

Maine DEP Solid Waste Diversion Grant Program

Commonly Asked Questions

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1. How/why was the program originally developed?

The Maine Legislature established the Maine Solid Waste Diversion Grant Program to provide grants to public and private entities to assist in the development, implementation or improvement of programs, projects, initiatives or activities designed to increase the diversion of solid waste from disposal in Maine.

2. Who is eligible to apply for the grant?

This program is open to any public or private entity residing within the State of Maine. Applicants must be able to demonstrate a proposed program, project, initiative or activity which is likely to increase the diversion of solid waste from disposal within a particular community, municipality or region of Maine.

Funds will be awarded based on prioritization with the highest priority going toward proposals submitted by municipal or regional association and proposals that are likely to increase the removal and recycling of organic materials from municipal waste streams, are consistent with the provisions of the [solid waste management hierarchy](#) and the [food recovery hierarchy](#), and finally, provide the most benefit to Maine in terms of increasing the diversion of solid waste from disposal.

3. How often are the grants available?

The Department offers these grants through a Request for Proposal (RFP) published twice annually. You can find the RFP in major newspapers circulated statewide or you may directly access the RFP the State's website: <https://www.maine.gov/dafs/bbm/procurementservices/vendors/grants>. The application process typically starts with a spring round beginning in early February, with decisions occurring by late May and a fall round beginning in early August with decisions occurring by the middle of November.



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4. How much money is available during each round?

The Department currently has dedicated \$125,000 for each round (\$250,000 total for the year).

5. What is the range of available awards (minimum to maximum per applicant)?

There is no minimum amount that can be applied for, but the Department does suggest applying for at least \$1,000. In order to allow for multiple project successes, the Department is limiting individual awards to a maximum of \$40,000.

6. Is funding match required of the applicant?

Yes. Applicants must provide a minimum match of 25% of the total estimated project cost (including grant funds applied for). Match may be met using in-kind contributions.

- In-kind contributions include the following:

- ◊ Labor
- ◊ Services
- ◊ Goods
- ◊ Costs not eligible for grant funding, such as: indirect costs, administrative costs, fringe benefit costs, etc.

Note: Failure to meet the minimum 25% match of the total estimated project cost will result in disqualification of the application.

7. What items/projects can grant funds be used for?

Funding will be considered for proposals which include, programs, projects or ideas that address, but are not limited to:

- Establishing municipal or regional composting, organics recovery or recycling programs,
- Purchasing infrastructure, equipment or other items necessary to implement such programs or improve existing programs,
- Programs or projects designed to provide equipment for or otherwise support residential composting and recycling,
- Programs or business models designed to collect, transport for processing or process organic or recyclable materials,
- Pilot programs designed to evaluate the feasibility of targeted composting, organics recovery, recycling or other waste management programs or initiatives, or
- Initiatives or programs designed to educate certain categories of individuals or the general public about composting, organics recovery or recycling or to otherwise improve individual or community waste management practices.



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Applications should include information demonstrating how programs will:

- Take advantage of regional economies of scale,
- Increase organics management and recycling infrastructure in underserved areas of the state,
- Promote waste reduction through reuse, repair, and sharing economy initiatives,
- Reduce wasted food through donation or other sharing initiatives,
- Enhance the delivery of educational initiatives to promote organics management or recycling efforts,
- Address a statewide need,
- Reduce “carbon footprint” of existing or proposed waste management programs, and/or
- Expand the types of materials managed through composting and recycling.

8. What items/projects are “ineligible” for grant funding?

The following items are ineligible for grant funding purposes:

- Proposals that require legislation to be enacted before they can commence or be implemented.
- Proposals for projects that need Department licensure prior to starting and have not received their permit prior to application.
- Administrative and indirect costs, including benefits overhead costs and other related items.
- Full and part-time salaries of project staff, with the following exception:
 - ◊ Any proposed funding for positions as part of the grant proposal must be essential and limited to positions associated with the development of the project. This includes: Educators, research associates and interns necessary for project inception.
 - ◊ Any ongoing funding for positions after project inception will be the responsibility of the grantee.
- Any disposal costs or other on-going waste handling costs associated with the proposed project.
- Any on-going cost that will be necessary to run the program on a permanent basis and for which the applicant does not have funding may be ineligible, depending on the nature of the project.

9. How can I make my grant application stand out from the competition?

As noted in the answer to question 7 above, projects that are likely to divert the most material, are innovative, are regional with widespread impacts, are likely to significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions or focus on the top of the waste hierarchies will be prioritized.

To better address this, please consider the following as you develop your proposal:

- How much reach does your project have – will multiple communities or a large geographic area be served?
- Is the area where this project will be implemented one with few existing options to divert the material your application is focused on?
 - For example, proposing a project in a highly competitive area where other entities are already working to divert similar materials would be less impactful than one implemented in an underserved area.



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- Is your project unique, and if so, what about it is different?
- Is this project likely to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and if so, are you able to estimate the emissions impact of the project?
- Does the proposal consistently push materials up the waste hierarchy? For example, activities at the top of Maine's hierarchies including food donation, gleaning, reuse, repair, material lending programs (tool libraries, etc.) and prevention of waste before it is created all preserve existing resources.
- Will your project expand diversion significantly in terms of tonnage?
- How will the material that is diverted be used Ideally, a diversion project should fully utilize the material resources in a manner higher on the hierarchies (i.e., not as fill, fuel, or for waste-to-energy incineration).

10. How do I apply for a grant? What does the "RFP" process involve?

All applicants must follow the directions listed in the issued RFP. A copy of the RFP, as well as the Question & Answer Summary and all amendments related to the RFP, can be obtained at: <https://www.maine.gov/dafs/bbm/procurementservices/vendors/grants>, under the "Waste Diversion Grants Program" section.

Proposals must be submitted to the State of Maine Division of Procurement Services, via e-mail, at: Proposals@maine.gov. Proposal submissions must be received no later than 11:59 p.m., local time, on the due date listed in the header of the RFP. Proposals will be opened the following business day. Proposals not submitted to the Division of Procurement Services' aforementioned e-mail address by the deadline will not be considered for a contract award.

11. During the "RFP" process, can I ask questions regarding the grant?

During the RFP process, prior to application submission, all questions must be submitted in writing using the following process:

- Bidders and other interested parties must use **Appendix E – Submitted Questions Form** – for submission of questions. The form is to be submitted as a WORD document.
- The Submitted Questions Form must be submitted, by e-mail, and received by the RFP Coordinator, identified on the cover page of the RFP, as soon as possible but no later than the date and time specified on the RFP cover page.
- Submitted Questions must include the RFP Number and Title in the subject line of the e-mail. The Department assumes no liability for assuring accurate/complete/on time e-mail transmission and receipt.

- **Question & Answer Summary:** Responses to all questions will be compiled in writing and posted on the following website no later than seven (7) calendar days prior to the proposal due date: [Division of Procurement Services Grant RFP & RFA Page](#). It is the responsibility of all interested parties to go to this website to obtain a copy of the Question & Answer Summary. Only those answers issued in writing on this website will be considered binding.



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12. Who do I communicate with once my application has been submitted?

From the time the RFP is issued until award notification is made, all contact with the State regarding the RFP must be made through the RFP Coordinator (Mark King). No other person/ State employee is empowered to make binding statements regarding the RFP. Violation of this provision may lead to disqualification from the bidding process, at the State's discretion.

Please note that during the review process, the RFP Coordinator will not be able to respond to questions regarding the quality or standing of a specific proposal, only that it has been received and accepted for processing. This is necessary to provide a fair, unbiased and equal review of all proposals.

13. Once I have received my notification letter, can I contact the grant coordinator with questions?

Once an applicant has been notified of the Department's decision regarding their proposal, there is a required "Appeal of Contract Awards" period that extends for 15 calendar days from the receipt of notification of conditional contract awards. During this time period, the RFP coordinator will be unable to communicate with applicants.

The exact language appears below:

Any person aggrieved by the award decision that results from the RFP may appeal the decision to the Director of the Bureau of General Services in the manner prescribed in [5 M.R.S.A. § 1825-E](#) and [18-554 Code of Maine Rules Chapter 120](#). The appeal must be in writing and filed with the Director of the Bureau of General Services, 9 State House Station, Augusta, Maine, 04333-0009 within 15 calendar days of receipt of notification of conditional contract award.

Tip: Take some time to thoroughly review the Department's [Solid Waste Diversion Grant Program](#) online resources (<https://www.maine.gov/dep/sustainability/compost/grant.html>) including the Waste Diversion Grant FAQ presentation, which is available for download from the webpage.

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