

COVID-19 Recycling Relief Grant

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

N.C. Department of Environmental Quality
Division of Environmental Assistance and Customer Service

The purpose of this grant program is to assist local governments and recycling businesses to purchase recycling equipment in North Carolina during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Division of Environmental Assistance and Customer Service (DEACS) administers the COVID-19 Recycling Relief Grant program through the Solid Waste Management Outreach Program.

With the release of this Request for Proposals (RFP), DEACS seeks proposals for grant funding to purchase recycling equipment that supports the continued operation or improvement of recycling programs during and after the COVID-19 pandemic. **Proposals will be accepted until 5:00pm on Friday, October 30, 2020.** Applicants should carefully read this entire RFP prior to submitting a proposal.

COVID-19 Recycling Relief Grant Program Parameters:

Any proposed grant project must be to support or improve an existing recycling program for a local government or a business. COVID-19 has affected certain sectors of the recycling industry and some local governments and recycling businesses have had to alter their recycling service to accommodate new parameters. This grant is designed to provide supplemental equipment or resources for organizations that have had to alter recycling services.

When evaluating proposals, DEACS will prioritize residential recycling programs collecting traditional recyclable materials such as paper, plastic, metals, and glass. Since more residents are staying home during the pandemic, residential recycling programs have had an influx of material.

Example Project Grants:

- Extra recycling carts for a community or private hauler that has had to reduce the frequency of curbside collection. The extra carts can capture the overflow of recyclable material that will not fit in residents' existing carts.
- Upgrades to collection vehicles to increase automation and reduce material handling by employees.
- Containers for increased drop-off recycling service due to disruptions in curbside service.
- Outreach materials to inform the public of a change to recycling service during COVID-19.
- COVID-19 personal protective equipment for employees that engage with the public such as face masks for convenience center staff.

Available Funding:

Max grant award amount: \$20,000

Communities preparing proposals for a 2020 COVID-19 Recycling Relief Grant must contact Sandy Skolochenko at (919) 707-8147, sandy.skolochenko@ncdenr.gov or Matt James at (919) 707-8133, matt.james@ncdenr.gov. These staff are available to discuss potential grant projects and provide technical assistance and advice prior to submitting a grant proposal.

Cash Match Requirement:

Required Cash Match: COVID-19 Recycling Relief Grant winners must provide a cash match equal to or exceeding 20 percent of the requested grant funding. For example, a grantee requesting a \$20,000 grant must match at least \$4,000 with local funds for a total project cost of \$24,000.

Calculating Cash Match: To determine the necessary cash match for any grant project, first determine the total budget associated with the project and then use the following equation: total project budget ÷ 6 = required cash match.

Distributions from the \$2 per ton Solid Waste Disposal Tax may be used to cover cash match requirements. In-kind contributions will not be accepted in lieu of cash match.

Use of Grant Funds:

Examples of **approved uses** of COVID-19 Recycling Relief Grant funds include site development costs, construction of facilities to handle recyclable materials, equipment purchases, equipment installation costs, key recycling program components, PPE for employees who engage with the public, and materials that support public education such as signs or brochures.

Grant funds **MAY NOT** be used for employee salaries, land acquisition costs, administrative expenses such as overhead, utility costs, studies or work performed by consultants, contracted collection costs, and / or payment for other contracted recycling services such as payment to a vendor for operating a household hazardous waste collection event.

Eligible Entities:

- Local governments, defined as counties, municipalities, councils of governments and solid waste authorities in North Carolina, are eligible to apply for funding from the COVID-19 Recycling Relief Grant Program.
- Recycling businesses, defined as a business or a nonprofit organization that accepts, collects, and/or recycles materials from outside sources to create a value-added feedstock for intermediary processing or end-use recycled product manufacturing.

Conditions on Submittals:

- **ONLY ONE PROPOSAL PER ELIGIBLE ENTITY WILL BE ACCEPTED.** Grant proposals may combine funding requests for multiple types of projects into one proposal. The available funding limits still apply and total request may not exceed the grant award amounts noted in the Available Funding section.
- Multi-party initiatives such as joint projects involving two or more local governments where each local government contributes towards project funding are encouraged. Any group participating in a regional or multi-party project proposal may not submit additional proposals.
- All applicants selected for funding will undergo a compliance review to ensure that they do not have an outstanding Notice of Violation (NOV) related to North Carolina solid waste statutes and rules. Any outstanding NOV's must be corrected to the satisfaction of the N.C. Division of Waste Management (DWM) prior to any grant being awarded. Applicants with outstanding NOV's are responsible for providing DEACS with information from DWM indicating that the community is in compliance and that the NOV's have been corrected before a grant contract can be initiated.
- Applications will not be accepted from local governments that have not submitted the required Solid Waste and Materials Management Annual Report for the most recent fiscal year.
- DEACS aims to support as many qualifying projects as possible while funding remains. After close examination of funding requests and subject to agreement with the applicant, DEACS may award grant amounts lower than the original request. For any amount awarded, grantees must still provide the required cash match as explained in the Cash Match Requirement section.

Grant Project Period / Funding Period:

Successful grant applicants will be required to enter into a grant contract with the N.C. Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) for a one (1) year contract term. Grantees must expend funds within the year-long contract period unless the grant contract end date is extended by written agreement between the applicant and the DEQ. Extensions are possible but not guaranteed. **All purchases associated with grant funds must be made within the grant contract period. Any purchases made prior to the start of the grant contract or after the end date of the grant contract will not be eligible for reimbursement.**

How to Submit Proposals:

One electronic copy of the proposal must be submitted by email to sandy.skolochenko@ncdenr.gov. Receipt of all acceptable proposals will be acknowledged by e-mail. ***If you do not receive a confirmation, contact Sandy Skolochenko at sandy.skolochenko@ncdenr.gov or 919-707-8147 as soon as possible.*** It is the responsibility of anyone submitting a proposal to contact DEACS if they do not receive a confirmation. Please submit electronic versions of proposals as Microsoft Word (preferred) or Adobe (PDF) files. If submittal of an electronic version of a grant proposal presents a hardship, please contact Sandy Skolochenko to discuss submittal options.

Proposals will be accepted until 5:00pm on Friday, October 30, 2020. Proposals will be evaluated in the order that they are received and awards will be made for winning proposals on a rolling basis while funding remains available. Any proposal received after October 30th will not be considered for funding.

Required Proposal Format:

The following outline indicates what applicants **must** include in their proposal for their application to be considered complete. Proposals that fail to provide all of the required information or that fail to follow the following format may not be considered for funding.

- Project Title
- Applicant Contact Information: to include the following:
 - ✓ Name and title of main contact
 - ✓ Organization
 - ✓ Address
 - ✓ Phone number
 - ✓ E-mail address
- Date of Proposal Submittal: this should be the date the proposal is submitted to DEACS
- Project Description: Provide responses to each of the following prompts below. Applicants are encouraged to provide a clear project description and consider the Award Criteria as they describe the project elements.
 1. Describe the proposed project and identify specifically what items (and how many) you intend to purchase with grant funds.
(Planning: 0-25 points)
 2. How has your recycling program and budget been affected by COVID-19 and how will this project help?
(Demonstration of Need: 0-25 points)
 3. How many households or businesses will be impacted by or have access to the recycling services associated with the proposed project?
(Efficiency/Cost Effectiveness: 0-20 points)
 4. Estimate the number of tons of waste expected to be reduced annually as a result of the proposed project.
(Waste Reduction Impact: 0-25 points)

5. What is the anticipated service life for the items to be purchased with grant funds? How will you sustain the project after the grant ends?
(Planning: 0-25 points; Efficiency/Cost Effectiveness: 0-25 points)
6. Describe any partnerships associated with the proposed project. Please include documentation of support from any partner entities.
(Joint Effort: 0-5 points)

- **Project Timeline:** Bulleted list showing project milestones and general implementation dates.
- **Project Budget:** to include the following:
 - ✓ Itemized list of intended expenditures and estimated costs;
 - ✓ Total project cost with breakdown of funding requested from the state and amount of matching funds to be provided by the applicant (see Cash Match Requirements);
 - ✓ Please submit the Project Budget in a table following the example shown below:

Project Elements	Estimated Cost		
Supplemental Recycling Carts for Recycling Program	\$ 10,500		
Labels for Carts and Signs for Recycling Sites	\$ 900		
Program Brochures (Design and Printing)	\$ 600		
Project Budget	Total Project Cost	State Grant Award	Applicant Cash Match
Total	\$ 12,000	\$ 10,000	\$ 2,000

* Note about Project Budgets for local government applicants: state and local sales taxes **are not** reimbursable expenditures and should not be included as part of grant budgets.

Grant Selection Process:

A selection committee will use the pre-established Award Criteria identified below to rank proposals and make award decisions:

1. **Demonstration of Need (0-25 points):** Does the proposed project address a specific equipment, educational, or infrastructure need related to impacts from COVID-19?
2. **Planning (0-25 points):** Did the Project Description include all necessary elements as outlined in the Required Proposal Format? Is the proposal well thought out, well researched and backed by valid facts and assumptions? Is the project consistent with recycling industry Best Management Practices?
3. **Waste Reduction Impact (0-25 points):** Will the project contribute substantially toward reduction of the local waste stream or will it substantially increase tonnage recovered through recycling services? Will the project improve the material quality in the recycling stream by reducing contaminants?
4. **Efficiency / Cost-effectiveness (0-20 points):** Will the project improve the efficiency or cost-effectiveness of the local waste reduction program? Does the project increase the efficiency or effectiveness of an existing recycling service? Does the project reduce the operating cost of a current recycling service or does it adopt practices to keep employees safe? Does the project make investments that will continue to serve the community for years to come?
5. **Joint Effort (0 or 5 points):** One-party proposals will receive zero (0) points; multi-party proposals (involving cash match from all participants) will receive five (5) points.

If a Proposal is Selected for Funding:

Applicants selected for funding will be notified by DEACS with a formal offer by e-mail. The applicant must accept or decline the offer. The following will occur once the offer of grant funding is accepted:

- DEACS may work with applicants to revise initially submitted proposals before entering into a grant contract. Any changes to initial proposals must be approved by DEACS and the applicant and the resultant final proposal will become an attachment to the grant contract.
- Successful applicants will be required to:
 - Provide their federal tax ID number.
 - Register with the state's e-procurement system using the same address provided in the applicant's proposal. To register in the state's e-procurement system or confirm/update your existing registration, please visit the following link: <http://eprocurement.nc.gov/>.
 - Submit a Conflict of Interest Policy using the following template or submitting a copy of your organization's existing policy: <https://deq.nc.gov/conservation/recycling-business-assistance/financing/grants/forms>
- Private recycling businesses will be required to include the following:
 - Provide your company's federal DUNS Number: <http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform>
 - Complete No Overdue Taxes Certification with notarized signature: <https://deq.nc.gov/conservation/recycling-business-assistance/financing/grants/forms>
 - Complete the Non-Debarment Form: <https://deq.nc.gov/conservation/recycling-business-assistance/financing/grants/forms>
- DEACS will submit a request through the DEQ contract processing system for a grant contract. Grantees must act to execute the resultant grant contract without excessive delay.

NOTE: Successful applicants that make purchases before a grant contract is signed by both DEQ and the grant recipient will not be reimbursed.

Other General Terms and Conditions:

All grantees are subject to the following terms and conditions. Most of these terms and conditions will be outlined in the grant contract.

- **Publications:** all documents and publications associated with a grant contract should be printed on recycled paper containing at least 30 percent post-consumer content.
- **Final Reports:** a draft final report is required to be submitted to DEACS at least 30 days prior to the contract end date and a final report is required to be submitted by the contract end date. Final reports and drafts should be submitted electronically. All applicants are strongly encouraged to visit the following web site to review the final reporting format and guidelines: <https://deq.nc.gov/conservation/recycling/programs-offered/grants-local-governments>.
- **Extensions / Amendments:** no-cost time extensions are possible but not guaranteed for grant contracts. Grantees seeking no-cost time extensions should submit a request for a time extension at least sixty (60) days prior to the contract end date.
- **Reimbursement:** distribution of DEACS grant funds is on a reimbursement basis. Requests for reimbursement can only be made after the grantee has completed purchases associated with the grant project. Reimbursement requests must be submitted on letterhead, must include copies of invoices, and must include proof that the grantee has made payment. Proof of payment may include copies of canceled checks or other financial reports showing that funds were spent. **For local government grantees, state and local sales taxes are not reimbursable, may not be counted towards expenditure requirements, and should be excluded from reimbursement requests.** The amount of actual grant payments may be prorated for projects or project elements that come in under budget.
- **Final 10 Percent of Funds:** DEACS will continue to reimburse grantees until 90 percent of the grant award amount has been expended. The final 10 percent of grant funds will be held until an acceptable final report has been received by DEACS. The final report must be received and approved prior to the end date of the contract.