



## Food Recovery 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 planning and operations. R&E works to improve recovery and management of recyclable materials, food waste and other organic waste.

R&E offers several grants to businesses and nonprofits to implement projects that will advance R&E's goal to protect health and the environment and meet the state of Minnesota's 75% recycling goal.

The Food Recovery Grant is available to organizations interested in starting or expanding food recovery efforts in Ramsey and/or Washington counties, defined as collection of surplus food from grocery stores, distributors and other sources of safe and edible food that can be redistributed to people who need it.

### Available Funding

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Funding for Food Recovery Grants is available as follows:

- Up to \$20,000, depending on the organization's capacity and needs
- Organizations may reapply in the year their original contract ends (for example, if their contract ends in July 2026, they may apply at any time during 2026)
- Applications are accepted twice per year, with deadlines to apply in February and August

### Eligible Applicants

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Businesses that meet the following criteria are eligible for a Food Recovery Grant.

- *Eligible organizations:* Businesses (food donors, including food producers, distributors, grocers and cafeterias), nonprofit organizations and college/university food shelves
- All food recovery associated with this grant must take place in Ramsey and/or Washington counties
- Be in "active/in good standing" status with the Minnesota Secretary of State
- Must provide a W-9 for reimbursement of expenses
- If reapplying, must be in good standing from their previous grant

*Ineligible organizations:* Individuals, home-based businesses, government organizations and restaurants are not eligible for participation.

### Grant Guidelines

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- All grant recipients are required to enter into a grant agreement with R&E for 18 months. Projects may be completed earlier, though biannual reports will need to be submitted to cover food recovery activities for the entire grant period.
- Grant recipients must provide a completed W-9 form prior to funds being distributed.

- Collected food must be distributed to people in need in Ramsey and/or Washington County. Food shelves, meal providers and other approved outlets are acceptable recipients of donated food. Any food collected that is deemed inedible must be composted whenever possible. Collected food must be distributed for free – the sale of the items once collected is not acceptable, except in cases that are pre-approved by R&E.
- Grant recipients must provide a baseline of food donated (if a food generator/donor), received (if an organization that receives donated food) and distributed to people. Recycling experts are available to help assess baseline amounts for participating organizations.

## How to Submit a Grant Application

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To apply, the applicant must receive a site visit from one of BizRecycling’s Recycling Experts. At the site visit, the Recycling Expert will help with answering questions about the grant and assessing baseline measurements of food being donated/recovered. They will help the applicant determine how to best use grant funding to meet the applicant’s food recovery goals. The Recycling Expert will help develop and submit the grant application.

Applications take approximately eight weeks to process, from submittal to the business receiving the first grant check.

### Grant Process

1. Applicant expresses interest by emailing [info@bizrecycling.com](mailto:info@bizrecycling.com) or calling 651-266-1199
2. A Recycling Expert will contact the applicant to set up a site visit and assist with completing the application
3. A team will review the application
4. A notice of approval or denial for the grant will be emailed to the applicant within 4 weeks of the deadline
5. Grant recipient will review and sign grant contract
6. 50% of project grant funding disbursed once contract is signed
7. Grant work begins
8. Grant recipient will complete biannual reports
9. Grant recipient will complete mid-term report to correspond with timing of the second biannual report deadline
10. Once the grant recipient has spent more than the first half of funding, they can request reimbursement through the midterm report, an email with receipts attached and/or by attaching all receipts to the final biannual report
11. Grant recipient will provide final biannual report at end of 18-month contract
12. Final \$250 disbursed upon approval of final report

## Evaluation Criteria

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All submitted applications will be evaluated according to the following criteria:

- Outcomes – Objectives clearly stated, specific, realistic and measurable

- Impact – Prevention of food waste through donation and/or collection and distribution of surplus, edible food to people in need
- Environmental/food justice – How well grantees prioritize environmental and food justice (examples: addressing food access/access to healthy foods, meaningful engagement with groups most vulnerable to environmental harms, access to culturally-specific foods)

## **Reporting Requirements**

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All applicants will complete a site visit and share some baseline information as part of the grant application. If awarded a grant, the grantee is required to complete three biannual reports and a mid-term report.

Biannual reports will include the following information:

- Pounds of food collected or donated by month, by county
- Pounds of food redistributed by month, by county
- List of donor locations by county
- List of meal locations and agency partners by county
- Description of how weights were determined or estimated
- Grantee expenses and revenues for food recovery efforts overall and the portion attributed to work in Ramsey and Washington counties

Biannual reports are due on the following dates during the 18-month grant duration:

- Quarter 1 and Quarter 2 (for work completed in January-June) - Due July 31
- Quarter 3 and Quarter 4 (for work completed in July-December) - Due January 31

The mid-term report will include a brief survey and receipts for purchases completed during the first half of the grant period. This report will be due concurrently with the second biannual report.

The final biannual report will include a few additional questions to summarize outcomes from the duration of the grant, highlight lessons learned and program successes and provide feedback on the grant program. The final report is due 18 months from the grant start date. R&E withholds \$250 from the original grant award and will pay this amount upon approval of final report by R&E.

## **Appropriate Use of Funds and Restrictions**

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Funds must be used for the expenses approved in the grant contract. Expenses exceeding the approved amounts for any grant item, or for any items not covered by the grant contract, will not be reimbursed. Eligible and ineligible expenses are listed below.

### **Eligible expenses include:**

- Materials needed for food recovery activities, including collection materials (buckets, boxes, reusable bags, etc.), materials to assist with food mobility (carts, pallets, etc.)
- Storage costs, including rental and/or equipment purchase for storage

- Transportation costs, including vehicle rental if necessary. Transportation costs include mileage reimbursement and vehicle rental. Fuel costs cannot be reimbursed
- Infrastructure and equipment for use in food recovery and donation efforts, including refrigeration and shelving
- Funding for staff for recycling education training (hourly wage for each employee for one hour of training)
- Staffing costs up to \$15,000 or equivalent of 0.5 FTE, whichever is less, for work directly associated with food recovery and/or gleaning activities

**Ineligible expenses include:**

- Staffing costs unrelated to food recovery activities and/or amounts exceeding 50% of 1 FTE
- Fuel costs
- General operating expenses
- Materials that are not recyclable, compostable or reusable
- Gift cards
- Any expenses deemed unnecessary for food recovery activities by R&E
- Funding for any activities taking place outside of Ramsey and/or Washington counties

**Fund Dispersal**

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Allocation of award payments will occur as follows:

- 50% of funds provided upon approval of grant application
- Additional funds spent beyond the first 50% of funds, less \$250, can be reimbursed once receipts are submitted
- Final \$250 provided upon approval of final report and submission of all receipts

**Receipts and reports on the following must be provided in order to be reimbursed for programming:**

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- All materials purchased
- Transportation costs
- Staff roles, wages and hours worked related to food recovery (if applying for reimbursement)
- Names and locations of donor organizations
- Recipient organizations names and locations
- Pounds of food collected
- Pounds distributed to each recipient site
- Description of how weights/amounts are estimated or determined

**R&E Board Rights**

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The R&E Board may require confirmation of information furnished by applicants. The R&E Board 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 Food Recovery 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 preparation and submission of applications or in anticipation of a grant.