



2024-2027 School Waste Reduction and Recycling Grant Guidelines

Environmental Health Division
2785 White Bear Ave. North
Suite 350
Maplewood, MN 55109
651-266-1199
minette.saulog@ramseycounty.us

Environmental Health Division
2785 White Bear Ave. North
Suite 350
Maplewood, MN 55109
Phone: (651) 266-1199
Fax: (651) 266-1177
www.co.ramsey.mn.us

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. 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 .
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 years 2024 and 2025. 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	<p>January 16, 2024: Application open.</p> <p>April 5, 2024: First-round applications due.</p> <p>May 3, 2024: Applicants notified of status.</p> <p>By August 1, 2024: 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> <p>After the first-round application process closes, applications will be accepted on a rolling basis until December 13, 2025.</p> <p>December 31, 2027: Final date to complete project and submit grant expenditures for reimbursement.</p> <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"> ▪ Completed grant application form ▪ Project budget ▪ Project work scope with timeline ▪ Supporting documents (as applicable)
Questions	<p>Questions can be sent to Ramsey County School Waste Reduction and Recycling Grant Manager</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Minette Saulog: minette.saulog@co.ramsey.mn.us

Ramsey County

2024-2027 School Waste Reduction and Recycling Grant Program

Overview and Guidelines

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](#).

The grant program prioritizes equitable funding for schools and school districts that have the most resource needs. There is an emphasis on providing support and funding to grantees who will be able to make the most impact.

Background

Schools are required by [Minn. Stat. §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 Plan](#) (Solid Waste 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. This grant program addresses the current Solid Waste 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 Solid Waste Plan, the School Waste Reduction and Recycling Grant program was developed in conjunction with a team consisting of fourteen different school groups. Through a series of three meetings, the team established the categories of the School Waste Reduction and Recycling Best Practices Continuum 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 with a consultant and key school representatives to develop a best practices continuum 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 the levels of the continuum and how best practices fit under each 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 a food scraps (organics) collection program
- Reinigorating 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 on an annual basis.

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](#).

If school districts have continuing waste reduction and recycling program goals and wish to apply for additional funds, a follow-up grant request may be submitted after the end of their initial grant agreement. Charter schools may reapply for funds and may be approved for funding on a case-by-case basis. 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.

Funding

Technical assistance, grant funds and resources will be made available to assist schools in improving their waste reduction, recycling and organics management programs in line with the best practice's continuum.

Total funds in the amount of \$600,000 per year are available for the program in 2024 and 2025. These funds must be spent by the end of 2027. 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 12/31/2024. Starting on 1/1/2025, grantees may access the remaining 50%.

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	-

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 submit a grant application and formally enter into a grant agreement with Ramsey County. The grant agreement will address the conditions of the award, including implementation for the project. The County must approve the grant application including a written project work scope and budget with timeline prior to the award of grant funds and the execution of a grant agreement. Failure to obtain prior approval of any modification to any budget line item may result in denial of the request and/or loss of funds. No work on grant activities or expense of grant funds 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. Quarterly reports may be written or oral. Quarterly reports must detail progress towards meeting goals and adherence to timeline. As the project proceeds, regular check in phone calls, emails and/or online meetings will be considered routine. 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, including approved modifications to any budget line item. Ramsey County will review each request for reimbursement against the approved grant budget and grant expenditures to-date before approving payment. All invoices for reimbursement must be received by December 31, 2027.

To request reimbursement:

1. Send invoices and itemized receipts via email to: ph.invoice@ramseycounty.us.
2. Copy (cc) emails to: Minette Saulog (minette.saulog@ramseycounty.us), Nawal Ahmed (nawal.ahmed@ramseycounty.us), and Jennifer Nguyen Moore (jennifer.nguyenmoore@ramseycounty.us).

- **Review Process**

Grant applications will be reviewed and approved by a review committee. The review committee will evaluate all eligible and complete first-round grant applications, which are due on April 5, 2024 at 4:30 p.m.

- **Notification**

Ramsey County will provide written notification via email to all grant applicants by May 4, 2024 for first-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 grant agreement can take 6 to 12 weeks.

Guidelines

- The development of 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 application is approved, unless previous waste reduction and recycling grant agreements have 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 [Schools 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 and Timeline

- First-round applications are due April 5, 2024
 - Completed applications should be submitted to Minette Saulog, Ramsey County School Waste Reduction and Recycling Grant Manager: minette.saulog@ramseycounty.us
- Applications will be reviewed within four weeks of submission of completed application.
 - May 3, 2024: Notification of status sent out to schools via email.

- By August 1, 2024: 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:
 - completed grant application form
 - project budget
 - project work plan with timeline
 - supporting documentation (as applicable).
- After the first round closes, applications will be accepted on a rolling basis until December 13, 2025.
- Awardees must complete project work and submit expenditures for reimbursement by December 31, 2027.