

Polypropylene Recycling Grant Program Request For Proposals

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 and Grant Program Summary

This summary is provided to help potential applicants gain a broad understanding of this grant program. Specific parameters and requirements are explained in detail in the body of the Request for Proposals (RFP) document. Applicants should ***carefully read this entire document prior to submitting a proposal***.

The purpose of the Polypropylene Recycling Grant Program is to facilitate Material Recovery Facility (MRF) processing, sortation and marketing of polypropylene packaging to ensure the widest possible access to polypropylene recycling in community recycling collection programs in the United States. This program focuses on equipment and process investments that establish polypropylene as an automatically MRF-accepted material. Those investments must lead to inclusion of polypropylene as an accepted material in collection programs supplying the MRF, either as a separate grade or as part of a mixed grade of plastics (e.g., a #3 – 7 resin grade). The projects must result in the successful ongoing return of polypropylene to manufacturing use.

Eligibility: Publicly, privately and non-profit owned and operated MRFs in the United States are eligible for funding under this grant program. Local recycling collection programs, post-MRF processors of polypropylene or mixed resin grades, or any other parties not directly involved in MRF processing are not eligible for funding.

Funding Targets: Grant funding is available for equipment or process investments that establish permanent and sustainable MRF acceptance and recycling of polypropylene packaging.

Funding Availability: Funding is available through competitive responses to this Request for Proposals under the auspices of the Polypropylene Coalition. Ultimate decisions on proposal funding is subject to allocation of Coalition contributions to grant-making and to the goals and objectives of the Coalition.

Grant Matching: This RFP encourages strong grant matching for projects to optimize Coalition funding while also ensuring fair sharing of project costs and facilitating a strong return on investment for all parties. Details on project match are provided below.

Data and Reporting Requirements: The Partnership's work is data driven, and applicants must agree to provide written reports on project investments and results, as specified below.

Grant Making Process: Grant applications under this program will be accepted on an ongoing basis, and there is no due date for proposals. When evaluating applications, The Partnership considers the thoroughness of the proposal in addressing required application elements and how well the proposal meets Coalition objectives, as spelled out below. The Partnership commits to a speedy review of all applicants received and will seek to notify applicants of a grant making decision within roughly 60 days of the receipt of a complete application. Grant winners will be asked to enter into a grant contract agreement with The Partnership. Grant contract terms will typically last for at least one year if not longer, and 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.

Polypropylene Sortation Grant Program Request For Proposals

Submitting an Application for Grant Funding

Proposals will be accepted on an on-going basis – there is no due date for applicant proposals. Applicants must submit proposals using the format prescribed below. No other application format will be accepted. Any applicant with questions related to this grant program or that is interested in submitting an application is strongly encouraged to contact Rich Simon at rsimon@recyclingpartnership.org prior to submitting a Polypropylene Recycling Program Grant proposal.

Residential Curbside Recycling 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.

General Eligibility

To be eligible for funding an applicant must be a publicly, privately or non-profit owned and operated Material Recovery Facility that is geographically located within the United States of America. Community recycling collection programs, secondary post-MRF processors of polypropylene or mixed resin grades, or any other parties not directly involved in MRF processing are not eligible for funding. There is no minimum MRF size requirement.

Project Measurement

An applicant must agree to provide written reports and related data on project impacts in a format specified by The Recycling Partnership.

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.

Technical Assistance

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.

Funding Availability and Use of Grant Funds

Grant funding is available for equipment or process investments that establish permanent and sustainable MRF acceptance of polypropylene packaging. 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 polypropylene acceptance or improved polypropylene processing
- Dock space or related investments that facilitate polypropylene 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 polypropylene MRF processing. The exception is an allowance for up to \$75,000 for outreach expenses to raise public awareness where the equipment grant results in new access to curbside recycling of polypropylene. The Recycling Partnership reserves the right to adjust this education allowance.

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 expenses is not included in the \$500,000 cap.

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 polypropylene materials, the selection of equipment, engagement with community recycling programs or haulers supplying the MRF with commingled material, and other possible technical issues.

Commingled Plastic Sortation (e.g., #3-7) vs Polypropylene-Specific Sortation

The intent of this grant program is to facilitate the broadest possible collection, processing, and marketing of polypropylene packaging in the residential material stream. As such, The Recycling Partnership's highest priority is to fund projects focused on specific MRF processing of polypropylene. However, the Recycling Partnership understands that processing of material into mixed resin bales such as a #3-7 mix could still be an important pathway for achieving Polypropylene Coalition goals. Therefore, grant proposals are allowed that include the production and marketing of mixed resin bales provided that: 1) polypropylene is a highly specified element of the mixed resin bale, and 2) the project facilitates strong public access to polypropylene recycling.

Grant Application Process and Proposal Submittal

There is no due date for grant applications. Applications will be accepted on an ongoing basis for as long as funding is available. Applicants are strongly encouraged to submit applications at least ninety (90) days prior to intended project implementation.

A proposal for grant funding in the form of a Microsoft Word or .pdf document using the prescribed format and content below and the letters of support must be submitted via email to Rich Simon at rsimon@recyclingpartnership.org. Each applicant will be notified by The Partnership upon the receipt of their proposal. 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.

Grant Review and Selection Process

The principle goal of the Polypropylene Coalition is to increase residential polypropylene packaging recovery in the U.S. The main objectives to achieve this goal are:

- increasing the number of MRFs accepting polypropylene,
- increasing the number of local recycling programs accepting polypropylene in their collection services,
- increasing the total number of households that can successfully recycle polypropylene packaging, and
- enhancing the capabilities of these MRFs to efficiently process the material

All grant applications will be assessed from the standpoint of how well they help the Coalition achieve these objectives.

The Partnership intends to award funding for Polypropylene Recycling Program Grants on a rolling basis. Each application received by The Partnership will be reviewed and applicants will be notified by The Partnership within forty-five (45) days following the end of the month in which an application is received whether its application is denied or subject to further review (“Second Round Review”). While the initial review is taking place, The Partnership may contact applicants in order to request follow-up information and/or seek clarifications. Within ninety (90) days following the end of the month in which an application is received by The Partnership, each application that has transitioned to Second Round Review will be further assessed and applicants will be notified by The Partnership whether the application was denied or has been approved to receive grant funding.

Applicants selected to receive grant funding will receive an award letter and The Partnership will initiate the development of a grant agreement. Grant funds will be allocated by The Partnership to successful applicants as determined by The Partnership in its sole and absolute discretion.

As The Partnership evaluates applications, the key grant selection criteria will include:

- The number of local curbside programs and number of households positively affected by project results, including the number of households gaining new polypropylene recycling access;
- An assessment of the value of project impacts relative to requested funding;
- An assessment of 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 ability of the grantee to provide solid project data;
- The example or replicability that the projects sets for other potential projects;
- An assessment of the timeliness of project implementation, with an understanding that complex projects may require longer timeframes.
- The anticipated impact on MRF processing and successful marketing of polypropylene; and
- An applicant's ability to leverage additional financial resources to support the project, including internal capital, local, state, or other non-profit funding.

Application Revisions: 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.

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 sixty (60) days prior to the grant contract end date.

Disbursement of Grant Funds

Distribution of grant funds will be on a reimbursement basis, and payment of 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.

Required Proposal Format

Applicants must submit their proposal in the form of a Microsoft Word or .pdf document using the following structure and content. Each Section below is required and must be provided in the exact order prescribed. Incomplete applications may be denied. No other application format will be accepted.

Section 1. Key Contacts: Each applicant is required to provide its key contacts, including:

- **Project Director:** Provide the name, phone number, email address, and mailing address of the Project Director that will oversee the implementation of the proposed project. The project director should be the main point of contact for the grant project.
- **Project Alternate Contact:** Provide the name, phone number, email address, and mailing address of a person who can be alternate contact who will have full familiarity with the project in the event the Project Director becomes unavailable.

Section 2. Project Description: Each applicant is required to provide a narrative, not to exceed three (3) pages, that describes the details of their proposed project. The narrative must address the following points:

- Description of how polypropylene is currently managed by the applicant. The applicant should address questions such as: is polypropylene currently accepted and processed at the MRF? If so, how will the project change the management/processing of polypropylene? If polypropylene is currently not accepted or processed, how will the project make this possible? How will project help you market polypropylene as a separated commodity?
- Description of the investment that is proposed. The applicant should include details on the specific equipment that will be purchased and deployed, how polypropylene will be 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 polypropylene recycling access. The applicant should detail whether and how much the project will result in the retention or addition of polypropylene 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, indicating especially for how many households new access is being established.
- Description of other parties involved or funding sources. The applicant should describe any other major 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 or helps replicate other potential projects
- Optional: The applicant should describe how up to \$75,000 would be used to enhance public knowledge and awareness of polypropylene recycling and to increase the capture of polypropylene from households in the areas served by the MRF.

Section 3. 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 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 Cost	Requested Partnership Funding	Grant Applicant Funding	Other Source of Funding (please specify source)
Project Component #1 - specify				
Project Component #2 - specify				
Project Component #3 - specify				
Optional Outreach Component				

Please add more rows as needed to provide a complete project budget.

Section 4. Timeline: The Partnership seeks “shovel ready” projects that can be fully implemented within approximately six (6) 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: 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 Polypropylene Program 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 polypropylene that can now be processed by the grantee on an annual basis
 - The numbers of local recycling programs and the numbers of households with improved access to successful recycling of polypropylene 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: 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 Other Funding or Partnerships: Though not required, applicants may submit up to three (3) 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 Rich Simon at rsimon@recyclingpartnership.org.