

PET Recycling Coalition Grant Program | Request for Proposals

About The Recycling Partnership

The Recycling Partnership is a national nonprofit transforming recycling in communities, counties, and states nationwide. Improved recycling creates jobs, protects the environment, and empowers communities. For more information regarding our programs, staff, and funders, visit: www.recyclingpartnership.org.

Introduction to the PET Recycling Coalition Grant Program

This grant program is administered by The Recycling Partnership's [PET Recycling Coalition](#), which drives improvements to transform the PET recycling landscape and create scalable solutions that advance circularity for all PET packaging.

The purpose of the PET Recycling Coalition's Grant Program is to facilitate a number of distinct yet interrelated improvements related to the circularity of PET packaging in the United States:

- Increasing the capture of PET at MRFs and PET reclaimers by improving process effectiveness and reducing yield loss;
- Increasing the number of local recycling programs accepting PET non-bottle rigids (e.g. thermoformed clamshells, cups, trays);
- Increasing the viability of recycling pigmented/opaque PET*.

This program focuses on equipment and process investments that contribute to these desired outcomes. All projects must result in the successful ongoing return of PET to manufacturing use, with preference given to systems returning PET to packaging manufacturing use.

Applicants should carefully read this entire document prior to submitting a proposal.

*Please note that in the context of this Request for Proposals, pigmented/opaque PET refers to all PET other than clear, light blue, or green.

Funding Targets

Grant funding is available for equipment or process investments that establish long-term, sustainable increased PET capture, strengthened recycling viability for pigmented/opaque PET, and/or broadened acceptance of PET non-bottle rigids in community recycling collection programs.

Grant Recipient Eligibility

To be eligible for funding, an applicant must be a publicly, privately or non-profit owned and operated material recovery facility (MRF), PET reclaimer, or closely related facility. Geographic eligibility is limited to the United States for MRFs, and eligibility is open to the United States, Canada, and Mexico for PET reclaimers. PET reclaimers in Canada and Mexico must have a demonstrable relationship with the circularity of PET in the United States, either by processing PET waste generated in the United States or supplying rPET to markets in the United States. There is no minimum facility or operation size

requirement. Community recycling collection programs and all other parties not directly involved in post-collection PET recycling are not eligible for funding.

Funding Availability and Use of Grant Funds

Grant funding is available through competitive responses to this Request for Proposals for equipment or process investments that create measurable progress towards the PET Recycling Coalition's desired outcomes. Uses of the funding may include, but are not limited to:

- Optical sortation equipment
- Robotic sortation equipment
- Conveyor systems
- Bunker or other storage systems for sorted material
- Equipment focused on processing other materials that result in broadened PET acceptance or improved PET processing
- Dock space or related investments that facilitate PET shipment

Grant funds cannot be used for staff costs, recycling collection equipment, land or building purchases, or for any other purposes not directly related to PET recycling. The exception is the additional award of outreach and education funding as detailed below.

Ultimate decisions on proposal funding are subject to allocation of Coalition contributions to grant-making and to the goals and objectives of the Coalition.

Commingled Plastic Sortation (e.g., #1-7) vs PET-Specific Sortation

The intent of this grant program is to facilitate the broadest possible collection, processing, and marketing of PET packaging in the residential material stream. As such, The Recycling Partnership's highest priority is to fund projects focused on PET-specific recycling flows. The Recycling Partnership understands that processing of PET into mixed resin bales could still be a pathway for achieving PET Recycling Coalition goals, however at this time grants will not be issued for projects that result in the production and marketing of mixed resin bales.

Maximum Grants Available

Grant funding under this program has a target cap of \$500,000 per grant. However, The Recycling Partnership reserves the right to adjust the maximum award of a project. The additional option of \$75,000 for outreach and education expenses is not included in the \$500,000 cap.

Optional Addition of Outreach and Education Funding

At its discretion, The Recycling Partnership may award additional funds up to \$75,000 for outreach and education expenses to raise public awareness where an equipment grant results in new residential access to curbside recycling of PET non-bottle rigids and/or pigmented/opaque PET. Publicly-owned MRFs may apply to receive this award directly and must provide detail regarding the outreach method, target community, and number of households. Privately-owned/operated MRFs may recommend communities within their MRFshed to receive and utilize this outreach and education award.

Applicant Funding / Cash Match

Applicants are strongly encouraged to seek other sources of grant funding to support the implementation of the project including, where applicable, state operated recycling grant programs. Applicants should be prepared to make cash expenditures in addition to funding provided by The Recycling Partnership. Applicants who are able to secure additional sources of funding (internal and/or external) will have a more competitive application. The Recycling Partnership reserves the right to adjust matching requirements to facilitate project implementation.

In-Kind Assistance to Grantees

The Recycling Partnership is prepared to offer limited technical assistance to grant recipients, including assistance related to the marketing of PET bales, flake, or pellet, the selection of equipment, engagement with community recycling programs or haulers supplying commingled material to MRFs, engagement with MRFs and/or secondary sortation facilities supplying PET bales to reclaimers, and other possible technical issues.

Grant Program Conditions and Requirements

The following information outlines the requirements and parameters of this grant program. Applicants must meet all requirements in order to be eligible to apply for grant funding.

Complete Application: An applicant must provide thorough and accurate responses to all required sections of this Request for Proposals.

Project Measurement: An applicant must agree to provide written reports and related data on project impacts in a format specified by The Recycling Partnership. Grant recipients will be required to submit quarterly reports detailing expenditures, project progress, and numerical data on project results.

Funding Recognition: An applicant must be willing to acknowledge Recycling Partnership grant support in any public communications about the project, including using The Recycling Partnership logo on written materials released for public communications. An example of logo usage is available upon request.

Recognition by The Recycling Partnership: An applicant must be willing to receive acknowledgement by The Recycling Partnership in public communications about the PET Recycling Coalition, including acknowledgement of receipt of grant funds and a brief description of the project. An example of such acknowledgement in The Recycling Partnership's public communications is available upon request.

Technical Assistance and Site Inspections: An applicant must be willing work with The Recycling Partnership to receive technical support and assistance to ensure adoption of best management practices in the implementation of the project. This includes allowing Recycling Partnership staff to conduct on-site inspections of project implementation at any time desired or deemed necessary by The Recycling Partnership. The Recycling Partnership is willing to sign limited non-disclosure agreements to help facilitate this provision.

Anticipated Grant Project Start Date and Grant Period

Successful applicants will be required to enter into a grant contract agreement with The Recycling Partnership. Resultant grant contracts will generally have a term that is at least one year in length, with the actual term to be based on when the project will be initiated. The goal is to have the contract term extend beyond the date of actual equipment installation to accommodate adequate measurement of project impacts. It is possible, depending on project timelines, that applicants may be offered multi-year contract agreements. Adjustments may be made to actual project start dates and contract periods by mutual agreement between The Partnership and grant recipients. Each grantee must expend funds and submit a final report within the grant contract period unless the term of the grant is extended by written agreement of the grantee and The Partnership. Requests for contract extensions should be submitted by the grantee at least 60 days prior to the grant contract end date.

Disbursement of Grant Funds

Grant proceeds are paid on a reimbursement basis, meaning that grantees must make the initial purchases of grant-related materials and then work with the Partnership to request a reimbursement of funds from grant proceeds. All final grant payments are contingent on the submittal of required data and reporting under the grant terms. Payment of grant funds will take place within thirty (30) days of receiving a properly prepared invoice and required documentation of expenditure from a grantee.

Total grant distributions from The Partnership will not exceed ninety percent (90%) of reimbursable costs until the submittal of a final project report by the grantee. The remaining ten percent (10%) of grant funding shall be paid upon final report submittal. Funds not expended by the end of the grant contract term will be forfeited and any unused funds must be returned to The Partnership. Any funds expended prior to the start of the grant period will not be reimbursed.

Submitting an Application

Applicants must submit proposals in the form of a Microsoft Word or .pdf document using the format prescribed below. No other application format will be accepted. Applicants may include an optional cover letter with their application should they wish to provide The Partnership with additional information or to address issues not raised in the application form.

Applications and letters of support must be submitted via email to Rob Taylor at rtaylor@recyclingpartnership.org. Each applicant will be notified by The Partnership upon the receipt of their proposal.

Any applicant with questions related to this grant program or interest in submitting an application is strongly encouraged to contact Adam Gendell at agendell@recyclingpartnership.org prior to submitting a grant application.

Grant Application Timeline

Grant applications under this program will be accepted on an ongoing basis for as long as funding is available, and there is no due date for proposals. Grant applications will be evaluated on a rolling schedule:

- 2025 first quarter due date: January 24, 2025

- 2025 second quarter due date: April 18, 2025
- 2025 third quarter due date: July 18, 2025
- 2025 fourth quarter due date: October 17, 2025

This schedule may be adjusted, and all applicants should reference The Partnership's webpage [PET Recycling Grants for MRFs and Processors](#) for the most accurate information on grant due dates.

The Partnership commits to a speedy review of all applicants received and will seek to notify applicants of a grant making decision within 60 days of the nearest evaluation date.

Applicants are strongly encouraged to submit applications at least 90 days prior to intended project implementation.

Additional granting rounds and due dates may be added to future versions of this document.

Grant Review and Selection Process

When evaluating applications, The Partnership considers the thoroughness of the proposal in addressing required application elements and how well the proposal meets Coalition objectives.

Key grant selection criteria will include:

- The magnitude of expected improvement towards PET Coalition objectives, which may be measured against one or more of the following:
 - Volume of new PET captured for recycling;
 - Number of households receiving new acceptance of PET non-bottle rigids in recycling collection programs;
 - Volume of new capacity for recycling PET non-bottle rigids and/or pigmented/opaque PET;
 - System improvements that strengthen the long-term viability of recycling PET non-bottle rigids and/or pigmented/opaque PET.
- The applicant's ability, as demonstrated through their application, to successfully implement the project, including all of the required elements of this grant program;
- The timeliness of project implementation, with an understanding that complex projects may require longer timeframes;
- The ability and willingness of the grantee to provide accurate and robust project data;
- The degree of innovation and creativity displayed by the project;
- The example or replicability that the projects sets for other potential projects;
- The productivity and resilience of the end markets for the material output of the project;
- The location of the project and its relationship to regions that have been historically underleveraged by recycling infrastructure or are otherwise important to the recycling landscape.
- The applicant's ability to leverage additional financial resources to support the project, including internal capital, local, state, or other non-profit funding;
- The applicant's historical and forward-looking performance with regard to minimizing emissions, safeguarding community health and wellbeing, and operating in a social and environmentally just manner.

While the initial review is taking place, The Partnership may contact applicants in order to request follow-up information and/or seek clarifications. Applicants selected to receive grant funding will receive an award letter and The Partnership will initiate the development of a grant agreement.

The Partnership may work with an applicant to adjust and revise the project details before entering into a final grant agreement. Any changes to the project as described in the initial proposal must be jointly agreed upon by The Partnership and the applicant, and elements of the revised grant proposal will be incorporated into the grant agreement between The Partnership and the applicant.

Grant funds will be allocated by The Partnership to successful applicants as determined by The Partnership in its sole and absolute discretion. The Recycling Partnership reserves the right to offer and negotiate partial funding of grant requests; applicants retain the right to accept or reject partial awards.

Proposal Requirements and Guidelines

Section 1. Key Contacts (REQUIRED): Each applicant is required to provide its key contacts in the following format:

Project Director: Primary point of contact for the grant project	
Name:	
Organization:	
Title:	
Phone #:	
Email:	
Mailing Address:	

Project Alternate Contact: Person who can be alternate contact who will have full familiarity with the project in the event the Project Director becomes unavailable.	
Name:	
Organization:	
Title:	
Phone #:	
Email:	
Mailing Address:	

Section 2 (MRFs only). Key Project Figures (REQUIRED):

	Households served			
Number of households served by MRF (enter number)				
	Yes	No	Other	
Are PET non-bottle rigids (clamshells, cups, trays, other thermoforms) currently accepted?				
	Baled with PET bottles	Baled with mixed plastics	Baled in a dedicated stream	Residual
Current fate of inbound PET non-bottle rigids (clamshells, cups, trays, other thermoforms) (check applicable)				
	Number of tons	Estimate or actual		
Current annual inbound tons (enter number of total tons of all material and indicate if estimate or actual)				
	Tons per year capacity	Percent of capacity utilized		
Current processing capacity and estimated percent utilized (enter tons per year of capacity and current percentage of capacity utilized)				
	Number of outbound tons	Estimate or actual		
Current annual outbound PET tons (enter number of tons and indicate if estimate or actual)				
	Number of new inbound tons	Number of new outbound tons		
Projected increase in annual PET Tons as a result of project (enter estimated number of new tons, if applicable)				

Section 2 (PET reclaimers only). Key Project Figures (REQUIRED):

	Percentage allowed	Percentage received			
Percent of PET non-bottle rigids (thermoforms) currently allowed by inbound specifications and percent received (estimate)					
Percent of pigmented/opaque PET (colors other than clear, light blue, green) currently allowed by inbound specifications and estimated percent received					
	Processed with PET bottles	Marketed to other PET reclaimer	Marketed to secondary sortation	Landfill/ Disposal	
Current fate of received PET non-bottle rigids (clamshells, cups, trays, other thermoforms) (check applicable)					
	Processed in a dedicated stream	Marketed to other PET reclaimer	Marketed to secondary sortation	Landfill/ Disposal	
Current fate of received green PET (check applicable)					
	Processed in a dedicated stream	Marketed to other PET reclaimer	Marketed to secondary sortation	Processed with green PET	Landfill/ Disposal
Current fate of received pigmented/opaque PET (colors other than clear, light blue, green) (check applicable)					

	Packaging	Non-packaging
Percentage of outbound rPET tons to packaging markets (enter percentage of outbound rPET tons)		
	Percentage	
Percentage of outbound rPET tons with FDA Letter of No-Objection (enter percentage of outbound rPET tons)		
	Percentage	Estimate or Actual
Current Annual Inbound PET Tons (enter number of tons and indicate if estimate or actual)		
	Percentage	Estimate or Actual
Current Annual Outbound rPET Tons (enter number of tons and indicate if estimate or actual)		
	Number of Tons	Estimate or Actual
Projected Increase in Annual PET Tons as a Result of Project (enter estimated number of new tons, if applicable)		

Section 2. Project Description (REQUIRED): Each applicant is required to provide a narrative, not to exceed three pages, that describes the details of their proposed project. The narrative must address the following points:

- Description of how PET is managed by the applicant. The applicant should address questions such as:
 - How is PET currently processed in the facility? What types of sortation and processing equipment are used? Please provide a description of the flow of PET through the facility.
 - Will the project enable an increase in the capture, yield, and/or overall tonnage of PET processed?
 - Will the project change the acceptance, management, or processing of PET thermoforms or pigmented/opaque PET?
- Description of the investment that is proposed. The applicant should include details on the specific equipment that will be purchased and deployed, how PET will be processed with the new equipment, and how operations will change in the facility because of the new investment.
- Description of overall funding and business analysis of the project. In addition to and in support of the budget required under Section 3 below, the applicant should describe the expenditures, funding, and return-on-investment calculations for the project.
- Description of the applicant’s measures to safeguard human and environmental health and wellbeing and record related thereto. The applicant should describe current and planned measures to avoid or minimize unwanted water and air emissions, releases of microplastics, greenhouse gas emissions, and other impacts to environmental and community health. The applicant should also describe current and planned measures to ensure the health, wellbeing, and safety of stakeholders including facility employees and the surrounding community. The applicant should disclose all citations and/or violations related to human and environmental health incurred over the previous three years (e.g., from Occupational Safety and Health Administration, a state or local government) and actions taken to mitigate and correct infractions.
- *Optional, for MRF applicants only: The applicant should describe how up to \$75,000 would be used to enhance public knowledge and awareness of PET recycling and to increase the capture of PET from households in the areas served by the MRF (if applicable).*

Section 3. Budget (REQUIRED): The budget section must detail the cost and revenues associated with the project. Be sure to include any anticipated funding that will come from external sources other than Partnership grant funding. Unless otherwise allowed through written permission from the Partnership grant contact, the budget should be provided in the following format:

	Project Component #1	Project Component #2	Project Component #3	Optional Outreach Component
Component description (i.e. piece of equipment, other project cost item)				
Total cost (as quoted by equipment supplier)				

Amount of funding requested from The Recycling Partnership				
Amount of funding provided by city/county				
Amount of funding provided by state				
Amount of funding provided by federal program				
Amount of funding provided by applicant				
Amount of funding provided by other source(s) (please specify source)				

Please follow this format for additional components as needed to provide a complete project budget.

Description of other parties involved or funding sources. The applicant should describe any other stakeholder whose support of the project is essential, including stakeholders providing any project funding, such as state, county, municipal, federal, or non-profit organizations.

Section 4. Timeline (REQUIRED): The Partnership seeks “shovel ready” projects that can be fully implemented within approximately six months of signing a grant agreement for a project. Please detail the timeline by bulleting out the anticipated implementation dates for the key milestones, including the provision of a final report on project results.

Section 5. Measurement Activities and Planning (REQUIRED): The Partnership is grounded in measuring and reporting results. In support of this, applicants must indicate their willingness and ability to measure and report project results according to a format specific by the Partnership. In addition to informal progress reporting during the course of project implementation, all PET Recycling Coalition grant recipients must submit a final report in Word or .pdf format covering each of the following required components:

- General Project Results
 - Description of the deployment and activation of funded equipment
 - Tonnage results – the amount of PET that will be affected by the grantee on an annual basis
 - If applicable, the number of local recycling programs and the number of households with improved access to PET recycling as a result of the grant
- Final Project Budget
- Final Project Timeline

Project applicants must clearly indicate in their proposal their willingness and ability to submit project reporting according to these parameters.

Section 6: Provision of Equipment Quotes (REQUIRED): Project applicants must provide documentation of proposed equipment costs in the form of vendor quotes. Applicants may propose alternatives to quotes but the alternatives must contain enough detailed information on equipment costs to allow the Partnership to understand specific project expenses.

Section 7. Letters of Support from Other Funding Sources or Partnerships: Though not required, applicants may submit up to three letters of support from stakeholders that will be critical to project implementation.

Special Note:

If an applicant's municipality or community customers do not have carted recycling, The Recycling Partnership also offers cart grants. Applicants who apply for grants are not precluded from receiving funding for multiple services. For more information, please contact Rob Taylor at rtaylor@recyclingpartnership.org.