

Film & Flexibles Recycling Coalition Grant Program Request for Proposals

About The Recycling Partnership

The Recycling Partnership (“The 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: recyclingpartnership.org.

Introduction and Grant Program Summary

This grant program is administered by The Partnership’s Film and Flexibles Recycling Coalition which brings together a robust group of stakeholders to drive improvements that transform the film and flexibles recycling landscape in the United States. For the sake of this grant program, film plastics and flexible plastic packaging (“Film and Flexibles”) includes residentially generated post-consumer derived material as defined below.

Film plastics – This term can refer to anything from plastic wrap to plastic bags to vegetable freezer bags and plastic packing materials like bubble wrap or bags filled with air in shipping boxes. Plastic film is typically less than 10 mil or 0.0254 millimeters thick and typically is made from polyethylene resin. It is a common packaging material but is typically not accepted in curbside recycling.

Flexible packaging – Packaging made of plastic that wraps or protects products and whose shape is likely to change after the contents are added or removed. This includes plastic bags and film such as bread bags, produce bags, paper towel and beverage overwraps, and newer packaging technologies such as pouches and multilayer films. Multilayer flexible packaging may consist of multiple layers of the same polymer or incorporate different polymers or substances.

The purpose of this grant program is to facilitate several distinct, yet interrelated improvements to the circularity of film and flexible packaging in the United States:

- Increasing the capture of residentially generated film and flexibles at materials recovery facilities (MRFs), secondary sortation facilities, and/or film and flexible reclaimers by improving process efficiency and reducing yield loss
- Increasing the number of local recycling programs accepting residential film and flexibles
- Optimizing the supply of post-consumer film and flexibles and improving its quality by aligning with end market needs
- Educating the public about film and flexible packaging recycling and acceptable materials

This program focuses on equipment, process, and other infrastructure investments that contribute to these desired outcomes. All projects must result in the successful ongoing return of post-consumer residential film and flexibles to manufacturing use, with preference given to systems that return film and flexibles to packaging manufacturing use.

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

Funding Targets

Grant funding is available to support equipment, process, or other infrastructure investments that establish long-term, sustainable increased film and flexibles capture, strengthen recycling viability for film and flexibles, enable the inclusion of film and flexibles in community recycling collection programs, and/or improve alignment of reclaimed film and flexibles with end market needs.

Grant Recipient Eligibility

To be eligible for funding, an applicant must be a public, private or non-profit owned and operated material recovery facility (MRF), operator of a residential recycling program, secondary sortation facility, or film and flexibles reclaimer. Geographic eligibility is limited to the United States for MRFs, residential recycling programs, and secondary sortation facilities, and eligibility is open to the United States, Canada, and Mexico for film and flexibles reclaimers. Film and flexibles reclaimers in Canada and Mexico must have a demonstrable relationship with the circularity of film and flexibles generated in the United States, either by processing post-consumer film and flexible materials generated in the United States or by supplying recycled film to markets or end-users in the United States. There is no minimum facility or operation size requirement for grant eligibility. Eligible projects must intentionally add or expand the ability to collect and manage post-consumer film and flexibles and the materials collected for recycling must derive from residential curbside or drop-off recycling programs.

Funding Availability and Use of Grant Funds

Grant funding is available through responses to this Request for Proposals for equipment, infrastructure, or other process investments that create measurable progress towards the improvements to the circularity of film and flexible packaging. Proposals will be accepted on an ongoing basis, and there is no submittal deadline. This grant program is competitive, and proposals will be evaluated and funded based on fit with the priorities and parameters outlined in this RFP. The use of the grant funding may include, but is not limited to:

- Optical sortation equipment,
- Robotic sortation equipment,
- Other novel, innovative sortation equipment,
- Cleaning equipment or systems,

- Conveyor systems,
- Bunker or other storage systems for sorted material,
- Stipends to stimulate end markets and other end market support,
- Equipment focused on processing other materials that result in broadened competitive acceptance or improved film and flexibles processing,
- Dock space or related investments that facilitate film and flexibles shipment,
- Public recycling program equipment or infrastructure that enables the collection and/or management of residential film and flexible materials, and/or
- Efforts to educate the public about film and flexible materials recycling.

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

Maximum Grants Available

Grant funding under this program has a target cap of \$500,000 per grant. However, The Partnership reserves the right to adjust the maximum award for select projects. 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 Partnership may award additional funds of up to \$75,000 to support outreach and education to raise public awareness where a grant results in new or improved residential access to curbside or drop-off recycling of film and flexibles. Publicly owned MRFs and residential recycling programs may apply to receive this award directly, and must provide detail regarding the outreach methods, target communities, and number of households that will receive outreach. Privately-owned/operated MRFs may recommend communities within their service area to receive and utilize outreach and education funding.

Applicant Funding / Cash Match

Applicants are strongly encouraged to invest their own funds into the project and / or 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 Partnership. The Partnership encourages strong grant matching for projects and seeks to leverage investments of other funding. Projects that demonstrate 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 Partnership is prepared to offer limited technical assistance to grant recipients, including assistance related to the marketing of film and flexible 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 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 to be eligible for grant funding.

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

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

Technical Assistance and Site Inspections: An applicant must be willing to work with The Partnership to receive technical support and assistance to ensure adoption of best management practices in the implementation of the project. This includes allowing Partnership staff to conduct on-site inspections of project implementation at reasonable and mutually agreed upon opportunities by The Partnership and the applicant. The 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 agreement with The 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 agreement term extend at least one year 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 agreements. Adjustments may be made to actual project start dates and agreement periods by mutual agreement between The Partnership and grant recipients.

Disbursement of Grant Funds

Grant proceeds will either be paid based upon the accomplishment of project milestones or will be paid on a reimbursement basis, meaning that grantees may be required to make the initial purchases of grant-related materials and then work with The Partnership to request a reimbursement of funds from grant proceeds. All 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-five percent (95%) of the grant amount until the submittal of a final project report by the grantee. The remaining five percent (5%) of grant funding shall be paid upon final report submittal. Grant proceeds that have not expended by the end of the grant 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 Danielle Easdale at deasdale@recyclingpartnership.org. Each applicant will be notified by The Partnership upon the receipt of their proposal.

Any organization with questions related to this grant program or interest in applying is strongly encouraged to contact Danielle Easdale at deasdale@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 basis.

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.

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 the grant programs objectives for improving the circularity of film and flexible packaging noted throughout this document.

Key grant selection criteria will include:

- The projected tonnage or increase in tonnage of recycled film and flexibles enabled by the project,
- The value of project impacts relative to the amount of requested funding,
- The applicant's ability, as demonstrated through their application, to successfully implement the project, including all the required elements of this grant program,
- The ability and willingness of the grantee to provide solid project data,
- The example or replicability that the projects sets for other potential projects,
- The timeliness of project implementation, with an understanding that complex projects may require longer timeframes,
- The anticipated impact on processing and successful marketing of film and flexibles,
- The number of households or residents that may gain access to recycling of film and flexibles as a result of the project, and
- An applicant's ability to leverage additional financial resources to support the project, including internal capital, local, state, or other non-profit funding.

While the initial review of proposals is taking place, The Partnership may contact applicants to request follow-up information and/or seek clarifications. 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 Format

Section 1.

Key Contacts: Each applicant is required to provide its key contacts, including:

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

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

Section 2.

Project Highlights: Each applicant is required to provide project highlights, including key project figures, by completing the appropriate table below. There are different tables for MRFs, secondary sortation facilities, reclaimers and public recycling programs. Please use the table that best fits your work and project. For example: Reclaimers seeking grant funding should complete the Reclaimers Key Project Figures table.

MRFs - Key Project Figures:

	Households Served		
Number of Households Served by MRF (enter number)			
	Baled Film	Residual	Other
Current Fate of Received Mono-material PE Film (check applicable)			
	Baled Film	Residual	Other
Current Fate of Mono-material Polypropylene Film (check applicable)			
	Baled Film	Residual	Other
Current Fate of Multi-material Film and Flexibles (check applicable)			
	Number of Tons	Estimate or Actual	
Current Annual Inbound Tons (enter number of total tons of all residential recyclable material and indicate if estimate or actual)			
	Number of Outbound Tons	Estimate or Actual	
Current Annual Outbound Film and Flexibles (enter number of tons and indicate if estimate or actual)			
	Number of New Inbound Tons	Number of New Outbound Tons	
Projected Increase in Annual Film and Flexibles Tons as a Result of Project (enter estimated number of new tons, if applicable)			

SECONDARY SORTATION FACILITIES - Key Project Figures:

	MRFs Served		
Number of MRFs Served by Facility (enter number)			
	Baled Film	Residual	Other
Current Fate of Mono-material PE Film (check applicable)			
	Baled Film	Residual	Other
Current Fate of Mono-material Polypropylene Film (check applicable)			
	Baled Film	Residual	Other
Current Fate of Multi-material Film and Flexibles (check applicable)			
	Number of Tons	Estimate or Actual	
Current Annual Inbound Mono-material PE Film Tons (enter number of source separated tons and indicate if estimate or actual)			
	Number of Tons	Estimate or Actual	
Current Annual Inbound Mono-material Polypropylene Film Tons (enter number of source separated tons and indicate if estimate or actual)			
	Number of Tons	Estimate or Actual	
Current Annual Outbound Multi-material Film and Flexibles Tons (enter number of tons and indicate if estimate or actual)			
	Number of New Inbound Tons	Number of New Outbound Tons	

<p>Projected Increase in Annual Flexibles Tons as a Result of Project (enter estimated number of new tons, if applicable)</p>		
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RECLAIMERS - Key Project Figures:

	Baled Mono Material PE Film	Marketed to other Film and Flexibles reclaimer	Marketed to secondary sortation facility	Landfill/ Disposal	Other (please specify)
<p>Current Fate of Mono-material PE Film (check applicable)</p>					
	Processed with Mono Material PE Film	Marketed to other Film and Flexibles reclaimer	Marketed to secondary sortation facility	Landfill/ Disposal	Other (please specify)
<p>Current Fate of Mono-material Polypropylene Film (check applicable)</p>					
	Processed with Mono Material PE Film	Marketed to other Film and Flexibles reclaimer	Marketed to secondary sortation facility	Landfill/ Disposal	Other (please specify)
<p>Current Fate of Received Multi-material Film and Flexibles (check applicable)</p>					
	Packaging	Non-packaging			
<p>Percentage of outbound Film Tons to Packaging Markets (enter percentage of total outbound film and flexibles tons)</p>					
	Number of Tons	Estimate or Actual			

Current Annual Inbound Film and Flexible Tons (enter number of tons and indicate if estimate or actual)		
	Number of Tons	Estimate or Actual
Current Annual Outbound Film 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 Film and Flexibles Tons as a Result of Project (enter estimated number of new tons, if applicable)		

Public Recycling Program - Key Project Figures:

Name(s) of Jurisdiction(s) Served by Program (list)	
Types of Recycling Film and Flexibles Services to be Offered (e.g. drop-off, curbside)	
Number of Households Served by proposed Recycling Program (enter number)	
Is Residentially Generated Film and Flexible Material Currently Accepted for Recycling?	
If yes, please provide:	
Types of film and flexibles accepted:	
Annual tons of film and flexible materials recycled:	
Current market or destination of film and flexible materials recycled:	

Section 3.

Project Description: 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 film and flexibles are currently managed by the applicant.** The applicant should address questions such as:
 - How are film and flexibles currently processed in the facility? What types of sortation and processing equipment is used? Please provide a brief description of the flow of film and flexibles through the facility.
 - Will the project enable an increase in the capture, yield, and/or overall tonnage of film and flexibles processed? Please provide a description of how the project will enable an increase in film and flexibles recycling.
 - Is mono-material PE film currently accepted and processed? What about Polypropylene or other types of mono-material films? Are multi-material film and flexibles currently accepted and processed? If so, which formats (examples: bags, film, pouches)?
 - If those formats are already accepted, how will the project change their management/processing? For all formats currently not accepted or processed, how will the project affect their acceptance and processing? What film and flexibles formats do you intend to accept and process as a result of this project? How will this project help you market each format either as separate commodities or as a unified stream of film and flexibles?
- **Description of the investment that is proposed.** The applicant should include details on the specific equipment or infrastructure that will be purchased and deployed, how film and flexibles will be collected or processed with the new equipment, and how operations will change in the facility as a result 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 project effect on community recycling programs and film and flexibles recycling access.** The applicant should detail whether and how much the project will result in the retention or addition of film and flexibles in local recycling collection programs. To the extent possible, the applicant should include a count of the number of programs affected and the number of households served by those programs, and should specifically indicate the number of households for which new access to film and flexibles recycling will be created when that is an objective of the project.
- **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 recycling program programs.
- **Description of how the project sets an example and/or helps replicate other potential projects.**

- **Optional, for MRF applicants only:** *The applicant should describe how up to \$75,000 would be used to enhance public knowledge and awareness of film and flexibles recycling and to increase the capture of film and flexibles from households in the areas served by the MRF (if applicable).*

Section 4.

Budget: 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 The 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 (i.e., piece of equipment or other project cost item)	Total Component Cost	Requested Partnership Grant Funding	Applicant Funding	Other Funding (if any)	Other Funding (please specify source)
Project Component #1 - specify					
Project Component #2 - specify					
Project Component #3 - specify					
Optional Outreach Component					

Please add more rows and specificity 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 or county recycling programs or additional non-profit funding.

Section 5.

Timeline: The Partnership seeks “shovel ready” projects that can be fully implemented within approximately six months of signing a grant agreement for a project, understanding that complex projects may require longer timeframes. 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 6.

Measurement Activities and Planning: 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 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 film and flexibles 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 successful recycling of film and flexibles 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 7.

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

Section 8.

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 municipal or community customers do not have access to carted curbside recycling collection services, 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 Danielle Easdale at deasdale@recyclingpartnership.org.