

School Waste Reduction and Recycling Grant Program Overview and Guidelines

2022 - 2023

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General information

Ramsey County School Waste Reduction and Recycling Grant	
Purpose	The purpose of the School Waste Reduction and Recycling Grant program is to provide technical assistance and resources to all Ramsey County public K-12 school districts and charter schools with student enrollment of 250 and larger for creating, implementing and improving programs to increase waste reduction and recycling efforts. Technical assistance, grants, equipment and supplies provided will be linked to implementation of best practices along the School Waste Reduction and Recycling Best Practices Continuum (https://www.ramseycounty.us/sites/default/files/Recycling%20and%20Waste/Business/School%20Recycling%20Best%20Practices%20Continuum.pdf).
Eligibility	All Ramsey County public K-12 school districts and charter schools with student enrollment of 250 and above.
Estimated total funds	Total funds in the amount of \$600,000 per year are available for the program in fiscal year 2022 and 2023. The maximum award per school district is \$190,000. The maximum award per charter school is a base amount of \$10,000 plus \$50 per student for every student over 250.
Timeline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> January 1, 2022: Application open. March 15, 2022: First-round applications due. April 19, 2022: Applicants notified of status. June 20, 2022: Anticipated date grantees will be able to begin grant activities after a signed grant agreement has gone through all internal Ramsey County processes and signed by the grantee.* <p>Pending funding availability, a second-round application process is possible:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> May 2, 2022: Notification of second-round application. July 1, 2022: Second-round applications due. August 5, 2022: Applicants notified of status. October 7, 2022: Anticipated date grantees will be able to begin grant activities after a signed grant agreement has gone through all internal Ramsey County processes and signed by the grantee.* December 31, 2023: Final date to spend grant funds and complete work. <p><i>*No work shall begin until all required signatures have been obtained on the grant agreement, and a grantee receives a signed copy of the grant agreement.</i></p>
Application requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cover letter. Completed application form. Budget. Spending plan with timeline. Supporting documents (if applicable).
Questions	Contact Joel Anderson, School Waste Reduction and Recycling Grant manager: joel.andersen@ramseycounty.us .

Purpose

The purpose of the School Waste Reduction and Recycling Grant program is to provide technical assistance and resources to all Ramsey County public K-12 school districts, and charter schools with student enrollment of 250 and larger, for creating, implementing and improving programs to increase waste reduction and recycling efforts. The technical assistance, grants, equipment and supplies provided will be linked to implementation of best practices along the [School Waste Reduction and Recycling Best Practices Continuum](https://www.ramseycounty.us/sites/default/files/Recycling%20and%20Waste/Business/School%20Recycling%20Best%20Practices%20Continuum.pdf) (<https://www.ramseycounty.us/sites/default/files/Recycling%20and%20Waste/Business/School%20Recycling%20Best%20Practices%20Continuum.pdf>).

Background

Schools are required by [Minn. Stat. §115A.151](https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/cite/115A.151) (<https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/cite/115A.151>) to have a recycling program. School recycling programs educate future generations about the importance of waste reduction, recycling and overall environmental stewardship. In addition, recycling can help schools save on disposal costs and taxes associated with solid waste disposal.

The Ramsey County [2018-2038 Solid Waste Management Master Plan](https://www.ramseycounty.us/sites/default/files/Recycling%20and%20Waste/Solid%20Waste%20Management%20Master%20Plan%20Final%202018-2038.pdf) (<https://www.ramseycounty.us/sites/default/files/Recycling%20and%20Waste/Solid%20Waste%20Management%20Master%20Plan%20Final%202018-2038.pdf>) (Master Plan) contains several strategies related to waste reduction and recycling in schools, including a strategy that all public K-12 schools have robust and sustained recycling and organics programs by 2023. To support this, Ramsey County is offering resources to public K-12 school districts and larger charter schools, as well as technical assistance and consultation, to increase recycling and organics diversion, support food waste prevention and donation program participation, launch targeted reuse campaigns, and implement end of year school clean-outs.

The School Waste Reduction and Recycling Grant program is the successor to the Public Entity Innovation Grants program funded in 2012, and it addresses the current Master Plan strategy to “continue a program to provide funds to schools and other local public entities (excluding the University of Minnesota, Metropolitan Council and the State of Minnesota) for the purpose of starting and/or improving recycling and organics management programs.”

With guidance from the Master Plan, the School Waste Reduction and Recycling Grant program was developed in conjunction with a stakeholder team consisting of fourteen different school groups. Through a series of three meetings, the stakeholders established the categories of the [School Waste Reduction and Recycling Best Practices Continuum](https://www.ramseycounty.us/sites/default/files/Recycling%20and%20Waste/Business/School%20Recycling%20Best%20Practices%20Continuum.pdf) (<https://www.ramseycounty.us/sites/default/files/Recycling%20and%20Waste/Business/School%20Recycling%20Best%20Practices%20Continuum.pdf>) and contributed to the development of the continuum with input about critical needs to advance and improve diversion rates and waste reduction.

Best practices continuum

To refine an understanding of best practices for implementation of recycling and organics programs in public and private K-12 school district operations, Ramsey County, in partnership with Washington County, worked together with a consultant and key stakeholders to develop a [best practices continuum](https://www.ramseycounty.us/sites/default/files/Recycling%20and%20Waste/Business/School%20Recycling%20Best%20Practices%20Continuum.pdf) (<https://www.ramseycounty.us/sites/default/files/Recycling%20and%20Waste/Business/School%20Recycling%20Best%20Practices%20Continuum.pdf>) to evaluate, set standards and measure progress of schools in meeting waste reduction and recycling goals. The intent of the continuum is to develop long lasting

partnerships with schools to foster and encourage best practices in cafeterias, classrooms and end-of-year school clean-outs.

The continuum requirements were developed in consultation with local school representatives from districts in Ramsey and Washington counties as well as charter and private schools. A chart was developed showing levels of the continuum with corresponding best practices that can be applied to the diversity of schools in the county. The continuum progresses from basic program coverage to advanced, high-performing and sustainable programs. The continuum requirements are considered achievable and equitable.

The scope of the continuum contains best practices including the following types of activities:

- Waste reduction practices, such as eliminating disposable dishware or single serve containers.
- Establishing or enhancing reuse opportunities, such as cafeteria share tables and locker clean-outs.
- Implementation of an organics program.
- Reinvigorating recycling programs and adopting best practices in buildings and outdoor areas.

The continuum includes both quantitative and qualitative evaluation measures to be summarized and reviewed annually.

Eligible applicants

All Ramsey County public K-12 school districts and charter schools with student enrollment of 250 and above are eligible for the School Waste Reduction and Recycling Grant program. Schools operating within a public school district must have the school district apply on their behalf. Private schools and charter schools with less than 250 students are not eligible but may apply for funding through the [BizRecycling grant program](http://www.bizrecycling.com/grants/) (<http://www.bizrecycling.com/grants/>).

Funding

Technical assistance, grants and resources will be available to assist schools in improving recycling and organics management programs in line with the best practices continuum.

Total funds in the amount of \$600,000 per year are available for the program in 2022 and 2023. The maximum award per school district is \$190,000. The maximum award per charter school is a base amount of \$10,000 plus \$50 per student for every student over 250.

Grantees may access 50% of their awarded funding through Dec. 31, 2022. Grantees may access the remaining 50% starting on Jan. 1, 2023.

The specific number of awards made will be determined by the number of applications received and in consultation with a review committee.

The specific amount of grant dollars and resources (containers, labels, etc.) allocated to each school or district will be determined in consultation with school recycling experts and county staff.

Funding	Estimate
Estimated amount to grant per year	\$600,000
Estimated number of awards	Dependent on number of applications
Estimated award maximum: school district	\$190,000
Estimated award maximum: charter school	\$10,000 plus \$50 per student over 250
Estimated award minimum	-

If the school is considered to have a functioning recycling and organics management program after completing the activities, additional resources may be applied for, up to the maximum award. Additional resources will be made available to assist schools with moving beyond the basic level in the continuum into the improved and advanced levels of the continuum.

Eligible expenses

The following are examples of eligible expenses:

- Bins, carts, sorting stations and sorting tables for collecting recyclables or organics.
- Custom signage, labels and education materials.
- Educational materials.
- Reusable trays and flatware to replace disposable.
- Conference registration for the Green School Conference & Expo or related.
- Large capital items necessary for achieving greater waste reduction and additional recycling may require a cost-share.
- Other tangible resources may be requested. Eligibility will be determined on a case-by-case basis.

Grant management responsibilities

Grant agreement

Each grantee must formally enter into a grant agreement. The grant agreement will address the conditions of the award, including implementation for the project. The county must approve a written spending plan with timeline prior to the grant proceeding. Failure to obtain prior approval for a spending plan or modifications of any budget line may result in denial of the request and/or loss of funds. No work on grant activities can begin until a fully executed grant agreement is in place, or reimbursement requests will be denied.

Reporting requirements

Quarterly progress reports on program activities will be required and will include regular check-in phone calls or written updates. Reports must detail progress towards meeting goals and adherence to the timeline. A final written report will be required at the end of the agreement terms and must include barriers encountered and solutions implemented, lessons learned and any plans for continuation.

Grant payments

Reimbursement is the method for making grant payments. All grantee requests for reimbursement must correspond to the approved grant budget. Ramsey County will review each request for reimbursement against the approved grant budget and grant expenditures to date before approving payment.

To request reimbursement:

- Send invoices and itemized receipts to: ph.invoice@ramseycounty.us.
- CC Joel Anderson (joel.andersen@ramseycounty.us), Nawal Ahmed (nawal.ahmed@ramseycounty.us) and Katie Keller (katherine.keller@ramseycounty.us).

Review process

Funding will be allocated through a review process. The review committee will evaluate all eligible and complete first-round applications (due March 15, 2022 at 4:30 p.m.). If funding is available, second-round applications must be received by July 1, 2022 at 4:30 p.m.

Notification

Ramsey County will provide written notification via email to all grant applicants by April 19, 2022 for first-round applicants and August 5, 2022 for second-round applicants. Applicants will be notified whether they were awarded a grant. If awarded a grant, no work shall begin until all required signatures have been obtained on the grant agreement, and the grantee receives a signed copy of the grant agreement. Full execution of a grant agreement can take six to 12 weeks.

Guidelines

- Grant applications are meant to be a collaborative effort between schools and the county and must be drafted in consultation with county staff or a [consultant](#) contracted with the county. County staff must meet with an Assistant Superintendent or equivalent before an application is approved unless previous contract work has been completed.
- Priority will be given to projects that demonstrate a strong plan to sustain the activities after county resources have been exhausted; projects that are readily replicable in other locations may be favored.
- The [School Waste Reduction and Recycling Best Practices Continuum](#) is the guiding document for developing projects and recognizes schools/districts are at different places along the continuum.
- A school completing a School Waste Reduction and Recycling Grant program application does not commit the county to enter a contract, nor does it obligate the county to pay for any costs incurred in preparation and submission of applications.
- Once an application is approved, a grant agreement between the county and the school will be developed between the entities outlining the terms and details of each entity's requirements and responsibilities.

Application timeline

- Completed applications are due March 15, 2022.
- Applications will be reviewed within five weeks of submission of completed application.
 - April 19, 2022: Notification of status sent out to schools via email.
 - June 20, 2022: Anticipated date grantees will be able to begin grant activities after a signed grant agreement has gone through all internal Ramsey County processes and signed by the grantee.
- A complete application will include:
 - Cover letter.
 - Completed application form.
 - Budget.
 - Spending plan with timeline.
 - Supporting documentation (if applicable).
- Completed applications should be submitted to Joel Andersen: joel.andersen@ramseycounty.us.
- Possible second-round application (contingent on fund availability): Ramsey County strongly encourages applicants to complete their application in the first round as this gives the applicant more time to complete grant projects.
 - May 2, 2022: Notification of second-round application availability.
 - July 1: Second-round applications due.
 - August 5, 2022: Applicants notified of status via email.
 - October 7, 2022: Anticipated date grantees will be able to begin grant activities after a signed grant agreement has gone through all internal Ramsey County processes and signed by the grantee.
- Awardees must complete project by December 31, 2023.