



2016 Request for Proposals: The Recycling Partnership's Grant Opportunity to Improve Access to Residential Curbside Recycling Systems

Applicants should carefully read this Request for Proposals (RFP) prior to submitting a proposal. Applicants must submit their proposal using the [proposal application form](#). No other application format will be accepted.

The Recycling Partnership (Partnership) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit designed to transform curbside recycling programs nationwide through public-private partnerships. The Partnership provides resources for communities starting programs in recycling carts or switching from bins to carts; if your community needs only educational resources to support a fully-funded switch to carts, please do not apply for this grant and instead contact Karen Bandhauer at kbandhauer@recyclingpartnership.org.

The Partnership is an industry funded public-private partnership focused on transforming the U.S. curbside recycling system. The funders of the Partnership understand the importance of robust curbside recycling to feed domestic end markets. As of the release date of this RFP, funding partners include: Alcoa Foundation, Amcor, American Chemistry Council, American Forest & Paper Association, Association of Plastic Recyclers, Ball, Can Manufacturers Institute, Carton Council, Coca-Cola, Consumer Technology Association, Food Service Packaging Institute, Heineken, Keurig Green Mountain, Kimberly-Clark, Novelis, Procter & Gamble, Recycling Works in Publishing, SPI: The Plastic Industry Trade Association, Tri-Arrows Aluminum Inc., Waste Management and WestRock. For more information, visit: www.recyclingpartnership.org.

To accelerate the local level adoption of recycling best management practices, the Partnership uses highly leveraged grants coupled with technical assistance. This RFP details those best practices and requests that each applicant detail its willingness to adopt such practices to dramatically improve the performance of its residential curbside collection program. This is an exciting, high profile initiative that requires a high degree of readiness and commitment on the part of the applicant's elected officials, city administrators, and the recycling program.



Recycling Partnership Executive Director, staff, funders, and 2014 city partners.

Who Should Apply? The Partnership is a multi-year initiative. A prospective applicant that is not ready or eligible to apply under this RFP should anticipate future opportunities to apply for funding in subsequent RFPs. An applicant is eligible to apply if they meet the following criteria:

1. **Eligibility** -
 - a. Funding is only available for residential curbside recycling programs.
 - b. Counties, municipalities, solid waste authorities/districts, and tribes with 4,000 or more households (at least 10,000 residents) are the only entities eligible for funding.
 - c. Funding cannot be used for commercial, institutional, school or organic food scrap collection programs.
 - d. Funding is only provided for both cart and education grants, applicants cannot apply for education grants alone.
2. **Collection Frequency** -
 - a. Only weekly or every other week collection is eligible.
 - b. Communities collecting two times per month are not eligible.
3. **Cart Size** - The following cart size requirements must be met:
 - a. Community must provide one standard size cart for every home in community.
 - b. ***Weekly Collection:*** Minimum 60+ gallon cart size is required. 90+ is encouraged.
 - c. ***Every Other Week Collection:*** 90+ gallon cart size is required.
 - d. ***Exceptions:*** All programs have options for disability service. For these locations, smaller containers are acceptable coupled with clear direction for who is eligible.
4. **Cart Distribution** - Eligible programs must have automatic/comprehensive collection programs, meaning all homes that receive curbside garbage services must receive a recycling cart in order to be eligible for this grant.
 - a. Carts must be distributed to all residents free of charge, meaning there cannot be a special cart fee to receive a cart.
 - b. A voluntary roll-out cart program (“subscription” or “opt-in service”) that requires interested residents to sign up for recycling or purchase carts is not eligible for funding under this RFP.
 - c. Preference will be given to communities that embed their operational recycling costs into their solid waste fees or general fund versus separate fee-for-service recycling programs.
5. **RFID (Radio Frequency Identification) Tags** - RFID tags must be embedded in carts at the time of manufacturing.
 - a. An applicant must be willing to have embedded RFID tags, however they are not required to (i) purchase RFID reading equipment or (ii) use a RFID tracking or data management system.
6. **Education and Outreach** - The Partnership has developed an outreach campaign, Curbside Access = Recycling Tonnage (CART), to support the roll out of carts in its partner communities. An applicant must use the CART campaign graphics and partner with The Partnership to deploy the campaign one to two months prior to the rollout of carts.

7. **Technical Assistance** - Each grant from The Partnership includes support for technical assistance, e.g., truck and cart RFP review, routing and cart distribution techniques, operational timelines, etc. The Partnership has extensively interviewed cities that have recently undergone cart conversions and it can use those findings to support a smooth transition for your community. An applicant must work with The Partnership to receive technical support and assistance to ensure optimal adoption of best management practices. For more insights into these topics and considerations, visit our [Guide to Implementing a Cart-based Recycling Program](#).
8. **Measurement Plan** – An applicant must agree to monitor monthly tonnage data, before and after cart implementation
 - a. Data includes: MSW, recycling, and green waste as appropriate, set out data, and contamination data from the servicing MRF, if possible.
 - b. Reporting requirements are detailed in the Proposal and in the Other General Terms and Conditions section of this RFP.
9. **Timeline** - An applicant must follow the timeline described below.
10. **Leveraging Funding** - The Partnership seeks highly leveraged proposals for the Partnership.
 - a. Examples of outside funding sources include: state grant funding, local funding, leveraged private funding from a hauler or processor, or other funding sources external to The Partnership.
 - b. Funding is available on a sliding scale based on the number of households and is detailed in the budget section of this RFP.
11. **Reimbursement of Costs** - Distribution of grant funds is on a reimbursement basis within thirty (30) days of receiving an invoice. The Partnership does not permit reimbursement of costs associated with the purchase of roll-out carts prior to the execution of a grant contract.
12. **Agreement on Final Grant Applications** - As a condition of receiving a grant, The Partnership may work with an applicant to revise an initial proposal before entering into a grant contract. Any changes to an initial proposal must be approved by The Partnership and the applicant, and the revised grant proposal will be attached to the grant contract.
13. **Funding Recognition** - An applicant must work with The Partnership on the following:
 - a. Partnership logo usage on education materials and cart labels, and
 - b. Appropriate disclaimers acknowledging that the project was partially funded by a Recycling Partnership grant.
14. **Amplification of Impact** - While not required, The Partnership encourages proposals from applicants featuring partnerships between governments, such as cities and suburbs, contiguous municipalities, or between municipal and county governments.

Grant Funding Structure:

Over 4,000 households:

- Cart procurement: \$7.00 per cart delivered up to \$500,000.
- Education and outreach implementation: \$1.00 per household up to \$50,000.
- Access to technical assistance and the CARTs campaign materials valued at \$139,000.

For example:

- 10,000 households = \$80,000 in total grant funding for carts and education
- 40,000 households = \$320,000 in total grant funding for carts and education
- 100,000 households = \$550,000 in total grant funding for carts and education

Dates/Timeline:

- Questions: The Partnership will hold a webinar on March 1, 2016 at 2:00 p.m. eastern time to address questions related to this RFP. Register for the [webinar here](#).
- All other questions related to this RFP must be submitted to The Partnership Project Director Karen Bandhauer at kbandhauer@recyclingpartnership.org by March 31, 2016 at 5:00 p.m. eastern time.
- **Due Date:** The proposal application [form](#) as well as any letters of support must be received electronically by **5:00 p.m. eastern time on April 15, 2016**. Please submit the proposal form and support letters via email to kbandhauer@recyclingpartnership.org and cmarschall@recyclingpartnership.org.
- Review Period and Award: Proposals will be reviewed and applicants will be contacted by April 29, 2016 to address clarifying questions. 2016/2017 grantee selections will be made and applicants will be notified of their final status by May 20, 2016. Notwithstanding anything in this RFP to the contrary, The Partnership, in its sole and absolute discretion, reserves the right not to make any Partnership grant awards.
- Contract Finalization: Once final selections are made, a draft grant contract will be provided by June 3, 2016 with an expectation that a grant contract will be executed by The Partnership and the grantee no later than July 31, 2016.
- Contract Period: The project period must not exceed 15 months from award date. The Partnership expects that each grantee will begin to deploy carts no later than May 1, 2017. Each grantee must expend funds and submit a final report within the grant contract period unless the term of the grant contract is extended by written agreement of the grantee and The Partnership at least sixty (60) days prior to the grant contract expiration date. Funds not expended by the end of the grant contract period will be forfeited and any unused funds must be returned to The Partnership. Any funds expended prior to the start of the grant contract will not be reimbursed.

Grant Limitations: The Partnership provides grant dollars for cart procurement and education and outreach materials. The Partnership also provides technical assistance support to communities for recycling operations and champion building with state and local elected officials. Grant funds cannot be used for truck procurement, MRF upgrades, or for purposes other than cart procurement and education and outreach, except in the case of communities interesting in pursuing secondary funding to complete a Waste Characterization Study, as detailed in Appendix A. While our grant dollars have limitations, The Partnership has a long history of working with communities as partners. The Partnership is committed to working closely with successful applicants to craft programs that respond to specific community needs.



RFP Proposal Format

The following information outlines the mandatory components of a proposal under this RFP. Please complete the [proposal application form](#) to answer the questions below; the form correlates to each section outlined. **No other application format will be accepted.**

Letters of Support: Each applicant is required to include letters of support from its highest elected official (e.g., County Commissioner, Mayor, Executive Director, etc.). An applicant is strongly encouraged to include letters of support from its current Materials Recovery Facility (MRF) and state recycling office. Submit the letters with the proposal application form by the RFP due date.

Contacts:

- **Project Director:** Provide the name, phone number, email address, and mailing address of the Project Director assigned to the proposal. The project director should be the main point of contact and responsible for daily operations of the recycling program.
- **Highest Ranking Official:** Provide the name, phone number, email address and mailing address of the applicant's highest ranking official.
- **Material Processor:** Provide the name and location of the recycling processor.
- **Hauler:** Provide the name of the hauler if material is not collected by the applicant.

Program Description: This section of the proposal should provide the background that reviewers need in order to understand the context of your program. The Partnership seeks projects that are poised to make dramatic improvements to curbside recycling programs and recover 250 pounds/household or less under the existing residential curbside collection program. An applicant must switch from bags or small open bins to large roll carts, or start a program in large roll carts and execute education campaigns to support the deployment of large roll carts.

Budget: Outline the current and proposed cost structure for recycling services and describe the recycling cart project financing. For the education budget, consider that the Partnership utilizes a behavior change approach to recycling education known as 3, 2, 1. The key 3 behavior change educational components are 1) a direct to resident information card/hanger informing them that carts are coming, 2) a kit of information delivered with the cart, which includes an acceptable materials magnet/sticker, an introductory card, service calendar, etc., and 3) an oops/congrats tag to reinforce correct recycling behavior after carts are delivered. The Partnership requires that grant dollars be used toward the procurement of these key 3 items, at a minimum. To support an effective campaign, the Partnership requires that a successful grantee select at least two additional awareness communication components, such as billboards, digital ads, festival/event kit, truck signage, etc. Procurement of these items will likely exceed the Partnership's education grant amount and should be considered in the applicant's budget. Finally, the Partnership requires that Grantees update their websites to communicate the basics of the cart roll out. Based on experience, the total cost for implementing the 3, 2, 1 program is between \$2 and \$3 per household, although this may vary considerably. A good budget number for 93+ gallon carts is \$50 and \$45 for 65 gallon carts.

Timeline: The Partnership seeks “shovel ready” projects that can be deployed within fifteen (15) months of project signing. Assuming a grant contract is signed by July 31, 2016, fill out the timeline in the spreadsheet with key milestones, adding milestones as necessary.

Measurement Plan: The Partnership is grounded in measuring and reporting results. Successful applicants must be willing to provide monthly tonnage data for at least twelve (12) months after carts are fully delivered. Each proposal should demonstrate commitment to data and measurement of the following: including RFID tags in carts at the time of manufacture and providing monthly baseline data for two (2) to three (3) years prior to program change. A letter from the servicing MRF is highly recommended indicating its willingness to assist in measuring and reporting contamination data.

Processing Capacity: The Partnership seeks proposals for the Partnership from applicants where the processing infrastructure is capable of receiving more material, but the collection infrastructure is underdeveloped. Describe current MRF capacity and recent MRF investments, if applicable. A letter from the MRF is highly recommended acknowledging current excess capacity or the ability to accept more materials by adding a shift, etc. If an independent hauler is used to collect materials please confirm that the hauler will be able to accommodate the switch to an automated or semi-automated cart-based system.

Growing Material Mix: Each proposal should list the materials currently collected via residential curbside and anticipated material expansion. In the proposal form’s table, check off materials currently accepted, materials intended to be added, and provide any relevant commentary. A letter from the MRF regarding material mix matters is highly recommended, which should include the key quality / contamination issues facing the MRF.

Commitment to Best Practice Education and Outreach: Each proposal should describe their commitment to best practice education and outreach, including the 3, 2, 1 approach described in the budget section, in the attached form. The Partnership is interested in testing the effectiveness of our educational resources through phone surveys. While not a requirement of the grant, please indicate if your community would be willing to partner with The Partnership on conducting these surveys at no additional cost to the community.

Existing Partnerships: Describe all demonstrated partnerships in the community, such as with the processor, the local solid waste authority, state recycling organization or office, or recycling company that could help the project achieve success. Detail affiliation with a larger regional group that could help to amplify grant fund investment in your community. If this is a joint application between two governments, detail the partnership envisioned.

Supportive Best Practices: Each proposal must detail existing or planned supporting policies and/or best practices in recycling. Examples include mandatory recycling, embedded recycling costs in solid waste fees, disposal bans, unit-based pricing for waste collection, etc.

Definitions:

Cart: Plastic recycling container with wheels and lid. Also referred to as barrels.

Contamination: Refers to the amount of material that residents include in their recycling collection that is not accepted in curbside program, thus ultimately ending up in as residual at the recycling facility.

Participation Rate: The number of homes that put recycling out to be collected at least once during a month period. This is analyzed by actually observing specific addresses over a month long period and counting each time they recycle because not each home recycles every collection day. To calculate this rate, take the number of addresses that have recycled at least once in a month and divide that by the total addresses observed. For an observation of a two week period, if you observe 100 homes and 40 recycle one week and 40 completely different homes recycle the next week, that is an 80 percent participation and a 40 percent set-out rate.

Set-out rate: The number of homes with recycling out at the curb at any given time. This is calculated by counting the number of homes with recycling out and dividing that number by the total number of homes on that route. For example, if there are 100 homes on a route and 40 homes have recycling out, the set out rate is 40 percent.

Classifications for Homes to Participate

Comprehensive/Automatic Service: A comprehensive system where curbside recycling service is automatically provided to every single family resident in the community and is paid for through general taxes or fees. In this system participation by any household is voluntary, though it is not possible to opt-out or avoid payment of the fee of tax that funds the service. A container is delivered to every home, the resident is assigned a recycling day and on that day they have the opportunity to put their container out at the curb for collection. The actual collection service may be conducted by public staff and equipment or through a private hauler contracted by the community with the local government being billed for the recycling service and acting as a single-payer for service at all covered properties.

Comprehensive Opt-in: The curbside recycling service is available to every single family resident in the community (thus paid for through general taxes or fees), but the resident must specifically contact the local government or private hauler to set up service and/or purchase a container to start receiving the service. If a resident does not request the service, they still technically pay for the program through general taxes or fees. This can be provided through public or private hauler.

Public Opt-in: A curbside recycling service established by a local government where residents must specifically contact their local government to set up service and receive a recycling container. The resident then pays the local government directly for service through a publicly established and administered fee or tax. Those residents that do not contact the local government and opt-in do not receive recycling service and they do not have to pay the fees or taxes associated with the service.

Public Opt-out: A curbside recycling service established by a local government that is available to every single family resident in the community and typically paid for through utility style fee. Each resident will receive a recycling container and collection service unless they contact the local government and DECLINE service or container. If a resident declines service, are not subject to the fee.

Subscription Service: The approach is a free market system, where haulers provide service to customers upon request, financing the service through direct charges to the customers. The sub-categories of subscription service include:

- **Private Opt-in:** Residents must specifically contact the private hauler to set up service and receive a recycling container. The resident will then pay the private hauler directly for service. Those residents that do not contact a private hauler do not receive recycling service or have to pay for the program through taxes or fees.
- **Universal private subscription:** Residents are automatically provided with a recycling cart without having to opt in or contact their garbage hauler to add the service. A local government may require garbage haulers to provide automatic recycling service as a condition of receiving a franchise or license. Subscribers may pay a separate fee for the automatic service or the recycling service may be embedded in an overall combined trash fee. Either way, residents must pay the hauler directly for the service, and the pricing does not change dependent on whether they participate in the recycling program or not.

APPENDIX A: Additional Opportunities to Partner

The Partnership seeks community partners interested in conducting a before and after curbside waste and recycling analysis to measure the impact of recycling carts and best management practices on the composition of waste. The Partnership is open to exploring collaborating with a grantee on designing and conducting a study, and is willing to cost share some of the expense. While not a factor in proposal review, please indicate if this is something that your community would like to explore further.