually until funds are fully disbursed. This is a competitive grant program. All grants are evaluated based on a set of criteria determined to fit the goals and priorities of R&E. Applications take approximately 8 weeks to process, from the grant submission deadline to the business receiving funds. Applications will be reviewed and evaluated by staff from R&E, Ramsey County, and Washington County. During the review process, R&E may contact the applicant for additional information or to clarify the proposal content. A site visit and consultation from an R&E Recycling Expert is required before applying.

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. At the site assessment, they will provide recommendations for improvements and help develop the project plan. They will help assemble the necessary documentation and price quotes for the grant application. **Applications that have not had a site assessment will not be reviewed.**

To set up your site assessment email info@bizrecycling.com or call 651-266-1199.

Eligibility and Requirements

Businesses that meet the following criteria are eligible for a Waste Reduction & Innovation grant.

Eligibility

- For-profit or non-profit 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.
- Be in “active/in 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 owned spaces; and residential apartments and condo buildings.

Requirements

- Complete a site assessment with an R&E Recycling Expert.
- Complete a Waste Reduction & Innovation application.
- Awardees must 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.
- Agree to host up to 3 site visits with an R&E 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) a final walk-through at the end of the 18-month grant period.
- Agree to carry out grant activities for 18 months.
- Provide a 3-sentence testimonial with pictures or video at the end of the grant period and, if asked, allow the R&E to promote the project as an example of a successful waste reduction project.

Types of Waste

The primary reduced material must be **mixed municipal solid waste (MSW)**. Garbage, refuse and other solid waste from residential, commercial, industrial, and community activities that the generators of the waste aggregates for collection. For this grant, solid waste includes garbage, refuse, or sludges in solid, semisolid, or liquid form. Waste is typically disposed of in garbage, recycling, or organics collection systems. (Click [here](#) for the MN Statute definition of MSW).

Ineligible waste types include:

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

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 the [EPA’s Waste Management Hierarchy](#).

All submitted applications will be 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 – The project can be sustained beyond the grant period.
- Feasibility - Activities, timeline, and budget are realistic and fit within the project description and outcomes.
- Budget- The 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 business is required to **complete a mid-grant and final report**. The reports will provide R&E 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 business 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 and interview with the Recycling Expert to verify the implementation and learnings of the grant activities.

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, consult with the 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 disposal items to reusable options.
- Up to 3 months or \$2500 of subscription costs, whichever is less, to manage inventory/usage/donations of food and disposal 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, which is beyond the expertise of R&E consultants.

- Costs related to supporting the established research and development activities of products or services that would significantly reduce solid waste in Ramsey and Washington County. 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 education materials.

Other

- Other needs related to the overarching goals of BizRecycling and waste reduction and recycling best practices, as approved by R&E.

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. R&E reserves the right to deny any item or request a more cost-effective substitute for the requested item be included in the grant application.

Fund Dispersal

Awardees will receive 50% of the grant upon execution of a grant agreement. The remaining 50%, less \$250 for final reporting, 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.

Program Goals

The Waste Reduction and Innovation Grant has the following goals:

- Increase waste reduction and recycling activities within the business community.
- Support source-specific reduction, recycling, and reuse needs.
- Provide innovative solutions to waste reduction problems.
- Support sustainable solutions to ensure the growth of on-site efforts by staff and contractual services related to waste reduction and recycling.
- Support efforts to manage operations higher on the waste management hierarchy as it relates to:
 - waste reduction and reuse activities.
 - market development activities.
 - food recovery and donation.
 - Composting/organics collection.
 - hard to recycle materials/source-separated materials.

- large business, industrial and college campuses.

R&E Board Rights

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

- Reject any or all applications if such an 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 & Innovation Grant application does not commit R&E to enter into a contract, nor does it obligate the R&E Board 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.